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THE REVOLUTION AS SEEN
BY L. LEONOV'S LITERARY CHARACTERS

by Irena Slowikowski

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INTRODUCTION

O.1 Leonov's path as a writer and a man despite many previous attempts to define it, is not well known. An attempt to correct some misconceptions about him would seem to be desirable.

Furthermore, a biography, incomplete as it is, is not only necessary in understanding the author and his literary creativity but is also useful in apprehending some of his heroes.

O.10 The problem of the revolution as seen by Leonov's heroes is tackled in one way or another by many critics. However, as far as it could be proved, there is no work dealing entirely with this question. The specific conditions in which he is living, the stigma of Stalin on his country, did not help objectivity of appraisal. Some of the ideas of that era which are now considered erroneous are being rectified. It is visible in the example of E. Starikova's¹, Mark Ščeglov's² and V.A. Kovalev's³ attempt to see

1 E. Starikova, "Russkij Les" Leonida Leonova, Vixrov i Gracjanskij, Moscow, Izdatelstvo Xudožestvennoj Literatury, 1963.

2 Mark Ščeglov, "'Russkij Les' Leonida Leonova", Novyj Mir, No. 5, 1954, p. 220-241.

3 V.A. Kovalev, Leonid Leonov, Seminarij, Moscow-Leningrad, Ed. Prosveščeniye, 1964, p. 4.

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The Russian Forest under the light of the changed political situation. This indicates that Leonov's works are open to another interpretation and, because some questions are still taboo in the Soviet Union, it should be attempted in conditions that are free from any pressure. Thus this work is only partly based on existing sources and in some cases conclusions have to be reached on the basis of Leonov's writings alone. There is no other possibility as most of the Western critics dealing with the subject accepted the findings of their now considered inaccurate Soviet colleagues and took them for granted. Those who did not are in a minority which is outstandingly represented by Ronald Hingley.

0.2 Leonov as an author often leaves the appraisal of the situation in his books and plays to his heroes. By learning their psychology and profession, he lets them behave and talk as they are supposed to in given circumstances.

Thus their opinion in most cases cannot be related to his own. It is they who are witnessing the revolution and are talking about it.

In the same way in his own public performances, mostly conventional, Leonov seems to act like a Soviet writer should, not necessarily as L. Leonov, the private citizen.

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0.3 The analysis of L. Leonov's works covers his whole available creative material of the years 1922-1962. The choice of the works discussed was prompted by the consideration of their usefulness to the theme of this thesis. For example the second redaction of The Thief was omitted as the comparison of the two Vekšins could be a problem for a whole chapter.

0.31 The four most representative strata of the Soviet population were chosen for study. They are the peasants, the proletariat, the intelligentsia and the communists.

0.32 The peasants were the most numerous class in pre-revolutionary Russia. Even by Lenin's admission, "The whole system of the war communism [...] started to collide with the peasants⁴."

Whether they are reconciled with the new order is the first problem of this work.

0.33 The proletariat, the class which was called to play a distinctive role under a new system in the old mostly rural Russia, constituted a very minor group.

How this social stratum appraises the revolution, how its life is changed and how it exercises so-called dictatorship is the second problem.

⁴ Ingłot, Mieczysław, "Borsuki" Leonowa, Wies, December 21-28, 1952, p. 4.

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0.34 The intelligentsia, the most educated and politically conscious stratum, suffered the greatest loss in the first years of revolution and during the consequent purges.

The enemies of the state are not taken into consideration. Among others the evolution of the acceptance of the Soviet reality is studied on the example of eight distinctive heroes, starting with Lixarev (Konec Melkovo Čeloveka), ending by Vixrov (The Russian Forest).

0.35 The communists incite interest as the members of the ruling class.

How they evaluate the revolutionary changes and how they understand their task is the fourth problem.

0.4 They are analysed in chronological order of their creation, however, in some instances, the individual hero had to be placed farther in the text so as not to disrupt the unity in the evolution of the similar mass heroes' question.

0.5 Secondary characters may express many of the important ideas. In the search of the sincere and not obvious it is necessary to reach the episodic even anonymous men and women.

0.6 Unfortunately the few translated works seldom could be of help, with the exception of The Thief, which had to be used. Maybe they are based on the earlier, later corrected editions. Many translations had to be done anew.

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0.61 In most cases, quotations refer to Leonov's Collected Works in nine volumes, the 1960-1962 edition, which is abbreviated as Sob.Soç. for Sobraniye Soçinienij. In the American transcription, for technical reasons, 'accent circonflexe' will be used.

0.7 The revolution in this work means the October revolution of 1917 made by the bolsheviks. It followed the democratic February revolution of the same year and it resulted in the total upheaval of all aspects of life. Its ultimate purpose, the dictatorship of the proletariat, was established and strengthened at the price of the civil wars, the Nep period, the Industrialization period, the years of terror, depriving of freedom and hardship and death for many people.

The revolution brought complete changes in the life of the country as well as of an individual. They have moral, political, social, economic — to quote only some — aspects.

How Leonid Leonov's heroes were affected by those changes and how they reacted to them is the theme of this thesis.

CHAPTER I

LEONID LEONOV, THE MAN AND THE WRITER

1.0 The man of his own, a very original song¹.

The writer lauded or persecuted by critics, pampered by his government and not belonging to the party²; considered to be a hard-core Stalinist³ and simultaneously an anti-Stalinist⁴, atheist and "perhaps [...] a [...] believer⁵".

The artist who is bold and daring⁶ and yet self-effacing⁷.

1 Gorkij in V. S. Kovalev, "L. M. Leonov", in Istoria Russkoj Sovetskoj Literatury 1941-1957 godov, Moscow, Ed. Akademija Nauk SSSR, 1961, Vol. 3, p. 237.

2 Ronald Hingley, "Leonid Leonov", in Soviet Survey, No. 25, July-September 1958, p. 69.

3 David Burg, "Popytka Leonida Leonova", in Mosty, No. 7, 1961; Janusz Kowalewski, "Dwa Nurty w Literaturze Sowietckiej", in Wiadomosci, No. 930, issue of January 26, 1964, p. 2, col. 2.

4 E. Starikova, "Russkij Les" Leonida Leonova, Vixrov i Gracianskij, Moscow, Ed. Xudožestvennoj Literatury, 1963; Ronald Hingley, op. cit.

5 Ronald Hingley, op. cit., p. 69.

6 V. A. Kovalev, Leonid Leonov, Seminarij, Moscow-Leningrad, Ed. Prosveščeniye, 1964, p. 3.

7 Helen Muchnic, "Leonid Leonov", in The Russian Review (U.S.A.), Vol. 18, No. 1, January 1959, p. 36.

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The author with a strong character and lasting principles⁸ whose desires became limited to echoing his masters' voices of the official loud-speakers.

The man whose sincere, bright green eyes impressed Furmanov⁹, whose tactfulness and modesty, even timidity were remembered by Saxnovsky¹⁰ and A. Jakovlev¹¹; yet whose recklessness and inexplicable stubbornness saddened Gorky¹² who was fond of him.

And finally, Vlasov insists that, apart from his self-control and assiduity, the most distinguishable feature of this sixtyish celebrity is his "inner concentration and outer calm¹³". Does this imply an inner tension unbecoming to the man of his stature? His "lively, pleasant face¹⁴" of the twenties now bears the marks of

⁸ L. Fink, Dramaturgija Leonida Leonova, Moscow, Sovetskij Pisatel, 1962, p. 348.

⁹ F. Vlasov, Poezija Žizni, Moscow, Sovetskaja Rossiya, 1961, p. 54.

¹⁰ V. G. Saxnovskij, "Neobxodimyj Kontakt", in Teatr i Dramaturgija, No. 3, 1934, p. 35-36.

¹¹ As cited in V. A. Kovalev, Tvorčestvo Leonida Leonova, Moscow-Leningrad, Ed. Akademija Nauk SSSR, 1962, p. 38.

¹² F. Vlasov, op. cit., p. 69-70.

¹³ Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁴ Fedor Stepun, Vstreči, Munchen, Tovariščestvo Zarubežnyx Pisatelej, 1962, p. 9.

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hardship. Its right side is partly paralyzed¹⁵. Such are the many condensed images as seen by numerous men and women who knew or know him personally or who attempt on the basis of his writings to define this many-sided phenomenon of Soviet Russian literature known as Leonid Leonov.

Obviously they came to conflicting conclusions, which proves that Leonov has a complicated personality and that his books are not easy.

.01 Leonid Leonov is one of the most renowned and valued writers in contemporary Soviet Russia. Therefore it seems rather paradoxical that not only his art leaves the way to a double interpretation of his works but also his official life story still contains some unanswered questions.

Evidently the writer does not like to talk about himself. The biographers have to add bits and pieces in order to reconstruct a more or less plausible account of the events in his life.

.1 It is known that he was born in May 1899. Most of the official sources, including the author himself¹⁶,

15 Information received in a private letter.

16 V. Lidin Pisateli, Avtobiografii i Portrety Sovremennykh Russkikh Prozaikov, Sovremennyye Problemy, Moscow, Stoljar, 1926, p. 200.

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define his place of birth as Moscow. But already at this point there exists a dissent. N. Rosen found in the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia of 1938 information that Leonov was born far from Moscow, in Poluxino¹⁷, the village where his father's family used to live. There Leonov as a child spent some time with his grandparents, probably at the difficult period of his father's imprisonment.

.11 This experience left a strong impact on his work and may be one of the sources of his love for peasants and the rustic life.

In Leonov's room there is a portrait of his great-great-grandfather Piotr Dorofeič Pietrov, who was a serf¹⁸. It is a kind of symbol and remainder of Leonov's peasant origin, of which he is proud.

It is possible that Matvej Vixrov's appearance was inspired by this ancestor, who was famous for his strength. His grandfather on the father's side can be recognized in Byxalov of The Badgers, but the writer loyally explains, that the prototype was much more human and good-hearted.

17 Nathan Rosen, Leonid Leonov: The Reforging of a Fellow-Traveler (1922-1935), typescript, thesis, New York, Russian Institute, Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University, 1956, p. 6.

18 F. Vlasov, Poezija Žizni, op. cit., p. 22.

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.12 In connection with Leon Leonovich Leonov, the grandparent in question, it should be stated that he was a deeply religious man and, as he did not possess the art of reading, the future author was obliged to read to him the only literature his grandfather recognized, namely the Saints' Lives, The Belozerski Tales, etc.

.121 Now Leonov does not deny that when very young he at first did not enjoy the task but then began to appreciate the poetry of such works and "gradually became attached to ancient Russian books¹⁹".

In case that statement may appear rather diplomatic and not particularly revealing, there is another, where Leonov affirms his allegiance to, of all authors, Avvakum, whose Life attracted him because of "the language [...] the epic temperament [...]"²⁰.

.122 The influence of these readings can be traced in the adult Leonov's language; but also the knowledge of the Bible is markedly noticeable in his books.

.123 However this cannot be taken as evidence of his religious feelings. But it seems that pronouncements

¹⁹ V. A. Kovalev, Tvorčestvo Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 40, footnote No. 96.

²⁰ L. Bat', "Leonid Leonov o Literaturnom Trude (iz besed s pisatelem)", in Voprosy Literaturny, No. 2, 1960, p. 186.

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similar to "Leonov [...] had never believed in God²¹" or "he had always been an atheist²²" are imprudent. Still less convincing and rather strange in a work of scholarly pretense is the assumption of "his hatred of religion" on the basis of the Leonov's form of lips, even if they are "full and sensual²³".

.124 From E. Starikova's statement that everybody in the family was religious and pious²⁴, it can be presumed that, as a child, Leonov was submitted to the influence of the church.

1.2 Leonov's father, Maxim known also under the name of Goremyka, served as a model for the image of Piotr Byxalov of The Badgers.

.21 He was in his own right a remarkable man. In spite of only one and a half years of formal schooling and the family's resistance to his literary ambitions,

21 Nathan Rosen, Leonid Leonov: The Reforging of a Fellow-Traveler (1922-1935), op. cit., p. 71.

22 Nathan Rosen, The Fiction of Leonid Leonov, typescript, thesis, Ph.D., New York, Columbia University, 1961, p. 245.

23 Nathan Rosen, Leonid Leonov: The Reforging of a Fellow-Traveler (1922-1935), op. cit., p. 9.

24 E. Starikova, "Tvorčeskij Put' Leonida Leonova", in Leonid Leonov, Sobranije Sočinienij, Moscow, Gosudarstvennoje Izdatelstvo Xudožestvennoj Literatury, 1960, Vol. 1, p. 6.

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he had sufficient will power to self-educate to the degree where he was able to write poetry, to edit two successful newspapers in Arxangelsk and to head the publishing house in Moscow. In theatrical matters he was considered "a walking encyclopedia"²⁵.

.22 And even if his poetry, inspired by and devoted to a peasant life, does not now command official recognition, the fact remains that some of his perhaps crude but sincere and touching verses were sung by Šaliapin. And, in the opinion of Gorkij, he was a "prominent writer of the people"²⁶.

.23 He was arrested and exiled for, apparently, writing and publishing politically dangerous literature. The information about his exile is misleading. In different works, the time of its taking place ranges from 1905²⁷ to 1915²⁸. Perhaps the best informed source is Kovalev who studied the matter. According to him, Maxim Leonov was exiled twice: in 1892 and in 1910. In 1905 he was in Moscow, the co-owner of the publishing house and the book

25 V.A. Kovalev, Tvorčestvo Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 15.

26 F. Vlasov, Poezija Žizni, op. cit., p. 26.

27 Nathan Rosen, The Fiction of Leonid Leonov, op. cit., p. ii.

28 E. Starikova, "Tvorčeskij Put' Leonida Leonova", loc. cit., p. 6.

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store "Iskra", and as such, was submitted to a whole series of brushes with the tzarist law²⁹. Then he moved to Arxangelsk where he chose to live, even when his term of exile expired.

.24 During the summer holidays, he was visited by his son Leonid. This occurrence and also the fact that the first works written by Leonid Leonov were published in his father's newspaper, suggest that the relations between them were friendly and understanding. The two pathetic poems dedicated by the father to his son reflect not only hope in his literary future but also faith that he will become the real defendant of the peasant cause. But even if the then unforeseen circumstances could somehow deviate Leonid Leonov from the path chosen for him, his father's idealistic approach to peasants and to art still remains. It also appears that Leonov collects the materials concerning his father and his part in the revolutionary movement³⁰.

.25 It can be presumed that Maxim Leonov died in disgrace, in 1929, as "he was not able to see rightly his

29 V. A. Kovalev, "Poet-surikovec M. L. Leonov", in Russkaja Literatura, Trudy Otdela Novoi Russkoj Literatury, 1, Moscow-Leningrad, Ed. Akademija Nauk SSSR, 1957, p. 250-264.

30 V. A. Kovalev, Tvorčestvo Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 13-14, Nos. 17-18, footnotes about Archive of Leonid Leonov.

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way in the political events on the eve and at the time of October, to break with the bourgeois prejudices and to separate himself from the antiproletarian forces³¹". He also "never called for revolutionary struggle³²".

.26 The explanation of Maxim Leonov's stand may be found in his adherence to the so-called Surikov's group, which was "under the influence of the reactionary teaching of Leo Tolstoy³³" and his undoubted devotion to the peasants' cause.

.27 It may be safely assumed that, in virtue of such accusations of his father, which are rather cautiously worded by the critics of the sixties, Leonid Leonov at some periods of his life must have had some serious reasons to worry.

Incidentally, it is worth remembering that Leonov's first fragment of the 'social command' novel Sot was printed in November 1929, and "since then" his "devotion [...] has never been questioned by Soviet critics³⁴".

31 V. A. Kovalev, Tvorčestvo Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 15.

32 L. Fink, Dramaturgija Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 9.

33 V. A. Kovalev, Tvorčestvo Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 10.

34 Nathan Rosen, Leonid Leonov: The Reforging of a Fellow-Traveler (1922-1935), op. cit., p. 2.

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Even if the quoted statement is slightly exaggerated³⁵, it can serve as an illustration of the point in question.

.3 Actually, even in his early years Leonov had not many reasons for joy. His parents separated. He lived in poverty. "In my childhood (extremely unpleasant) never was I presented with toys³⁶."

In 1918, in spite of all the hardship, but with the help of a scholarship, Leonov graduated as a medalist from a Moscow gymnasium, then left for Arxangelsk, which, unlike Moscow, was "'not red' then³⁷".

.31 The writer explains, that he joined his father because he could get work in his newspaper.

It is not certain what he did for two years, apart from writing. Obviously The Inscription on the Birch-bark, The White Night and The Road to the Ocean contain some hitherto undisclosed hints, if not facts, concerning that period of his life.

35 V. Kirpotin, "O Socialističeskom Realizme: Zakat Buržuaznovo Iskusstva (Lož v Iskusstvie)", in Literaturnyj Kritik, No. 1, June 1933, p. 47, sees hostility in "Skutarevskij".

36 F. Vlasov, Poezija Žizni, op. cit., p. 71, Leonov's letter to Gorkij of January 21, 1928.

37 L. Fink, Dramaturgija Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 19.

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There are no documents, no letters, and most of the poetry and prose he wrote at that time was burnt in 1920³⁸. Later Leonov commented as follows:

If you knew, how it is sometime indispensable and useful to burn the written pieces of work. From the flame raises the completely new man-pure, almost new born³⁹.

Only the items published at "Severnyi Den'" can give an idea of Leonov's feelings at the dawn of the revolution, but they are interpreted according to the wishes of the reviewers, which seems natural, as the paper's aim was to preserve neutrality in the struggle⁴⁰.

Leonov found himself in the ranks of the victorious Red Army in 1920, when the main resistance was broken.

On discovering that he can read and write⁴¹ and that he was working in the press, he was placed in the political section and attached to the army's newspaper. He turned his pen to attacking the Western and White Army leaders.

38 Z. Kedrina, "Leonid Maksimovič Leonov", in Russkije Sovetskiye Pisateli, Moscow, Gosudarstvennoje Izdatelstvo Detskoj Literatury Ministerstva Prosveščenija RSFSR, 1957, p. 306.

39 Leonid Leonov, "Moje Źycie i Ksiażki", in Wiadomosci Literackie, No. 47, 1933, p. 7.

40 L. Fink, Dramaturgija Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 19.

41 F. Vlasov, Poezija Źizni, op. cit., p. 8.

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.4 There is no reason to doubt his sincerity, even if the transformation seems sudden. Leonov does not conceal that: "For many of us the October revolution occurred somehow all at once⁴²." He probably accepted it not only as a fait accompli, and there was no alternative, but also became attracted by its slogans, bringing new hope for the embattled country. Anyway he did his best, he was popular, he was "a nice lad, liked by all of us⁴³" as D. Furmanov remembers him. Nevertheless, there was some kind of misunderstanding with one of the editors and Leonov was transferred to another detachment⁴⁴. He returned to Moscow in 1922 and there was confronted with the reality of everyday life. It seems that the plight of Mitka Vekšin corresponds in more than one way to his creator's disappointment at the time. Not without cause Leonov says that "My every book is my diary and I unwillingly give it to the readers⁴⁵". He came out without any

42 Sjerzej Romov, "Vstreča s Leonidom Leonovym", in Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 43, issue of September 24, 1930, p. 2.

43 F. Vlasov, Poezija Žizni, op. cit., p. 54.

44 Ibid., p. 9.

45 Leonid Leonov, "Moje Žycie i Ksiażki", loc. cit., p. 7.

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special rank⁴⁶. His plans for further education were shattered. And there was no work.

.41 In the Soviet Great Encyclopedia of 1953 there is mention of Leonov's university studies⁴⁷. This information is repeated by Harkins⁴⁸. Similar allegation can be found in Rosen's thesis. Leonov "enrolled in the School of Medicine [...] his stay at the University must have been brief⁴⁹". Actually Leonov plainly states and on several occasions that he never had a chance to study at the university. His plans first for the Mining Institute and then for medicine were postponed by the Civil War⁵⁰, and in 1922 he failed to enroll either in Stroganov's Academy of Fine Arts or in Moscow University⁵¹.

In this connection, Leonov said in 1930:

[...] I was not accepted at the university for completely incomprehensible reasons. But one of them [...] turned out to be very funny. I was

46 F. Vlasov, Poezija Žizni, op. cit., p. 51.

47 Bolšaja Sovetskaja Enciklopedija, Vol. 24, 1953, p. 581.

48 William E. Harkins, Dictionary of Russian Literature, Paterson, New Jersey, Littlefield, p. 194.

49 Nathan Rosen, The Fiction of Leonid Leonov, op. cit., p. 6.

50 L. Fink, Dramaturgija Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 18.

51 F. Vlasov, op. cit., p. 51.

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flunked on the examination for the Russian literature on Dostojevskij [...] I was not able to explain the social meaning of his creative works⁵².

This unfortunate incident became amusing indeed but only in works about Leonov.

It so happened that Kovalev quoted only a part of this statement⁵³, which was translated by Muchnic, and rightly so, as "although he himself had learned most from Dostoevsky, 'by the irony of fate' he had 'flunked' because of him⁵⁴". However it appears that the distinguished scholar attributed Leonov's words to the lack of success of his book, "[...] the publication of the Dostoevskian novel which had 'flunked' him, *The Thief*⁵⁵". And then, seemingly knowing all the sources, N. Rosen interpreted it in quite a different way.

[...] his study of Dostoevsky "had by an irony of fate [...] been cut off" (he was obviously referring to the demand for Five Year Plan literature)⁵⁶.

52 Sjergej Romov, "Vstreča s Leonidom Leonovym", loc. cit., p. 2.

53 V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, Moscow-Leningrad, Ed. Akademija Nauk SSSR, 1954, p. 104.

54 Helen Muchnic, "Leonid Leonov", loc. cit., p. 36.

55 Ibid.

56 Nathan Rosen, Leonid Leonov: The Reforging of a Fellow-Traveler (1922-1935), op. cit., p. 82-83.

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.42 Leonov's failure can be partly clarified by an unusual poem written by him in 1921 and dedicated to Dostojevskij, which implies that the author of The Devils not only was "the brother of the working people"⁵⁷, but had faith in the revolution and would be happy to embrace it.

If this opinion of Dostojevskij's ideology is not shared by many, who will deny his other numerous merits as enhanced by Leonov of the late twenties⁵⁸, thirties⁵⁹, forties⁶⁰ and later⁶¹? Leonov talks of his particular way of writing, of his depth, and above all of his knowledge of the human soul and of great patriotism.

There is no doubt that, despite unfriendly criticism, pressures and other factors, Leonov remained faithful to his first literary love: "I like Dostojevskij with

57 V. A. Kovalev, Tvorčestvo Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 36-37.

58 "Naši Sovremennyye Pisateli o Klasikax", in Na Literaturnom Postu, No. 5-6, 1927, p. 57.

59 Sjergerij Romov, "Vstreča s Leonidom Leonovym", loc. cit., p. 2.

60 L. Bat', "Leonid Leonov o Literaturnom Trude", loc. cit., p. 186.

61 Leonid Leonov, Literatura i Vremja, Isbrannaja Publicistika, Ed. CK VLKSM Molodaja Gvardija, 1964, p. 338.

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all resulting from this consequences⁶²", he announces in the 1927.

He stubbornly insists that his formation as an author was influenced, among others, by "of course Dostojevskij⁶³".

In view of such a deep attachment it is difficult to accept the belief of Muchnic: "despite his early enthusiasm, Dostoevsky had never been firmly entrenched in his mind⁶⁴", but then, evidently, this certitude was borrowed from Kovalev, who, being a Soviet critic, was anxious to discover that "Leonov's orientation on Dostojevskij's heritage did not last long⁶⁵", because to him the influence of Dostojevskij signified detachment from the new reality⁶⁶.

Not that anybody will try to refute Muchnic's (and Kovalev's) persuasive arguments concerning the differences between the two authors, and least of all

62 "Naši Sovremennyye Pisateli o Klasikax", loc. cit.

63 L. Bat', "Leonid Leonov o Literaturnom Trude", loc. cit., p. 186.

64 Helen Muchnic, "Leonid Leonov", loc. cit., p. 36.

65 V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 104.

66 Ibid., p. 103-104.

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Leonov himself, especially the Leonov of socialist realism fame.

.43 His ideas can be defined reasonably well on the grounds of his various pronouncements. The following statement appears to be unduly popular among his critics: "Now we can write neither like Dostojevskij, nor like Zola, nor like Balzac [...] ⁶⁷." It does not reflect Leonov's state of mind if not followed by continuation of the thought, contained in the same conversation with Romov, and that part has a ring of bitterness about it:

Stendhal wrote things which he reckoned would live a hundred years. But we write for one year, at a maximum for five. And even of that we are afraid [...].

It proves that he does not intend to compare himself with Dostojevskij, whose hundredth anniversary he celebrated in verse only nine years before. Why this talented and ambitious writer descends to the level of a newspaper reporter and is ready "not to reckon on history and live down to the present day" is also made clear. The author by

Not taking direct part in socialist reconstruction may be found to be flogged to death by life. About what will he write and who will read him? [...] For the writer it is a question of life or fading ⁶⁸.

⁶⁷ Sjergej Romov, "Vstreča s Leonidom Leonovym", loc. cit.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

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.431 Abram Tertz, writing on the same topic, compares the Soviet writer's freedom of choice to that of the Christian believer:

He who does not wish to believe may stay in prison, which is not worse than hell [...] ([...] there is no place for him in our literature and in our society)⁶⁹.

Tertz's wording is more precise, but on the whole the meaning of both statements is surprisingly close.

.432 Leonov now likes to say that he wrote his early prose just for himself.

This early fresh talent surprised his newspaper colleagues.

Somehow all of a sudden he acquired not only the status of a writer and fame, but also a kind of new look, the appearance of a master⁷⁰. Judging from Stepun's words, he attracted attention even in large gatherings, and was able to induce life-long warm feelings towards himself and his art⁷¹.

Indeed Leonov's luck seems to be out of the ordinary: "I was lucky in my life: the great people of

69 Anonim [Abram Terc], "Co to jest Realizm Socjalistyczny?", in Sad Idzie, Paris, Instytut Literacki, Biblioteka "Kultury", 1959, Vol. XLVI, p. 105.

70 Dm. Furmanov, Iz Dnievnika Pisatelja, Moscow, Moje Znakomstvo s L. Leonovym, 1934, as cited by F. Vlasov, Poezija Žizni, op. cit., p. 54.

71 Fedor Stepun, Vstreči, op. cit., p. 9.

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Russian art with whom I chanced to come in contact assumed a good attitude towards me⁷²."

.5 Apart from his talent, Leonov must have had considerable personal charm, because there can be no doubt that his manner, his personality helped him to win friends. It also appears that he knew what he wanted. His current friends were exactly what he needed. If some of those relations are a little unusual and may raise suspicions of a trace of opportunism, nevertheless behind the partial submission to experienced elders there lurks the personal and artistic independence.

.51 The well known painter, V. Falilejev, was the first of Leonov's literary patrons. Not only did he lodge the unknown youth when the latter had no other place to go, and won him over by the goodness of heart, but it was also Falilejev who launched Leonov's career. He organized the debut of the young author by introducing him to the influential people and to the editors. The daughter of one of them, M. Sabašnikov in 1923 became Leonov's wife.

.52 At their home he met another painter, I. S. Ostrouxov, with whom he struck up lasting friendship.

⁷² Leonid Leonov, "Ptica Obletevšaja Mir", in Teatr, Moscow, Gosudarstvennoje Izdatelstvo Iskusstvo, Vol. 2, 1960, p. 454.

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Ostroukhov was not only a very old man "wholly of the nineteenth century" but also "the severe and dangerous judge [...] the guardian of all kinds of cultural institutions⁷³" and a personal friend of many celebrities. His opinion was sought even by Stanislavskij.

What could they have in common? That Ostroukhov was won by Leonov is indicated by his comic biography of Leonov and by the many wordless nights they spent together with a glass or two of wine, which are nostalgically remembered by the writer⁷⁴. His influence over his young friend is proved by the fact that he persuaded Leonov not to publish the first version of Untilovsk, allegedly because of one scene unworthy of his possibilities. If this was really so, why did he not change it? Presumably he did not, and actually never published this work.

But when in 1929 Leonov was writing Sot' and the episode with the red-nosed drinking priest, not only the perfect knowledge that his friend would not approve of it, but even the sorrowful news of his death⁷⁵ did not

⁷³ Leonid Leonov, "Ptica Obletevšaja Mir", loc. cit., p. 454.

⁷⁴ F. Vlasov, Poezija Žizni, op. cit., p. 56.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 58.

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induce the author to change his story. It seems that there is no particular need for the scene, the priest in question being a very secondary figure. Only speculation remains as to what was the reason for Leonov's decision: stubbornness, the conviction of his rightness, the felling of his strength, or maybe the necessity? Certainly the truth lies somewhere in the middle but in no case does it prove his "lacking the personal point of view"⁷⁶.

.53 There can be found a striking similarity in Leonov's relations with Gorkij. They met in Sorrento, where Leonov, accompanied by the Katajevs and his wife, spent some time in June 1927. Except for the incident in the museum of Naples, where Leonov showed his taste for independence and rather boyish, inappropriate obstinacy, the two writers were quite congenial.

Following the visit, Leonov declared that he fell in love with Gorkij⁷⁷. His letters to the patriarch of Soviet literature sound sincere and trusting.

They exchanged gifts, but Leonov was not in a hurry to send The Thief which he promised to do, and Gorkij had to borrow it from somebody else. And he liked

⁷⁶ Helen Muchnic, "Leonid Leonov", loc. cit., p. 50.

⁷⁷ V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 121.

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this book. In fact he praised nearly everything Leonov wrote with such enthusiasm, that the following statement concerning his introduction to the foreign edition of Sot' is not exaggerated: "More eulogistic foreword [...] would exhaust the vocabulary of admiration"⁷⁸.

Gorkij's special attentions accelerated Leonov's climb to fame and, it can be presumed, helped him in many other ways. It was also Gorkij who introduced him to foreign writers such as G. B. Shaw and Romain Rolland.

.531 But there is one inexplicable incident connected with The Road to the Ocean, the idea of which, when related by Leonov, moved Gorkij to tears. The manuscript disappointed him to such a degree that he wrote to Leonov a very critical letter on October 4, 1935⁷⁹.

Leonov assures that the letter in question never reached him. This seems strange. Even if so, Leonov had a chance to read it later and, despite the fact that from time to time he rewrites his works for their different editions, he did not find it necessary to comply with Gorkij's suggestions; indeed, he did not change a word. And just two years earlier he declared: "The writer must

⁷⁸ "A Soviet Novel", in The Times Literary Supplement, issue of December 31, 1931, p. 1052.

⁷⁹ M. Gorkij, Pis'ma o Literature, Moscow, Sovetskij Pisatel, 1957, p. 490-493.

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have such a man to whom he is obedient, who can forbid him to print something⁸⁰." But then wasn't it Gorkij who warned Leonov not to follow the advice of the people who write the introductions⁸¹?

.532 For those who will be inclined to assume that Leonov used his connections as stepping stones for his career, the deductions are not complex. Leonov as a man achieved considerable success. The list of his honours and public functions is long and impressive.

He must be financially secure. He was awarded in 1943 Stalin's Prize for The Invasion, and another, renamed after Lenin, in 1957, for Russian Forest. The Dox' news of a similar reward for Ljonuška⁸² is not confirmed elsewhere. But each of them brings from fifty to a hundred thousand roubles. The theatrical productions are the best source of income, and even if the exact number of presentations of his most popular play The Invasion is hard to determine⁸³, Leonov has no reason to complain.

⁸⁰ Leonid Leonov, "Moje Źycie i Książki", loc. cit., p. 7.

⁸¹ F. Vlasov, Poezija Źizni, op. cit., p. 60.

⁸² Georg Dox, Die Russische Sowjetliteratur, Namen, Daten, Werke, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1961, p. 81.

⁸³ Reavey mentions that between 1942-1945 it was put on by ninety-six theatres; Fink in 1960 writes about forty-eight.

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.6 And yet, if Leonov is ready not only to compromise but to dodge about the might of this world, how did it happen that he exposed himself by writing a courageous eulogy after Jesienin's death in 1925, that he defended Pasternak in 1931 and permits himself to declare openly that something can be "irreproachably hidden" in his works, even if only his "personal problems"⁸⁴?

It suggests a rather idealistic not opportunistic approach, and more boldness than timidity. Therefore it is highly doubtful that material and personal success is the goal of Leonov's life. Above all, Leonov is an artist for whom writing is not a profession but a vocation⁸⁵ and the work of a writer is the work at all costs⁸⁶.

.61 The nineteen year-old Leonov declared: "Having the choice between two principles [...] 'life for art' or 'life for life' there can be no two decisions. Of course, art⁸⁷!"

⁸⁴ V. A. Kovalev, Tvorčestvo Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 71.

⁸⁵ L. Bat', "Leonid Leonov o Literaturnom Trude", loc. cit., p. 190.

⁸⁶ Leonid Leonov, "Talant i Trud", in Oktiabr', No. 3, March 1956, p. 166.

⁸⁷ Z. Boguslavskaja, Leonid Leonov, Moscow, Sovetskij Pisatel, 1960, p. 6.

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Since then he learned to value life. He has a collection of cactuses "a strange abortion that had shivelled in captivity⁸⁸", which he likes for their vitality.

.611 Leonov accepted the prevailing conditions, but that does not exclude the inner longing for art in its pure form. Such yearning is one of the most distinctive traits of Leonov no matter what he publishes. It is revealed by the author's attempts, wherever a favourable occasion arises to create unconformable works, only to see them rejected.

.62 His first works he wrote more or less according to his wishes. He was attacked ideologically for wandering absentmindedly between the Bethlehem star of the past and the beautiful Northern lights of the future⁸⁹, but artistically they were recognized as outstanding. His first novel The Badgers presents a paradoxical case as far as critical judgment is concerned. It was hailed by Gorbov⁹⁰, condemned as not enriching the proletarian

88 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, translated by Hubert Butler, London, Secker, 1931, p. 207.

89 Nik. Smirnov, "Literatura i Žizn", in Izvestija, No. 186, issue of August 17, 1924, p. 5.

90 D. Gorbov, "Leonid Leonov", in Novyi Mir, No. 10, October 1928, p. 5-6.

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reader, for the same ideological reasons by Kolesnikova⁹¹. It was appraised as propaganda by one Polish critic⁹² and recognized by another as a work which could not be written by a communist⁹³. Such a variety of opinions suggests that political matters were not the main preoccupation of Leonov at this particular time, or that he skillfully dealt with censure.

.621 Actually the first initiation to proper behaviour received by Leonov was in the theatre where responsibility had to be shared with others. In the Spring of 1925 Leonov started to work on the adaptation for the stage of his unpublished Untilovsk. He had to write and rewrite five preliminary versions of the play⁹⁴, and that did not include the changes introduced in the process of rehearsals, but Leonov showed some resistance: "I argued, defended myself, I had the impression that it was I whom they were slicing, yet nevertheless it was necessary to

91 G. Kolesnikova, "Barsuki", in Oktiabr', No. 9, September 1925, p. 187.

92 Emil Breiter, "Borsuki Leonova", in Wiadomosci Literackie, No. 46, issue of October 30, 1932, p. 3.

93 Wacław Lednicki, "Z Beletrystyki Sowieckiej: 'Borsuki'", in Przegląd Współczesny, No. 72, April 1928, p. 97.

94 E. Surkov, "Primečaniya", in Leonid Leonov, Teatr, Moscow, Gos. Izd. Iskusstvo, Vol. 1, 1960, p. 471.

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yield." Still "in my play some of the performers by no means gave the same image which I considered to be right⁹⁵".

These words describe the performance at the most famous theatre MXAT, where the play was directed by Stanislavskij, who, incidentally, also did not escape the particular captivating qualities of Leonov and who admired him as a writer as well⁹⁶. From a beginner in play writing, one could expect more enthusiasm in the circumstances.

.622 Still more characteristic is his next theatrical experience. It concerns the staging of The Badgers. Leonov decided to make just "a story about the life, blooming and ruin of some man⁹⁷". For that purpose he chose Egor Brykin as the main character. The Vaxtangov Theatre and its commissar V. V. Kuza had different ideas about the plot. Though in Leonov's estimation the play could be "fully acceptable for the keepers of ideological orthodoxy", some parts were eliminated which "maybe" were not important for the play, some added "with the purpose

95 Leonid Leonov, "Čestnost' v Rabote", in Teatr i Dramaturgija, No. 3, 1934, p. 29.

96 E. Surkov, "Primečanija", loc. cit., p. 473.

97 Leonid Leonov, "Ot Romana k Piesie", in So-vremennyj Teatr, No. 5, 1927, p. 70.

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of sharpening the 'ideological' edge" and, finally, Leonov declared it a "rather independent 'collective' product"⁹⁸. The result was satirized in "The Review in Verse: "the fierce badgers turned out to be but a bobtailed rabbit"⁹⁹.

The cooperation with the two best theatres was a good experience for Leonov. "After the staging of Unti-lovsk I became considerably older in many ways"¹⁰⁰. During the adjustment of his plays in the period 1925-1928, he wrote The Thief, where again, as in The Badgers, he was engrossed in the study of the "naked man" and aroused critics with The Unusual Stories About Peasants. But in 1928 he started to write Sot', the first social command novel.

.6221 The assertion that he was elected Chairman of The Writers Union because he published this work¹⁰¹ is contrary to fact. The information about his election was

⁹⁸ Leonid Leonov, "Ot Romana k Piesie", loc. cit., p. 70.

⁹⁹ Pelikan, "Družeskiye Epigramy", in Sovremennyj Teatr, No. 5, 1927, p. 71.

¹⁰⁰ Leonid Leonov, "Čestnost' v Rabote", loc. cit.

¹⁰¹ Nathan Rosen, Leonid Leonov: The Reforging of a Fellow-Traveler (1922-1935), op. cit., p. 119.

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announced on September the 16th¹⁰², and the first episode of Sot' appeared on November 9, 1929¹⁰³.

.63 The success of Sot' usually regarded as the turning point in Leonov's world outlook coincides with the somewhat less enthusiastic pronouncements of its author. His letter to Gorkij of October 31, 1930 is sad. He regards himself as being finished¹⁰⁴. It was written after the publication of Locusts and amidst the planning of Skutarevskij. Of course this mood could be only temporary, as he had had similar ones before. However it is sufficient to recall the interview with Romov¹⁰⁵ which took place only one month earlier to see that it could be connected with resignation from his literary ambitions. And for the benefit of those who enhance the enthusiasm of the writer as well as of his heroes¹⁰⁶ it may be useful

102 "Sojuz Pisatelej Smenil Svoje Rukovodstvo", in Literaturnaja Gazeta, issue of September 16, 1929, p. 1.

103 Leonid Leonov, "Pered Proryvom", in Literaturnaja Gazeta, issue of November 9, 1929.

104 F. Vlasov, Poezija Žizni, op. cit., p. 56.

105 Sjergerj Romov, "Vstreča s Leonidom Leonovym", loc. cit., p. 2.

106 Edward J. Brown, Russian Literature Since the Revolution, New York, Collier Books, 1963, p. 132; M. H. Futrell, "A Central Soviet Novel: Leonov's Sot'", in Renaissance and Modern Studies, University of Nottingham, Vol. 3, 1959, p. 115.

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to quote Leonov's words indirectly dealing with the matter, while again he was craving for "deathlessness" at least for a quarter of the century:

The standard of the industrial story, novel, play is developing (with the inevitable catastrophe in the middle and the heroism of the masses!), of the kolchoze epopea (with the inevitable and cunning little peasant, who is first against and after for!), of the foreign novel (with virtue and evil arranged in an established order!)¹⁰⁷.

.631 Is it really so hard to recognize just these attributes in some familiar situations and characters not only in Sot', but also in Locusts, Skutarevskij, The Orchards of Polovčansk, The Wolf, Ljonuška, just to mention a few? And it was not some hostile critic speaking; it was the author himself who appraises the past and, unfortunately, future products of his and others' pens.

Already then Leonov feared that Soviet literature might become a "clipped Versailles"¹⁰⁸, obviously referring to its planned and rigorously tended hedges, but naturally he accepted social realism, and, contrary to Jesienin, gave his lyra to October and May. Notwithstanding, he cherishes his own ideas about art, and for these ideas he fought.

¹⁰⁷ Leonid Leonov, "Prizyv k Mužestvu", in Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 47, 1934, p. 2, col. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

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It is worth remembering that, apart from the basic duty of the writer to help his country which is building socialism, he faces the obligation to create great literature, worthy of that construction. I hope that in future conditions will be created so that a writer can work on all hundred percent¹⁰⁹.

In the same speech he defends the integrity of Pasternak and scoffs at his critic who aspired to show his own "hundred percentness and salutary left-wingness¹¹⁰".

Incidentally when in 1958 Pasternak was in real trouble and even in the accounts of his funeral there is no mention of Leonov's name, who also lives in Peredelkino. But in the meantime Leonov had worries of his own.

.64 His Road to the Ocean was written when:

Even a mere shadow of opposing oneself to the party signifies the political death of a fighter for Socialism, his going over into the camp of the foreposts of counter-revolution¹¹¹.

So, after its publication in 1935 Leonov wrote The Orchards of Polovcansk and in January 1937 sent it to the MXAT theatre, with which again he could share the

¹⁰⁹ L. Leonov's Speech during the discussion in VSSP, in Novyj Mir, No. 10, 1931, p. 123-124.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 125.

¹¹¹ Karl Radek, Speech on the 17th Meeting of VKP(b), Stenographic Report, Moscow, Partizdat, 1934, p. 628, as cited in Brzezinski Zbigniew, The Permanent Purge. Politics in Soviet Totalitarianism, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1956, p. 17.

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responsibility. As previously happened he wrote four versions of it, until a psychological play about family life and the man with eternal, abstract features¹¹² acquired not only a clearly acceptable character but became transformed into a spy story, "the mixture of Brothers Karamazov with brothers Tur¹¹³". Its poetry was dried up by the theatre¹¹⁴.

After losing nearly three years on rewriting the previous play, Leonov created The Wolf comparatively easily. This one was "an illustration of the definite thesis¹¹⁵" and despite some criticism because one of the enemies of the people was most likable¹¹⁶ the play at last enjoyed popularity.

.641 It was followed, however, by The Blizzard whose erroneous ideas, seemingly prompted by pity towards the

112 E. Poljakova, Teatr i Dramaturg, Moscow, Vserossijskoje Teatralnoje Obščestvo, 1959, p. 244.

113 Ef. Mejerovič, "Čelovek i Sobytiye", in Teatr, No. 7, 1939, p. 88.

114 Zaleskij as cited in E. Poljakova, op. cit., p. 247.

115 L. Fink, Dramaturgija Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 200.

116 B. Emelianov, "Čornyje Maski", in Literaturnyj Kritik, Vol. 2, February 1939, p. 123-124.

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white emigrant¹¹⁷ were so well explained by the party press in 1940 and by Stalin in person¹¹⁸ that The Ordinary Man had to be in an "ideologically right aspect"¹¹⁹.

.7 And then came the war. The now forty-two year old Leonov was not sent to the front even as a correspondent. He was probably evacuated to Çistopol, not far from Ural.

His moral suffering is well depicted in those words written on April 4, 1942:

I completed a new play [...] it was received very well. And this gives some [...] relief to the mind and heart [...]. It saved me this work, and already for that very reason I am very grateful to it¹²⁰.

The play in question was Invasion.

.71 Roused by patriotic feelings, impressed by the suffering of his people, Leonov wrote it very quickly. It took him only four months, including one without the proper light in which to do it. The speed of writing may

117 S. Nikolajev, "Našestvie", in Oktiabr', Nos 4-5, 1943, p. 122.

118 Ilja Ehrenburg, "People, Years, Life", in Odyssey Review, Vol. 2, No. 4, December 1962, p. 118.

119 Z. Kedrina, "Leonid Maksimovič Leonov", in Russkije Sovetskiye Pisateli, Moscow, Gos. Izd. Detskoj Literaturny Ministerstva Prosveščeniya RSFSR, 1957, p. 318.

120 L. Fink, Dramaturgija Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 237.

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be proof not only of undoubted inspiration but also of clearness of the main idea right from the start. As far as could be verified, no critic ever raised the question of certain similarities between Invasion and G. B. Shaw's The Devil's Disciple. The action of the second takes place during the 1777 Anglo-American War. Dick Dudgeon the outcast was prepared to sacrifice his life for the priest just like Fedor of Invasion did for the leader of the resistance. But then, of course, the motivation was changed, and, above all, Shaw did not consider the idea of the plot as being entirely his own. It was fairly common in Victorian melodramas.

.711 Leonov's play had become a great success. But when staged in Paris in 1945 the reaction of the French critics was not enthusiastic¹²¹. It was then that Leonov frankly admitted the influence of the war not only on his way of writing but also on his previous preferences:

once I also thought only about art and always avoided the frontal show of reality [...] I [...] understood that the ivory towers are of no use¹²².

¹²¹ Rosen mistook them for Soviet critics, who were supposed to attack Leonov on aesthetic grounds and "Leonov counterattacked by reminding [...] of the need for propaganda" (The Fiction of Leonid Leonov, *op. cit.*, p. 237). Both assertions are quite improbable, and they are founded on Bat' 's interview.

¹²² L. Bat', "Leonid Leonov o Literaturnom Trude", *loc. cit.*, p. 185-186.

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The ivory tower was precisely what was hinted at by Kirpotin who objected to enclosure in the walls of a study which results in lack of knowledge of life outside¹²³.

"Art for life, not life for art"¹²⁴ was the suggested motto.

.72 Now Leonov recognized its necessity:

for the first time I had the urge to overcome myself and to launch a "frontal attack" similar to a poster's message which, as a matter of fact, was always expected of me¹²⁵.

He created a 'poster'. In Ljonuška the dying warrior lies in front of the spectators during the three acts of the play, by his appearance "imploring the revenge. It is necessary, however, that the symbol of suffering result from the action and that it not be carried onto the stage literally¹²⁶".

.721 So again Leonov had differing ideas about what was required from him and unfortunately this disapproval was not his main offence. The play could still be seen

123 V. Kirpotin, "O Socialističeskom Realizmie: Zakat Buržuaznovo Iskusstva", loc. cit., p. 48.

124 Ibid., p. 47.

125 Leonid Leonov, "Golos Rodiny", in Teatr, Moscow, Ed. "Iskusstvo", Vol. 2, 1960, p. 411.

126 K. Rudnickij, "Dramy Leonida Leonova", in Teatr, No. 7, 1958, p. 86.

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occasionally even in 1946¹²⁷, after which date it disappeared from the theatres.

The reason for its disgrace was an abusive article, in which not the image of the burnt tank corpsman, but of his entourage was considered as degrading to the dignity of the Soviet people¹²⁸.

The voice of the youth proved to be decisive in the fate of the play in which inoffensive humour is mixed with the true feeling of the tragedy of war.

.73 In the meantime, Leonov wrote The Taking of Velikošumsk, which encountered some depreciatory remarks from the critics. One of them disliked even the nickname given to the tank, the angel of vengeance, since the Soviet man is not disposed to see the interference "of some winged superior force¹²⁹". It may sound like a joke, but the accusation of mysticism is not a laughing matter.

.74 When the war ended, Leonov wrote The Golden Coach.

It was about plain people just as the first version of The Orchards of Polovchansk. Its plot consisted

127 Joseph Macleod, "Le théâtre en U.R.S.S. pendant la guerre", in La Revue Internationale du Théâtre, Vol. 1, October-November-December 1947, p. 75.

128 V. I. Gorodnickij and Ia. Varšavskij, "Černaja Magija, O Pjesie Leonova Ljonuška", in Komsomolskaja Pravda, issue of October 15, 1946, p. 3.

129 Ia. Elsberg, "Povest' o Narodnom Gneve", in Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 43, issue of October 21, 1944, p. 2.

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of an insignificant personal revenge and the unheroic and seemingly improper choice of a husband by the young girl. The year of its publishing coincided with Ždanov's speech. It was forbidden.

The next version did not appear till 1955, that is, not before the Second Congress of Soviet writers decided in 1954 on what Frenchmen termed: "Pas de 'dégel' prévu. Ni Mme Bovary ni héros sans menton ne seront tolérés¹³⁰." And only then, after nine years did Leonov rewrite the play changing by his own choice its plot, heroes and general character. Duty was put forward as the prime motive of behaviour. The heroes, devoid of strong chin, turned out to be disreputable figures. And all in spite of the fact that MXAT was ready to accept the play in its original form.

.8 Consequently the question arises, did Leonov at long last renounce the losing battle for his conception of art, for freedom to choose his subject and to develop it along the lines he felt inclined to follow? Seemingly he did, but this conclusion is risky, because his attitude towards critics did not change.

¹³⁰ Aragon, Littératures Soviétiques, Paris, Ed. Denoel, 1955, p. 36.

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.81 The subject of The Russian Forest published in 1953, the year of Stalin's death, is in a sense autobiographical. Vixrov, like Leonov, is suffering from unjust criticism. Vixrov's rightness is proved, even if he was not able to defend himself¹³¹. The optimistic note is provided by his victory. In real life it was only wishful thinking.

.82 The elevated hopes of some for a change of literary policies were shattered when, in the midst of the so-called Thaw in 1957, N. Khrushchev delivered a speech at his "dacha". He admonished the Soviet writers with such vehemence that one poetess fainted. Obviously Leonov learned his lesson too. He revised the long unpublished Thief, an occurrence which puzzles some Western literary critics¹³².

Naturally he rectified some of the mistakes of his youth. He also altered Firsov, but his critics are not less satirized than in the first version. Those fictitious guardians of vigilance hauntingly remind Leonov's

131 E. Starikova clarifies that point in "Russkij Les" Leonida Leonova, Vixrov i Gracjanskij, Moscow, Ed. Xudožestvennoj Literatury, 1963.

132 Vera Alexandrova, A History of Soviet Literature 1917-1962. From Gorky to Yevtushenko, Doubleday, 1963, p. 183.

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literary tutors that his attack on them can be nothing else but an attempt to square accounts.

.83 The sixty-five years old Leonov has not said his last word. The future may hold some surprises. It is not clear whether, as is claimed by Bat', The Russian Forest is that special book "just one real book" which "secretly" Leonov was longing to write¹³³.

.831 He is for the great and "not applied art"¹³⁴, he is against the obvious propaganda¹³⁵ which nevertheless can be found so often in his works.

But looking back at the years when literary profession could be dangerous for life¹³⁶ the old writer is overwhelmed by the feelings "of inevitability, of fulfilled duty and despair"¹³⁷.

.84 This frank and sad confession confirms only that Leonov sacrificed his talent for his country, yet in literary matters he was always a fellow-traveller, not a convert.

133 L. Bat', "Leonid Leonov o Literaturnom Trude", loc. cit., p. 189.

134 Leonid Leonov, "Poxvala Žanru", in Literatura i Vremia, op. cit., p. 325.

135 Ibid.

136 Ibid., p. 328.

137 Ibid.

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As for the present, Firsov's pathetic statement may well be his own:

only I alone in the universe know to what degree my kingdom is of this world [...]. It is cheerless my desert, populated by the melancholy phantoms which are not allowed ever to materialize¹³⁸.

¹³⁸ Leonid Leonov, "Vor", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Moscow, Gos. Izd. Xudožestvennoj Literatury, Vol. 3, 1961, p. 323.

CHAPTER II

THE PEASANTS

2.0 The Ancestors. The Peasants of Symbolic Stories.

When Voronskij was reviewing Leonov's first works he observed that the revolution in them is "a fiery tornado, the path covered not by roses but by blood and bodies. The gigantic cross on which are crucified Mitkas, Nikitkas, Talagans, Savosjans, Aljoshas¹" and some others. But he did not add to the lost the names of invariably unhappy heroes of Leonov's symbolic short stories, which, according to the introduction of their 1926' edition contain all the elements later developed in The Badgers².

This assertion invites a closer look at least at the three of them, which seem to be connected with the same theme: the impact of the revolution on the peasantry. To the same category belongs the short tale about Kalafat.

2.01 While Leonov leaves one free to infer the meaning of Buryga, there are indications that the hero and the subject are dear to his heart.

1 A. Voronskij, "Literaturnyje Siluety, Leonid Leonov", in Krasnaja Nov', Vol. 3, April-May 1924, p. 296.

2 A. Ležnev, "Leonid Leonov, Rasskazy", in Pravda, No. 210, issue of September 12, 1926, p. 5.

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Not only does he carve as a hobby the decidedly unsocial realistic figures of the forest's gnomes³, in Sot' he just slightly changed the name of Buryga to designate the man who accepted the revolution not without misgivings. In Russian Forest the falling of the trees equally realistically symbolic, is interpreted by many as the wasting away of the nation.

Thus it is possible to attach a definite significance to the sad story of an imp, whose life was drastically changed by the wood-cutters, especially as they came in autumn: early enough for the birch-tree to be green and sufficiently late for the falling of the first snow, which suggests October. The human beings were similarly affected by the revolution.

Buryga, a child with a bass voice⁴, can be considered a peasant as he speaks the peasant's dialect and his attitude towards the events bears a marked resemblance to that of Leonov's other mujiks.

Buryga is linked with them by: the feigned submissiveness to masters (in his case going as far as

3 Z. Kedrina, "Leonid Maksimovič Leonov", in Russkije Sovetskiye Pisateli, Moscow, Goudarstvennoje Izdatelstvo Detskoj Literatury Ministerstva Prosveščenija RSFSR, 1957, p. 306.

4 Leonid Leonov, "Buryga", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 1, p. 56.

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learning the prayers); the love of his land and impossibility to live far from it; the defencelessness against the force; the acceptance of the unavoidable.

And, contrary to Ležnev's opinion⁵, those are the elements which can be found in The Badgers, as well as in some later works.

0.2 The Ruin of Jegoruška is placed by Leonov alongside The End of a Petty Man as "a revision of the old from the positions of the new"⁶. This statement suggests the social importance and the actuality of the subject. Of course the story can be regarded as an attack on religion from the new atheistic standpoint. Nevertheless it leaves a way for another interpretation. Some details cast a shadow of doubt on the question of Agapij being a monk. He appears during a storm in October⁷. Irinia, the brave woman of the North, is terrified by his features. He is black, he has "naked eyes"⁸. For her he looks like a devil. When the word is actually pronounced it shatters him. In his prayer he was calling somebody

⁵ A. Ležnev, "Leonid Leonov, Rassказы", loc. cit., p. 5.

⁶ K. Kedrina, "Leonid Maksimovič Leonov", loc. cit., p. 307.

⁷ Leonid Leonov, "Gibieli Jegoruški", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 1, p. 98.

⁸ Ibid., p. 102.

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without the name. And what were his desires? To deprive Jegoruška of everything. Then he asked to "strike him on the head⁹".

Is it not reminiscent of the Sejfullina's words:

Everything old was doomed to be scrapped.
Blow after blow and all the time on the noodle,
on the noodle! Shake your brains, village!¹⁰

And what is also important, while Agapij's hat was left intact by the rough sea, he has no cross¹¹.

If the story is just a condemnation of the barbaric remnants of the past, how does it happen that God who is not supposed to exist, so promptly fulfilled the wishes of his backward monk? Agapij is "the redoutable force of the reality hostile to man¹²". This force was saved by the peasant, accepted as a member of the family, but instead of gratitude, it shatters the simple, quiet life. It is feared, disliked but tolerated. Moreover it forces the peasant into submission. Agapij's idea of

9 Leonid Leonov, "Gibiel Jegoruški", loc. cit., p. 107.

10 A. Sejfullina, The Humus, as cited by Z. Boguslavskaja, Leonid Leonov, Moscow, Soveckij Pisatel, 1960, p. 78.

11 Leonid Leonov, "Gibiel Jegoruški", loc. cit., p. 102.

12 D. Gorbov, "Leonid Leonov", in Novyj Mir, No. 10, October 1928, p. 212.

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gaining heaven through suffering corresponds not only to the teaching of the church but in equal measure to the promises of the revolution, destroying in the name of future bliss. The wording of Agapij's song "Come into the noose, come to paradise¹³" suggests rather an allusion to a terrestrial than to God's heaven. Jegoruška prefers his solid earth to the unknown land of happiness¹⁴. All he asks from his horrible and uninvited guest is justice¹⁵. He does not get it.

Jegoruška like Buryga does not want any change. When it comes he accepts it without resistance.

2.03 In The Breakthrough of Petušixa, also, an anti-religious device is used. It did not fool Efremin. The symbolic peasant of Aljoša's dream meekly spins for 1000 years waiting to see heaven. He discovers that he has nothing to hope for. There is no possible happiness for him. The peasantry however will have a leader, who will show the right if difficult path to "the pack of wolves¹⁶". Aljoša, the apocalyptic God's lad, under

13 D. Gorbov, "Leonid Leonov", loc. cit., p. 106.

14 Ibid., p. 119-121.

15 Ibid., p. 111.

16 Leonid Leonov, "Petušixinski Prolom", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 1, p. 196.

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the guidance of the peasantry's patron, Saint George, learned everything which is necessary for his task. He knows that there is no humanity's joy in the trunk under the care of devils, but that the blood is all around it¹⁷. The trunk containing human happiness is like a Pandora's box. Under the appearances of goodness it may be a source of many calamities. Who the devils are is explained thirty years later in The Russian Forest. The similarity of the names "vertopraxi" and "vertodoxy" certainly is no coincidence. The natural question: "are those wolves white or red¹⁸?" is answered in The Badgers. They are green.

2.04 In The Badgers, the moral of the symbolic peasant tale of fierce Kalafat is that nature alone will defeat attempts at subjugation. Who Kalafat may be is explained by Leonov in the text. In The Badgers "Every grass-blade should be accounted for¹⁹!" appears twice in Polovinkin's

¹⁷ Rosen's insinuation in The Fiction of Leonid Leonov (typescript, thesis, Ph.D., New York, Columbia University, 1961, p. 21) that "the substance of Saint George's teaching is that God is dead" is absurd. More likely Saint suffers in premonition of his flock's martyrdom.

¹⁸ A. Efremov, "Leonid Leonov", in Na Literatur-nom Postu, No. 3, January 1932, p. 31.

¹⁹ Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", in Sobraniye Sochinenij, Vol. 2, p. 12 and 14.

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dream and he repeats it when awake. In Sot' a girl says about Uvadiev: "He is counting trees²⁰." That coincides with the purpose of the tower's builder.

2.1 The realistic works. The mass hero.

As far as the mass of peasants is concerned, The Breakthrough of Petušixa, The Badgers and Sot' are in a sense a continuation of each another. Time advances, the revolution takes definite shape, the administration strengthens its power and the peasantry still forms a homogenous body. It is governed by the common interests and reacts to outsiders in a specific way, that is with pronounced mistrust. Those factors affect their attitude towards the revolution, as the new political and social trend was propagated by the city dwellers.

2.10 In the same way as Kručinkin, for whom the approaching of the Reds was a matter of no concern in view of his domestic problems, the inhabitants of Petušixa are not impressed by the changing governments.

Whatever hopes the peasants may have had, and judging from Savosjan's they were highly unrealistic, they do not materialize. Anyway the "Bolšaki²¹" were

20 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 4, p. 165.

21 Leonid Leonov, "Petušixinskij Prolom", loc. cit., p. 173.

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unknown people. The peasants manifest a clear ignorance of the revolutionary aims. If "they begin to comprehend that bolsheviks are leading them to a different, better life²²" they do not show it in the story. The word "better" is used, but it proves only peasants' apathy: "If Commune so Commune. If [you say] it's better then it's better²³." The "powerful drawing force of revolution²⁴" can be found only in Leonov's own lyrical digressions and they rather obscure the story.

2.11 The evolution of peasantry's relations with the new rulers is seen in the example of three meetings.

2.111 At the beginning of the revolution the first contact with the Soviet administration in Petušixa is characterized by the peasants' equal footing with the newcomer. The peasants ridicule the stuttering record and the propagandist²⁵ readily joins in laughter. For the

22 V. A. Kovalev, "L. M. Leonov", in Istoria Russkoj Sovetskoj Literaturny, Moscow, Ed. Moscow University, Vol. 2, 1962, p. 529.

23 Leonid Leonov, "Petušixinskij Prolom", loc. cit., p. 175.

24 V. A. Kovalev, "L. M. Leonov", loc. cit., p. 529.

25 Petušixinskij Prolom (loc. cit., p. 175) appears only one man, but Z. Boguslavskaja (Leonid Leonov, op. cit., p. 23) writes about four "comrades".

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community he is only a "babbler"²⁶ even if his inseparable gun makes certain impression. The man is a factory worker and alien to peasants. After the meeting comes the gloom.

2.112 There is another meeting in The Badgers. During the Civil War a propagandist comes from the city to the Thieves. He has orders to be tough, but he himself is very friendly. The peasants joke. They are ready to comply. Only the speaker's mistake prevents them from actually giving the grain to the city. They are meek and accept the irresponsible behaviour of their chairman's son. But they learned not to have confidence in their representatives: one of them destroys the compromising minutes of the assembly. Fear sets in.

Incidentally they rejected the grain tax but the report informs the central authorities about the unanimous acceptance²⁷. Such reports resulted in over-optimistic statistical data.

2.113 During the Five-Year Plan the meeting takes place in Sot'. The peasants' vote for planned changes is only a formality: "it was no secret to anybody that the moving

²⁶ Leonid Leonov, "Petušixinskij Prolom", loc. cit., p. 176.

²⁷ Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 166.

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will take place anyway²⁸". It was also known that "certainly during the voting the real peasants' frame of mind will be shown²⁹". While only Leonov's kulaks make trouble, their objections are sound. "You ought to talk things over with peasants first before taking action against Makarixa³⁰." Seemingly he is not right. Anyway Uvadiev is not worried. Everything was foreseen. To prevent a negative decision the Komsomol resorts to the help of workers — the numerous newcomers to the village. "The peasants were ominously whispering, not daring to turn out this hostile army³¹." So "among the jokes and the gay wrangling³²" the plan was accepted. Leonov does not say if unanimously.

To fear force was added.

2.114 All three meetings demonstrate the peasants' solidarity in seeing the revolution as something alien to their previous way of life. In all three works this solidarity is broken by way of different factors.

28 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 124.

29 Ibid., p. 125.

30 Ibid., p. 124.

31 Ibid., p. 126.

32 Ibid., p. 127.

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In The Breakthrough of Petušixa the breach is achieved by undermining of the church's authority. Whereas the only local communist was "not ours" the notion of "ours" and "foreign" later on becomes blurred³⁴. But at the time of the common sorrow the bolsheviks are cursed in one breath with the tzar³⁵. The magnetism of land in The Badgers and the economic questions in Sot' seem to play the same role in the destruction of the peasants' old way of life and of thinking. They will be studied later on.

2.12 The signs of peasants' general dissatisfaction with the new can be detected from their deeds rather than from their pronouncements. The fact that they are prone to anti-Soviet that is anti-revolutionary propaganda is not concealed by Leonov. In Koviakin's Journal the peasants are hiding Filofej. Agitated they were ready for rebellion. In The Thief, the village has as a leader an anti-Soviet chairman, Lavrentij. In Sot' peasants listen to Vissarion's teaching, they act according to their kulaks' wishes but till the last pages of the book

33 Leonid Leonov, "Petušixinskij Prolom", loc. cit., p. 174.

34 Ibid., p. 186-187.

35 Ibid., p. 193.

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somehow ignore Pronka's. All this explains whose ideas were nearer their hearts.

2.121 In The Breakthrough of Petušixa the peasants accept famine and death passively. All they can do is to move somewhere else. The possibility of the resistance is only hinted at by way of symbolism, but the realistic part of the story contains the foggy prediction of Annuška's death: "they cut her throat³⁶". At the end of the story she is still the commissar's friend.

2.122 In view of various allusions elsewhere the badgers' revolt cannot be considered an isolated case. As it is the only one described in detail it invites a closer study.

2.123 Leonov does not show what the peasants are for, but he makes clear what they are against. Certainly there is no "urge towards returning back³⁷". Much more likely they still cherish the old peasant's dream the point of which, as recalled by Leonov, is: "no barin on the hump³⁸". The meaning of "barin" in modern times is

³⁶ Leonid Leonov, "Petušixinskiy Prolom", loc. cit., p. 153.

³⁷ E. Starikova, "Tvorčeskij Put' Leonida Leonova", in Leonid Leonov, Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 1, p. 16.

³⁸ V. A. Kovalev, Tvorčestvo Leonida Leonova, Moscow-Leningrad, Ed. Akademija Nauk SSSR, 1962, p. 40.

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suggested by The Vagrant, but in The Badgers Leonov's habit of drawing parallel between the old and the new is of great help.

First it should be stated that the Thieves are not against the revolution itself. When angered, they are ready to reach Lenin and complain to him: "Comrade, we will say, did we come to the same against which we were fighting³⁹?" So it is obvious that they expected something else, something which Kirpotin calls "The new ways entirely not indicated in the bolsheviks' programme⁴⁰". The masses are dissatisfied with the administration. The amusing episode with the sixteen year old chairman of Otpetovo suggests how peasants understood the meaning of their elected representative: "He sat and there was harm from him to nobody; moreover the adult worker was not wasted on the written trifles. What is more a lad of his age did not learn to steal⁴¹." What they did not say but what is obvious, the boy was one of them and his role was confined to executing their wishes.

39 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 150.

40 V. Kirpotin, "Romany Leonida Leonova", in Proza, Dramaturgija i Teatr, Moscow, Goslitizdat, 1935, p. 29.

41 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 216.

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The Thieves got Ganders as their rulers and had to endure the domineering ways of another boy who was only a son of their chairman. Even if the conflict seems unavoidable the peasants showed a great deal of patience. "We are a submissive people [...] Do not offend us, we will keep mum⁴²."

2.124 Their tolerance of the local authority is similar to that which they had towards their landlord up to 1905: they were silent. Their stand may be best explained by the saying "do not touch a wolf for no reason" but if roused "bite him right in the throat⁴³". The very similar wisdom was implanted in Buryga. "You will not rebel against iron; resign yourself [...] be silent⁴⁴."

When the grain was forcibly taken, the Thieves did not show the slightest sign of opposition. They were tame indeed. But then, of course, they did not touch the wolf, especially as he was well armed. Fear kept them in check but also terror forced them to overcome their passivity. They were afraid of reprisals for killing the Gander and of punishment for not giving voluntarily the grain. Still maybe they would not dare to move except

42 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 82.

43 Ibid., p. 146.

44 Ibid., p. 60.

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for the knowledge that they have an ally among the armed deserters.

2.125 The events connected with the egg tax collection were less of the reason for rebellion than consequences of the peasant's readiness for action. The resemblance with the mutiny of 1905 is striking. They did not kill then but the landlord was absent. They burned the house and destroyed the foe's animals: the bull in 1905 and the dog and a horse in 1920.

At the root of the trouble in both cases was the desire for freedom and for land, but also the peasant's distrust of the city: "The factor deciding the country's fate⁴⁵". The city is just a force apart. There can be no reconciliation, no understanding. "It makes no difference who is there among them in the city [...] We are peasants anyway⁴⁶!" "One half of the city took another by the throat. The peasant waited" says Leonov "will the city not crumble in the final dust from all that shattering thing⁴⁷." They do not intend to be just unconcerned spectators. They would like to set fire to its remnants

45 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 222.

46 Ibid., p. 209. V. A. Kovalev (Romany Leonida Leonova, Moscow-Leningrad, Ed. Akademija Nauk SSSR, 1954, p. 32) accredits these words to Semjon, actually Semjon recalls the views of Stafejev.

47 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 240.

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and to watch not without satisfaction how well the stinging-nettle will prosper on an empty land. That means no love for either side nor any particular interest in the victory of the revolution, that is the city's proletarian revolution.

2.126 Leonov suggests that all that fire and blood was needed for one purpose only: to take back the Zinka's meadow. He repeatedly puts forward this piece of land as a cause of the peasants' uprising. If the explanation is taken literally the reader may get the impression not only of the backwardness of the peasants whose greed for earth pushed them to bloodshed, but, what is more important, that the rebellion was not consciously anti-Soviet. It is not necessarily so. The old quarrell between the two villages plays an important part in the uprising but not a decisive one. The argument was between themselves, namely between the peasants. It was so to speak a part of tradition. And then a new man in power, a city dweller gave the land to Ganders. How deeply he misunderstood the problem is proven by the fact that the petitioner himself was appalled by his decision. By an ill-advised even if just deed the communists gained the whole village of Ganders as an ally, but lost the whole village

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of Thieves which was "waiting for any chance to avenge itself⁴⁸".

2.1261 So far Leonov's obvious statements can be taken at their face value. However he makes clear that Ganders was the only Soviet village in the region and that the first killing of the Soviet official occurred not in Thieves but in Maliuga⁴⁹. The neighboring villages readily joined the rebels, even having no part nor interest in the meadow's dispute. The popularity of the war against the executive committees members was so great that the punitive detachment sent for their pacification joined the rebels leaving their commanding officer, of course a Gander, alone. It is inconceivable that all of them were rich and anyway this detail was added by Leonov later.

2.1262 The revolt had all the appearances of success. "The Ganders were just a small fortress of Soviet rule, surrounded by the Thieves' infinite plains⁵⁰."

The return of part of the Thieves population right in the beginning does not prove any change of heart as far as the main conflict is concerned. It is important

⁴⁸ Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 140.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 187.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 260.

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only in understanding Anton's success later on. The elders went back home where they belonged, to a "warm house with a roof on it and a stove under the roof"⁵¹. That "the peasant without his land is the same as the cart without wheels"⁵² is quite natural. They did not surrender right away. The leader of the new punitive detachment "had no nest nor compassionate warmth"⁵³.

2.127 The district was anti-Soviet but it had to "fall on its knees"⁵⁴. It was not a voluntary capitulation. There are three reasons for submission. The most important is the loss of contact between the badgers and the population. Not misunderstanding, but the fact that the flying brigade became cautious, fearing that the snow would disclose its hiding place. The gossip resulting from this was probably put in motion by the administration. By this trick peasants not only lost faith in their army but were convinced of their own defencelessness.

2.128 That was the beginning of the end. When Polovinkin threatened to burn down Suskija, it accepted his

51 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 220.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid., p. 297.

54 Ibid.

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authority from fear: "Suskija is not a fortress, nor the iron houses, nor the stone souls⁵⁵" says Leonov understandingly. But what a biting mockery he puts in the rumored request of Suskija's peasants for the return of Soviet power: "We are getting wild from the lack of authority. Come to have control over us. Soothe our impossible yearning⁵⁶." Other villages just followed suit. Did they really begin to languish for the rule of the strong hand? Not at all. "[...] illusory was their repentance: everything strong and young had its dwelling in the forest⁵⁷." In fact everything so strong and daring and lucky that to crush them was not a task for the terrorized local officials.

2.129 The man had to come from Moscow, Anton the professional appeaser. When it is stated that he "painlessly⁵⁸" resolved the problem it should be added without losses of his own. Having extensive experience, and that also proves that the badgers were no exception, he knew what to do. The "vague, slippery words⁵⁹", promising his

55 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 297.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 V. A. Kovalev, "L. M. Leonov", loc. cit., p. 532.

59 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 330.

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forgiveness, took care of some of the badgers. Thus the peasants were divided and their defendants dispersed or annihilated. The rebellion was over.

The population of the region had the real master again: he could pardon or order to plough⁶⁰.

The streets of Thieves were as empty as depopulated Petušixa when Anton set there his headquarters. He had nothing to fear. The peasants returned to their status quo. Though they slowly understood that resistance was useless the base of their discontent was not removed nor altered. In the neighboring province the revolt was just starting⁶¹.

Notwithstanding all the controversial elements of the novel, which can be summed up as a desire for more freedom and less of dictatorship, Leonov shows that peasants are not able to comprehend any abstract ideas. All they understand and really care for is their land.

By going a roundabout way Leonov accepts the orthodox point of view: "The peasantry as a class cannot have independent policy [nor] direct its life, and still less the life of the country⁶²."

60 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 331.

61 Ibid., p. 335.

62 V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 29.

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2.13 For the inhabitants of Makarixa the industrialization and the transition to socialism means the change of their traditional way of life. Their attitude passes through two phases. First the rejection and then the partial acceptance of the new.

"From the day of the town people's arrival [...] the earth itself was swinging under the peasants of Sot'⁶³." This author's remark does not contain any class differentiation. In the book however there is a distinction between the rich and the poor, kulaks and small landowners. As it happens kulaks do the talking and in many cases they express the views of the whole village. When Fedot states that "today there is no attention given to the peasant⁶⁴" his utterance is ridiculed by Pronka. But the village was moved without asking its opinion.

2.131 It is manifest that without the kulaks making trouble on the assembly, peasants would accept their fate as passively as the inhabitants of Petuśixa. Notwithstanding all the virtues of such an act the benevolence of Soviet rule was not properly appreciated. Only children enjoyed the change. Leonov describes with irony the misgivings of peasants, but they existed anyway. Not

63 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 125.

64 Ibid., p. 119.

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only did they not like the larger windows and the bigger rooms, but they missed the old insects and dirt. "They were sorry for the free and preposterous past which was ruthlessly threaded on by Sot'stroj and the uncertainty of the future was terrifying⁶⁵."

2.132 What is surprising in this novel, Leonov confirms that the peasants were right in disliking the new houses. They were not well constructed. In the book the evil insect is blamed, but he did not exist on the old place. And as for other benefits, peasants do not approve the big cost of the club⁶⁶. Mokronosov only expressed their views: "They do not feed in the club and as for the music, we have our own [...] just as in the proximity of the rich table we scratch our belly⁶⁷." This has wider meaning. While the kombinat was constructed in Potemkin's dream for the good of peasants, the work was given to newcomers. Later on the horse-owners, evidently not the poorest ones, were employed in transport.

Leonov suggests that the resistance was directed by kulaks. They burn the chairman's barn. Vasilij tries to kill Pronka for entirely personal reasons. But the

65 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 136.

66 Ibid., p. 163.

67 Ibid., p. 204.

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district is nearly unanimous in sabotaging the Sot'stroj's efforts. The peasants displayed great resourcefulness in avoiding the giving of necessary help and only two out of twelve rural districts "responded to Uvadiev's appeal"⁶⁸. If by Vissarion's calculation there were only "a few tens"⁶⁹ of really poor peasants it means that there were many more. Actually they were predominantly poor, if they did not have enough potatoes to make moonshine, and had to use hay-dust and saw-dust for that purpose. This proves that not only kulaks opposed the righteous cause. The construction workers call peasants counter-revolutionaries without asking their financial status⁷⁰. They are right only in part.

2.133 In Sot' there is the same conflict as in previous and later works, the conflict between the villagers and the city. The workers of Sot'stroj and its management were alien to Makarixa. They came from the outside so they were distrusted. At the time of the action the city is still in trouble and again asks the peasants' grain. Just as in The Badgers, the surplus is taken by force, and from nearly everybody. But the situation is

68 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 225.

69 Ibid., p. 252.

70 Ibid., p. 255.

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presented by Leonov differently. First comes the commission to take the hidden caches of the rich. Their grain is spoiled, but in spite of that it is seized. The peasants are stirred by this egoistical approach, "the barricade was growing on Sot'⁷¹". But twenty-six pages later the general requisition begins. Leonov blames Vissarion, yet the question remains what komsomol was doing as well as the culprit's landlord, usually active Pronka, at the time when the militia man was measuring the peasant's income by the light of a match? However it was Vissarion who by this unjust measure opened the door to rebellion to the wolfish tribe⁷². Such a statement gives a right to expect that the poor to whom the injustice was done will rebel. Such is not the case. The uprising is short lived and the insurgents are just a band of thieves, not supported even by the un-Soviet elements. It is characteristic that even the peasant who was given work on Sot'stroj does not consider himself "Soviet"⁷³. However when his proprietary instinct is aroused he fights the robbers. Thus peasants separate themselves from rebels.

71 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 226.

72 Ibid., p. 252.

73 Ibid., p. 289.

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The mass does not want any new rebellion. The Sot's frame of mind consisted of desire for truce: "nobody wanted war"⁷⁴. They had already one which, as in The Badgers, was crushed. Their "invincible Bereziatov"⁷⁵ was shot like the Thieves' leader of "invincible detachment"⁷⁶ — Semjon. This truce had to be transformed into support.

2.134 The evolution of the peasants' world outlook is slow. The animosity towards any change revealed by Mokronosov's efforts in town to stop the construction is partly broken when nearly a hundred villagers sign the petition on behalf of Sot'stroj. This only breach of solidarity is seen as a great success by authorities. Before that Favorov's frank and moving speech convinces at least twenty-three family heads, who give their carts and support. How many of them were komsomol's is not disclosed. Probably ten or more. And then the anti-rebellion feelings help to break the opposition to anti-Soviet measures. They are prompted by fear of repressions which is convincingly shown at a rumored Pronka's death. While the feelings of Thieves at a time of

74 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 284.

75 Ibid.

76 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 317.

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Groxotov's killing were in a way expressed by the woman "For all I care they can do away with the whole gang of Petkas⁷⁷", in Sot' the whole village runs to the place of crime. Is it an expression of sympathy? Not exactly. Somebody from outside "violated fragile armistice [...]" it was necessary to catch the villain and by that alone prove to somebody that only the evil individual will strike down⁷⁸". Then the construction will employ the inhabitants. It will change their economic conditions and the social status. They will be proletarians. But their final conversion is not shown.

If Potemkin proves to be right Suzanna also is not mistaken:

There was no way to convince them [just] as forcing the forest to move from its place. It was possible to hew them or to wait till they will be overgrown by the young shots⁷⁹.

As it is rather a pessimistic outlook, Leonov takes care to weaken the impact of such views:

The village is split and from the split ever widening [...], new human shoots were making their way. And those who were yet swinging on the old root, the construction of Sot' sucked in little by little by the sure gain⁸⁰.

77 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 186.

78 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 284.

79 Ibid., p. 205.

80 Ibid., p. 289.

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That is an optimistic note. Uvadiev would like them to grow up, however the resistance is not broken yet.

2.135 The people were changing on Sot' and with them their creator. In this work Leonov displays "a far sighted turn of philosophy as well as a knack of interpreting orthodox doctrine⁸¹". Still he cannot conceal his love for the peasantry. He does not varnish the truth. Instead he clearly shows that the prosperous and happy future was not a strong enough incentive to accept the proletariat as a leader. At least not for the old.

2.14 The years of terror are marked by The Orchards of Polovčansk. Nemirovič-Dančenko called it "the peculiar symbolic poem in dialogues⁸²".

The main hero of this play is a director of Sovhoz, a peasant. As his apples are named Motherland and his sons are "a whole humanity⁸³" the play may be considered as having a mass hero.

The symbolic starts with the names. Makkavejev, Maccabeus in the Bible, has a double meaning and so has the play.

81 "A Soviet Scientist", in The Times Literary Supplement, issue of April 25, 1936, p. 353.

82 L. Fink, Dramaturgija Leonida Leonova, Moscow, Ed. Sovetskij Pisatel, 1962, p. 173.

83 Leonid Leonov, "Polovčanskiye Sady", in So-branije Sočinienij, Vol. 7, p. 157.

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2.141 The first one is optimistic. Adrian Makkavejev was fighting for the revolution. Now his orchards are bearing wonderful fruits. They are twenty years old, just as the Soviet nation. "Sovxoz founded in the year of October on the dead Polovčansk's clay by the will of the people and the Soviet power⁸⁴."

So the symbol is entirely clear. The orchards are the country.

It is prepared for the internal (Pylajev) as well as external enemies⁸⁵, as the time of action coincides with the Spanish Civil War, just as Sovxoz is ready to fight the worms in the apples. The nation has many sons and they will struggle for revolution. When one son dies he will be happily replaced by another. His sister will not stop to mourn him. In concert with the new humanistic conceptions she is gay and calls for music, as she knows that her future is assured. It can be only bright. As for the hero's father, who is saddened by the loss, all he will say is: "he did not fulfill his task⁸⁶". For

⁸⁴ Leonid Leonov, "Polovčanskije Sady", loc. cit., p. 118.

⁸⁵ L. Fink (Dramaturgija Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 177) says "everything lives under a treat of the enemy".

⁸⁶ Leonid Leonov, "Polovčanskije Sady", loc. cit., p. 176.

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the whole family nothing is dearer than the future of the revolution.

2.142 The second meaning is less obvious, but it is suggested by Leonov, who in his explanation of the subject does not mention the enemies at all⁸⁷. So "the triumph of the victors⁸⁸" is not the issue. Apart from proving that the play is about a nation, and the rural character of it remains, "the sons having nothing to do in the play⁸⁹", "they are artificial paper plants⁹⁰".

This way a happy Soviet family loses its base and on the first plan is put Makkavejev, the father of the whole nation who lost his son in rather mysterious circumstances.

The biblical theme remains, however it is concerned not with the kings but with the Maccabeuses the Martyrs, with still another biblical twist added, that of Job.

One of the members of Sovxoz says contemplating the beauty of the sky: "glory be to creators of the

87 Leonov as quoted in L. Fink, Dramaturgija Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 177.

88 L. Fink, op. cit., p. 191.

89 Mix. Levidov, "Dom i Sady", in Literaturnyj Kritik, No. 6, 1938, p. 212.

90 Ibid., p. 211.

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land⁹¹". Makkavejev serves his creators as Job served his God. "The life is even, the power is Soviet, the work is in abundance⁹²." But his life is not so "even". There is a drought and a storm. His wife is unfaithful to him. He had a heart attack. His sons do not visit home unless summoned by cable. And the most important of everything is that his beloved Vassilij, the only one he is longing to see, loses his life. Nevertheless Makkavejev-the nation afflicted by all the misery is not crushed. It is true, in the first version of the play he was supposed to die. But in the second he is waiting for the promised visits of his sons in the year to come. His strange words about the fulfillment of the duty mean the duty towards country. After all Leonov had to cover somehow the tragic fate, which the old gardener passively accepts.

Actually it is Pyliajev who says "I became like Job⁹³". But he did not have much to lose, while Makkavejev lost nearly everything, yet retained the faith in the future in spite of the dark period of his life. "The

91 Leonid Leonov, "Polovčanski Sady", loc. cit., p. 154.

92 Ibid., p. 115.

93 Ibid.

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happiness will come many years later⁹⁴ as believes Ručkina.

2.2 The Individual Hero

2.21 It is unjust to accuse Semjon Raxlejev of looking on the revolution "from the standpoint of Zariadie's merchant⁹⁵". All that is left from his years in Zariadie are small traces of Katušin's influence, who, being his first teacher, fed him with poetry and an idealistic world outlook.

Anton was not far from the truth when he suspected Semjon of being a Social Revolutionary⁹⁶. The question was not positively answered but his ideas are convergent with that movement. Of course he is a peasant. The author calls him the true child of the Thieves region⁹⁷. But he is a romantic idealist, a thinker, the only one in his surroundings. His meditations concern all Russia not just his region. For him it is the struggle for peasants' rights, a sort of crusade against the

⁹⁴ Leonid Leonov, "Polovčanski je Sady", loc. cit., p. 146.

⁹⁵ V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 34.

⁹⁶ Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 341.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 153.

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Bolsheviks. This attitude explains his behaviour. Personally he is unselfish and ascetic, that is, till his disillusionment. As for his subordinates, he is angered by their extortions and crimes. He forbids them to shoot at peasants: "They will hang me one day but any of them is nearer to me than you. The blood is between us"⁹⁸. He recognizes the peasants' unity even if "they", Ganders, are in enemy's camp. He definitely is against the shedding of blood. He is also a traditionalist. The plans for action or the trial, are decided by the whole community, the traditional Russian Mir. It is obvious that Semjon believes in peasantry's right not only to be recognized but to be the main ruling force:

We give the bread, the blood, the support [...]. You forgot? [...] if somebody will crumble us by ten thousand a day and [...] forbids any increase, more than thirty years will be needed to exterminate all [of us]. Did you forget? With the million creaking wooden ploughs we will plough the town's place. Let the corn ear on it⁹⁹.

His tragedy lies in that he does not understand peasants after the twelve years of absence from his village, or so Leonov seems to suggest. The thought quoted above was inspired by Stafejev's symbolic tale about the

98 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 289.

99 Ibid., p. 260.

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mountain and the mouse¹⁰⁰. Semjon interpreted the city as being the mouse. At the time of defeat Stafejev ridiculed this idea. "How can a pair of chickens drive a hay-cart¹⁰¹?" However the number and strength of the peasantry are the base of Semjon's dreams of bettering its life. Like a true leader, he contemplates every aspect of the question. He even expects world wide support. 2.211 One part of his deliberations is not included in the 1960's edition nor in 1957 and it is interesting:

Then beat him down, this fierce Kalafat, beat him with cudgels, with plagues and contagion and hunger [...]. We will drag the stones from the tower to this side and that like ants. You musn't forget about us, we are many. We are every one. We are the earth itself. Lead us too, the way Kalafat went [...]. If we all sing together maybe ours will be not bad song at all¹⁰²!

Providing there is no mistake in translation, the statement looks like an offer of alliance to the city against Kalafat. An offer of the partnership in exchange for education. For Semjon with his Russian populist views it is a big concession. He hated the city from his childhood. Starting from 1905 "for his whole life" he remembers "the city [...]" bringing the Law and the knout¹⁰³".

100 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 209.

101 Ibid., p. 351.

102 Leonid Leonov, The Badgers, translated by Hilda Kazan, London, Hutchinson, 1947, p. 250.

103 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 84.

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It was already then that he threatened the vile force with his childish fists¹⁰⁴. The lack of political consciousness and education of the masses troubles Semjon greatly. He foresees that they can hamper his efforts. He grasps the danger especially at the time of his sickness, when he comes to the conclusion: "only that can reach us which carries an ax¹⁰⁵."

2.212 Shortly after comes Semjon's "rebirth" explained by Leonov by "He ceased to be careful¹⁰⁶". That is a certain simplification of the matter. He started an intensive and cruel activity against the bolsheviks, prompted by the bitterness over his family's fate. The man on whose head was fixed a price, became persuaded that there is no other way but to use an ax instead of the noble holy war. And he had nothing to lose. "Anton's charity is not for us. Hear, he threatens with trial! What kind of a trial can there be¹⁰⁷?" Still his terroristic activity concentrates on the individuals, on the members of the executive committees, in a true S.R. vein. And his actions are daring, wise and successful. But in accordance with history he could not win.

104 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 84.

105 Ibid., p. 299.

106 Ibid., p. 304.

107 Ibid., p. 331.

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2.213 His downfall does not come unexpected. Discord of the leaders, jealousy, misunderstandings play a certain part in it. In other respects Leonov is following Lenin's definition of the 1905's revolutionaries weaknesses: "Lack of self control, of resoluteness of the masses, which too much suffered from the illness of trustfulness¹⁰⁸." Semjon is perfectly conscious of these shortcomings. He also discovers that there is nothing more important for the peasant than land.

2.214 Leonov leaves to his reader to decide which part of Anton's speech impressed Semjon. The fact is that the handful of Semjon's men is "mashed¹⁰⁹" as promised. It is also possible that Semjon recognized the necessity of a strong proletarian hand to pull up the peasantry from ignorance, which he himself was unable to do.

In the play the ideological disagreement is more apparent. There is also no mention of the "process of nature". The conquered Semjon rejects even the family ties with Anton: "My brother was called Pawel¹¹⁰."

¹⁰⁸ Lenin, Soû., Vol. 19, p. 351, as quoted in Malaja Sovetskaja Enciklopedija, Moscow, Ed. "Sovetska Enciklopedija", OGIZ, 1941, p. 23.

¹⁰⁹ Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 343.

¹¹⁰ Leonid Leonov, Teatr, Moscow, Iskusstvo, Vol. 2, 1960, p. 313.

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2.22 The cruelty of revolution represented as a ruthlessness of the city-fostered men is revealed not only in Semjon's peril but particularly clearly in the short story The Adventure of Ivan, written in 1928.

The critics enhancing the backwardness of the village do not seem to notice the most important detail: while the black-smith was stealing before, he was not killed nor was anybody on his place. Ivan was shot, which by the way is not a peasant way of killing, by the men who under the influence of propaganda deserted the army. They are the embryo of revolutionary forces. They introduced the morose innovation: crime should be punished in the name of the law. And they execute the verdict.

2.23 As the counterbalance of the city's ways in The Return of Kopyljëv (1928), the hero is punished by his village. In a way he is a counterpart of Anton; however, after burning his village and threatening, in his degenerate sense of power, to destroy anything he wishes, the commissar cannot resist the call of the land. He returns. "The fields act stronger than a magnet¹¹¹." "There is no anger in us but the community decided to kill you for

¹¹¹ Leonid Leonov, "Vozvraščeniye Kopyljëva", in Izbrannyje Proizvedeniya, Moscow, Sovetskaja Literatura, 1934, p. 265.

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your sins. Pray, friend¹¹²!" There is no cruelty in this verdict, rather just the collective, traditional seeking of justice. And when Miška did not die, probably because of an exceptionally strong build, the village "adopted the villain. 'You are dearer than a son to us now'¹¹³." As a peasant, of course. Not a commissar.

2.23 Not all peasants are attached to their fields. Čadajev escapes to the forest. While his sister with "a whole hatch of emaciated children" is "rabid from poverty"¹¹⁴ this man "glorified the Soviet god for release from many vain troubles"¹¹⁵.

His story is that of a kulak whose plight does not call for sympathy until it is superimposed with the past. The past is not found in Leonov's work but in Turgenev's The Inn¹¹⁶ of which The Vagrant is a clear replica. This occurrence gives the story a very special

112 Leonid Leonov, "Vozvraščeniye Kopyljeva", loc. cit., p. 260.

113 Ibid., p. 267.

114 Leonid Leonov, "Brodiaga", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 1, p. 358-359.

115 Leonid Leonov, "Brodiaga", in Izbrannyje Proizvedeniya, Moscow, Sovetskaja Literatura, 1934, p. 285, in Sobranije Sočinienij (Vol. 1, p. 359) changed to "glorified his peasant god".

116 Postojalyj Dwor.

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flavor as Turgenev's classic was written in anti-serfdom vein.

The landlady was replaced by the Soviet law and taxes. The tramp enriched by Akim's money gives way to idealistic young Soviet official, Serega. He probably won Katerinka's attention with the help of "Soviet wires"¹¹⁷, the radio, just as Mark in The Russian Forest used this cultural innovation as decoy for Lenočka, Vixrov's wife. Both Akim and Čadajev are ruined and both are wagrants. But Akim was left in peace and became happy and nearly holy. As for Čadajev "nobody was interested in him" as the human being "but in his sins"¹¹⁸. Leonov suggests that his hero, chased by summons and hiding from the malevolent law, learnt to laugh. What is more he is on the verge of becoming a devil¹¹⁹. Of such dare-devils the rebels were made.

But Leonov made a hero of him, as Biriuk in Ljo-nuška is the continuation of this unusual character.

¹¹⁷ Leonid Leonov, "Brodiaga", in Sobranije So-činienij, Vol. 1, p. 354.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 361.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

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2.3 The Mass Hero. The Nation At War.

While Ljonuška was seared by critics' fire and The Russian Forest is honoured with highest praise, as far as peasants are concerned, some similarities can be found in those two works as well as in The Taking of Velikošumsk.

2.31 In Ljonuška the individualised heroes represent the Russian people just like in The White Nights the peasant was Russia itself. It is "a tragedy of collective hero"¹²⁰.

2.32 In The Taking of Velikošumsk the author uses the similar device as in The Orchards of Polovčansk. By the number of the names of Litovčenko: the general, his tank's corpsman, his schoolmate and the whole peasant family, Leonov achieves the impression of unity of the nation, which is allied by sorrow and purpose.

2.33 In The Russian Forest the old peasant woman and the soldier as well as his companions on the train are nameless. They are the voice of the nation, as it happens, of peasant origin. By this generalization of the hero, Leonov shows one moving spirit of the country: hate

¹²⁰ L. Fink, Dramaturgija Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 289.

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towards the common enemy, the collective desire of defence and of revenge.

2.34 He does not try to suggest that all of them were defending the communist party. He insist that they were defending the homeland. Personal reasons are the strongest motive for wrath, but in this case the personal, individual coincides with collective. The party represented in Ljonuška by Travina is the leading factor. But it understands peasants' psychology by now and that is probably the reason why "the artists" do not use any political slogans. The necessity of the resistance is driven home to peasants by the sight of human tragedy. Still the peasantry is hard to move. Potapyč is filled with thoughts of vengeance because of his sacred heifer that is, the economical factor; Biriuk is moved by his death; Ljonuška, who was among the first to join the partisans, is prompted to action by the loss of her beloved, just as Vasia Litovčenko joined the army to avenge his mother and the soldier of The Russian Forest is stirred to action not by an order, but by the realization of German atrocities. They do not speak about Socialism. Yet some do. Poxlebkina, the chairman of Kutasovo, "the most incredible¹²¹" in the whole play, attempts to quote

121 V. I. Gorodnickij and Ja. Varšavskij, "Černaja Magija o Piesie Leonova Ljonuška", in Komsomolskaja Pravda, issue of October 15, 1946, p. 3.

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Engels, but does not remember a single sentence. In Invasion the old peasant comforts the little hero with the name of Stalin, but the boy was acting in the name of Russian soil¹²².

2.341 In The Taking of Velikošumsk two peasants named Litovčenko suffer consciously for their country. One from Germany writes about the Ukraine which need not necessarily mean the USSR, except that his brother dies repeating "Glory be to the Red Army"¹²³. By sheer association of idea it should mean one great socialist country for those who wish to see it this way.

2.35 On the other hand Leonov deliberately shows that the doctrine did not penetrate the minds of peasants at large. Poxlebkina's efforts are considered by the older population, as the youth is at the front, just a waste of time. In a daring episode Potapyč jokingly compares Engels' reading to the Gospel. It is not a coincidence. In The Russian Forest an unknown defender of his country goes into action without Marx in his heart. "And you wait with Marx"¹²⁴ says a soldier to the clear voiced

¹²² Leonid Leonov, "Našestvije", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 7, p. 431.

¹²³ Leonid Leonov, "Vziatije Velikošumska", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 8, p. 31.

¹²⁴ Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 9, p. 789.

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youth who has an answer to everything according to the book. "He will always remain with you and I will have to crawl out to the war soon¹²⁵."

The thirteen year old boy arrested for deriding Hitler says: "in our family nobody is a party member¹²⁶". And Polja recognizes his moral superiority. The lack of political training is no obstacle to patriotism.

2.36 Leonov goes even further.

The three starostas of Russian villages occupied by Germans, prove to be heroes in the final count. Biriuk, like Zolotuxin, is quite independent; both show no servility towards the masters. Biriuk was living outside of the collective, Zolotuxin an enemy of the new and a kulak, returned to his village soon after its occupation. He did not accept the office right away. What is more he probably believes in Soviet victory, but he does not talk politics. Polja observes "his provocative calm¹²⁷" and simultaneously "his manifest stinking wilfulness¹²⁸" is noticed by the German. Both Biriuk and Zolotuxin kill

p. 789. ¹²⁵ Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit.,

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 649.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 668.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

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the well guarded German commanders. The thirth, Litov-
 êenko accepts the office on purpose. This way he can
 better help the partisans. But he dies. The collabora-
 tion does not exclude patriotism. Subsequently Leonov
 recognizes the worth of individual personality quite in-
 dependently from the collective.

2.361 This point of view is not new with Leonov. In
 his ill-fated Blizzard the White emigrant fought in Spain
 while his Soviet brother was making dishonest money. So,
 no matter what may happen to him, a Russian is always a
 Russian, just as the peasant is unchangeable.

2.37 In The Russian Forest, the last, chronologically
 speaking, work of Leonov, the above mentioned soldier and
 his companions reveal the same old misunderstanding be-
 tween the city and the village. A very educated man will
 be remembered by him till the end of his days for prompt-
 ing the seven men to resist the enemy force. The sol-
 diers' unanimous attitude towards this comrade is unmis-
 takable: "We passed him round by the side to evade the
 sin¹²⁹." Later he goes fighting from his own will.

2.38 The nation is heroic, solid in its hate of the
 occupant and, like Potapyč, not stopping to think about

129 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit.,
 p. 789.

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the danger, offers its life for victory. As for communism, this is something it would like to see but the whole idea is quite remote.

2.381 In the very characteristic talk between Polja and the old woman, two aspects of the peasantry's world outlook are revealed. First the human sympathy for the families of German soldiers. Secondly its life apart from the city's main preoccupation. When Polja says: "we will get them under. Can the sun be extinguished¹³⁰?", for her the "sun" already exists. The old woman expressed the desire to see "just the edge of your sun¹³¹". It means she did not see it at all.

2.382 To emphasize his idea, Leonov makes a soldier admit that he would like to see communism even with one eye: "what is it, this communism? [...] And, sort of, I don't much feel like scrambling out from behind the rich table without eating¹³²." In Sot' it was Mokronosov who was talking about the rich table. More than twenty years later it still did not appear. Leonov several times repeats that peasants are not only patient, they are insensible to all kind of privations. They should be. There

130 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 679.

131 Ibid.

132 Ibid., p. 789.

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is no prosperity shown in Kutasovo. It is not touched by war yet. Its inhabitants have nothing to offer to partisans' detachment.

2.39 The unjust distribution of wealth is confirmed by the scene on the train. It is dubious if during the daylight Vixrov could hear anything like it¹³³. The people were talking about the future life after victory "will there be left blockheads and the bureaucrats, red-tapist's hearts! and above all how to make oneself secure under communism from the inborn human greediness so that everybody would dip his spoon in turn in the common cauldron, following the dictates of his conscience¹³⁴".

This expression of vague hope is the strongest condemnation of the achievements of the pre-war revolution. It also proves the existence of "there" and here, that is they and we, or no identification with the administration.

133 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 786.

134 Ibid.

CHAPTER III

THE PROLETARIAT

The master of the country, the proletariat, does not have the prominence of the peasantry in Leonov's works. With the exception of the mass builders in Sot' and of Mit'ka Vekšin in The Thief the proletarians appear rather as episodic characters. However, because of the importance of this class in the USSR, it is necessary to determine what was introduced into the lives of its members by the revolution.

Nine heroes are examined. They are placed in chronological order, to illustrate the growth and the evolution of the new stratum.

3.0 Some critics maintain that The Thief is a criminal novel¹, others see in it only philosophical contents². As usual the truth can be found in the middle, because

In the tradition of Russian prose from which derives the writing of Leonov, the most trivial threads of the plot bore the load of the great undercurrent, and [...] were lost in it completely³.

1 V. Kirpotin, "Romany Leonida Leonova", in Proza, Dramaturgija i Teatr, Moscow, Goslitizdat, 1935, p.63.

2 E. Starikova, "O Romanie Leonida Leonova 'Vor'", in Vor, Moscow, Gosudarstvennoje Izdatelstvo Xudožestvennoj Literatury, 1959, p. 8.

3 Andrzej Mandalian, "Powiesc z wytrychem", in Nowa Kultura, No. 7, issue of February 15, 1959, p. 3.

In accepting this point of view it is possible to disregard the artificial surrounding of Mit'ka Vekšin. Leonov himself suggests the possibility of mystification. Just as Firsov "employed Agej as a dark screen"⁴ his creator uses screens of his own. One of them is Firsov himself. From behind them emerges Mit'ka who can be interpreted as at least three different persons. In the realistic plan there are two Mit'kas, Firsovs and Leonovs. Those two are joined by the third one presented on the metaphorical plan. He is the one who complicates the situation. Both Firsov and Leonov "did not have the courage to grapple seriously with" nor could "summon sufficient affection" to reveal the hidden Mit'ka, and "the real causes of his struggles"⁵. But even if the detection of Leonov's changing the plot during the writing seems to be well founded⁶ it is impossible to base its change on the prediction of Mit'ka's "cruel and splendid"⁷ death. Leonov took care of it. The words are Firsov's and he eventually kills Mit'ka in undisclosed circumstances⁸.

4 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, translated by Hubert Butler, London, Secker, 1931, p. 440. All quotations regarding Mit'ka Vekšin are from this edition.

5 Ibid., p. 438.

6 Vera Alexandrova, A History of Soviet Literature 1917-1962. From Gorky to Yevtushenko, Doubleday, 1963, p. 181.

7 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 52.

8 Ibid., p. 441.

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While the metaphorical Mit'ka is, like others, a rebel against the unforeseen turn of revolution, he is a prospective leader of the masses. The trial even by earth itself he has passed with the flying colors. The two realistic Mit'kas do not contradict the possibilities of the first one.

Not only Vekšin's rebirth, but the whole book is utterly conditional⁹. Leonov's peculiarity as an author consists of his talent of implanting the double meaning to nearly everything he writes. Starting from his symbolic stories ending by the Russian Forest the reader has a choice of interpretation. In the case of The Thief, the author, being under critics' attacks, gave his own interpretation of Mit'ka. If followed, Vekšin's metamorphosis cannot be termed "sudden"¹⁰. It has been developed in well-defined stages.

3.1 There are four phases of Mit'ka's evolution of the world outlook.

3.11 Firsov's description of the glorious past of the commissar "recommended for the Order of Revolution"¹¹ and

9 Z. Kedrina, "Leonid Maksimovič Leonov", in Russkije Sovetskiye Pisateli, Moscow, Gosudarstvennoje Izdatelstvo Detskoj Literatury Ministerstva Prosveščeniya RSFSR, 1957, p. 310.

10 Ibid.

11 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 56.

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his degradation induced by the delation of "the secretary of the Party-unit, a Georgian¹²" are witnessed by Sienka¹³, by Mit'ka¹⁴ and by Masha's hint.

This stripping him of the rank explains Mit'ka's relation with Atașez, but not his disillusion in the revolution. There is no denying that by calling the revolution "really a national movement [...] the wild unrest of the Russian blood¹⁵" Vekșin seemingly rejects its international character and its rational planning and organizing. But "three days of heavy drinking loosened his tongue¹⁶". Actually it was loosened to the point where Mit'ka sounds incoherent. The fact remains that the brave, enthusiastic and faithful revolutionary, who suffered a nervous break-down when he realized that he killed an unarmed man for purely personal reasons, is called to account for what he "screamed [...] drunkedly¹⁷". He accepts all humiliation in good faith even if

12 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 56.

13 Ibid., p. 54.

14 Ibid., p. 293. In the second version this point is not as clear.

15 Ibid., p. 56.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

"the dull misty morning" of his disgrace "left a [...] reflection [...] for ever afterwards on Mit'ka's face¹⁸". This personal injustice will affect his subsequent behavior and the course of his thinking. Presently it was "Vekšin's shadow¹⁹" who continued to fight "valiantly while the life of the Republic was at stake²⁰". This not only excludes the theory of Mit'ka's political downfall as caused by death of the officer, but also an assertion of Mit'ka's attraction to revolution as "a gratification of the own desire and the romantic of personal exploit²¹". The more so since Mit'ka is not a convert of the Civil War time. He was one of the organizers of the movement, which he joined from his early youth. The tragedy of Dolomanova was a direct result of his preoccupation with politics.

3.12 The disenchantment comes only after Mit'ka's demobilization. The shop windows of Moscow during the Nep period are "glittering and luxurious²²". At the beginning however Mit'ka was not worried. He still nourishes

18 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 57.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 E. Starikova, "O Romanie Leonida Leonova 'Vor'", loc. cit., p. 9.

22 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 58.

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an illusory hope that he, a fighter for the revolution, has a possibility and a right to change it. His egotistical approach was already wrong. "I wished this and it was so; I shall wish again — and it will be no more²³." He was supposed to think in the terms of 'we' not 'I' and to have faith in the wisdom of the party. The blow came when he realized that there are still the rich, the privileged, and the poor and hungry, like himself, the soldier without any rank, in all probability excluded from the party²⁴. He sees that the ideal of social equality just did not materialize. There is no fraternity either. The woman who for his chivalry repays him with a slap of her glove is "an official's wife²⁵". However she is a Nepman's wife in the second edition, and also in the Polish translation of the first redaction.

This is the crucial point in Mit'ka's degradation, the beginning of his depression and also of his rebellion.

But it is a case of Mit'ka's dissatisfaction with his environment, with what the men in power are doing to the revolution, but not with the idea itself, and not

23 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 58.

24 V. Kirpotin, "Romany Leonida Leonova", loc. cit., p. 57.

25 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 58.

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"displeasure with himself"²⁶. The displeasure can have only one source, his own helplessness to influence the course of events.

Vekšin is an enthusiast of revolution as such. In his imagination it takes the shape of a force which "overthrows mountains and levels abysses"²⁷. It is also a mirage, as sung by poets and anticipated by romantically inclined idealists. He must have had a deep affection for Lenin "for Mit'ka had gone past the leader's coffin groaning and reeling"²⁸. Probably also Firsov's remark is true that Lenin was "the only man in whom he could unreservedly have put his trust"²⁹. This last sentence is quite significant, as Vekšin really does not display confidence in the party officials.

3.13 The reasons for his dissatisfaction are closely connected with the unexpected turn of the revolution. "The times were out of joint and Mit'ka had no patience with the host of petty circumstance [...] Mit'ka's mind

26 V. A. Kovalev, "'Vor' L. Leonova (Ot pervoj ko vtoroj redakcii)", in Voprosy Sovetskoy Literatury, Vol. 9, Moscow-Leningrad, Sovetskij Roman, Ed. Akad. Nauk SSSR, 1961, p. 140.

27 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 428.

28 Ibid., p. 449.

29 Ibid.

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could not assimilate so much that was strange and conflicting³⁰", says Leonov. Vekšinn does not change his elevated image of revolution as it should be, — instead he blames its human coefficient. He sees that the jewelry stores are frequented by the new aristocracy, the officials³¹, victors who take the airs of conquered. He sees that Atașez is changed. And he has a close contact with another new master of life, Ćikilev. Having experienced himself the result of the institution of informing he is strongly against it.

I'll not mind dying if I've got to, but what I can't do is look through a key-hole [...] and I won't either. And if I don't want to, a mountain won't make me³².

So it is not only a case of disillusion with the men who are in power, but also a conflict between the old and the new morality. Vekšinn's views in this respect are close to the biblical distinction of good and evil. And not surprisingly, Pĉxov is his closest friend. Mit'ka, a non-believer, he nevertheless remembers the ten commandments to the point where he loses sight of the class struggle. "He spoke of the beauty of pity and mercy in

30 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 119.

31 Ibid., p. 300.

32 Ibid., p. 148.

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the victor³³." When rebuked by Matvej, he asks him:
 "Suppose you should be called to a priest to cure him,
 will you give him a poison³⁴?"

He expected a utopia of human goodness. The victorious revolution was supposed to nullify the social differences and to become the festive day of fraternity. He had no right to long for "the liberation of the man in general³⁵". In the world which surrounds him his noble impulses are out of place. They are nothing but "a delirious dream³⁶" and he has to "roll down³⁷". However Vekšin's opposition to the new cannot be too prolonged. At heart he is a communist. Manjukin's calling him Hamlet is just a device to intrigue the reader, and with the same purpose Mit'ka's quasi-mental disturbances are introduced, with psychiatrist and all. As it is he is more a Prince Myškin than a Prince of Denmark.

3.14 The return of Mit'ka to the right path is helped by the three men whose names start with an A: Agej,

33 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 118.

34 Ibid., p. 120.

35 V. Ermilov, "Problema Živovo Čeloveka v Sovremennoj Literature i 'Vor' L. Leonova", in Na Literaturnom Postu, Nos. 5-6, 1927, p. 77.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

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Atașez and Anatolij. They represent definite ideas and serve as a crooked mirror for the main hero. But his rebirth can be detected only by the acceptance of Leonov's explanation that he meant to "incarnate the spontaneous origin of human passions"³⁸ and that his hero lacks culture³⁹ which is in turn interpreted by Kovalev by "primitive"⁴⁰. It is true that Mit'ka's sufferings are on a rather intellectual level, but that occurrence must be a remainder of the one Mit'ka lost during the writing of the book.

3.141 Agej represents the senseless cruelty of war, which did not stop at the time of peace. Mit'ka, who during the war was "Loving the world with the love of a plough that cleaves the soft, submissive earth"⁴¹ now contrary to Agej suffers because of his feeling of guilt. "Thou shalt not kill"⁴² is one of the basic themes which he debates in his mind. That is the murder of unarmed

38 Sjergej Romov, "Vstreča s Leonidom Leonovym", in Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 43, issue of September 24, 1930, p. 2.

39 Ibid.

40 V. A. Kovalev, Tvorčestvo Leonida Leonova, Moscow-Leningrad, Ed. Akademija Nauk SSSR, 1962, p. 242.

41 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 54.

42 Ibid., p. 288.

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man. His disgust with Agej is connected with his first thought about ending his solitary revolt and seeking peace of mind in work⁴³.

3.142 Atașez, the communist who betrayed friendship in the name of the new ethics, in Mit'ka's eyes forgot the high ideal for which they were both fighting. Having power beyond Mit'ka's grasp, he is seen by Mit'ka as a yes-man⁴⁴ leading a petty bourgeois life. Before his encounter with Atașez, Mit'ka is on the verge of recognizing his guilt towards revolution: "I've dished the revolution but haven't I dished myself too⁴⁵?" This may seem strange in the first version, but it is explained by the second in which he discovered whom he robbed. When he leaves Atașez' office he seems to be not convinced by his arguments and even feels his superiority. Leonov adds that he had forgotten the stolen money in his pocket⁴⁶. It happened to be thirty thousand rubles. The number is symbolic and rubles "weighted the pocket of his [...] coat⁴⁷". Vekșin not only unsuccessfully tried to win

109. 43 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 108-

44 Ibid., p. 153.

45 Ibid., p. 148.

46 Ibid., p. 155.

47 Ibid.

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back the whole sum but, subconsciously, the details of Atașez' political lecture weighed on his mind. It took time to penetrate his consciousness, but, when shocked by the backwardness of the village, to his mind comes the word "turbine"⁴⁸ because Atașez was talking about the electrification⁴⁹ and a power plant is under construction in the village. The second talk with Atașez is as unfriendly on the part of Mit'ka as the previous one. Vekșin rejects the attempt of reconciliation, but again, used to blind obedience in the past, with his tardy reflexes he arrives at a conclusion which concurs with Atașez' wishes. After all, his departure to Siberia is an execution of Atașez' order: "I forbid you [...] to loaf round here any longer"⁵⁰. That was something tangible which at least he could understand. He was asking Puxov for an order before⁵¹ to no avail.

In the second version the episode in the Zoo is missing. It is not necessary, as Kit'ka is less of a rebel and more of a thief, so his departure is activated by the different reasons. It is an escape from the law.

48 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 362.

49 Ibid., p. 154.

50 Ibid., p. 467.

51 Ibid., p. 293.

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3.143 Anatolij of Ararat is the reflection of Mit'ka's heresy and a reminder of his possible future. The former revolutionary can only talk about his misgivings. It is a protest of crossed hands and a life of deepest degradation. By hating him, Vekšin is driven to refute the arguments which were his own. Thus he realizes that no sacrifice is too big for the revolution and that he is only a part of the millions who were dreaming about its coming⁵². His former ambition and his claim to the credit for it is totally lost: "What rascal can brag that he has sacrificed too much to the revolution and that it was all his doing⁵³?" Anatolij's sarcastic remarks about the roses and the cockroaches⁵⁴ incite Vekšin to believe that the 'vermin' should be crushed. And that is new with him. While before, after considerable thought, he was ready to admit only that "If I don't kill him he'll kill me⁵⁵", now he approves the necessity of destruction of the old. "All the grain had been threshed from the sheaves and they should be thrown into the fire [...] we

52 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 428.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., p. 436.

55 Ibid., p. 294.

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must wait for the new ones to come⁵⁶." Leonov will repeat this idea in Sot', with, however, less vehemence.

3.15 Vekšin, who becomes lost when left to himself, recognizes the necessity of a "shepherd"⁵⁷. He has used his power only to harm. The material well-being has no value for him. He even slept in the tzar's bed⁵⁸ and this experience did not give him any satisfaction. All he needs is a purpose in life. "Everyone should have something for which he can sacrifice himself without question"⁵⁹. Now he has a "dream to help the way of all

56 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 436.

57 Ibid., p. 435-436.

58 a) This sentence was somehow transformed by Nathan Rosen (The Reforging of a Fellow-Traveler (1922-1935), typescript, thesis, New York, Russian Institute, Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University, 1956, p. 70, and The Fiction of Leonid Leonov, typescript, thesis, Ph.D., New York, Columbia University, 1961, p. 62) into "wading in tzarist blood", probably as a result of the proximity of "krovat'" and "krov'" in dictionary.

b) Incidentally, after the "execution" of Donka, Mit'ka does not suffer, in the book, any nervous breakdown (Nathan Rosen, The Reforging of a Fellow-Traveler (1922-1935), op. cit., p. 76). He is ill with typhus (p. 546), neurosis of the heart and over-exhaustion (p. 546).

c) The answer on "What does this gibberish add up to?" (Nathan Rosen, The Reforging [...], op. cit., p. 70) concerning the officer, his horse and the treasure, of which Mit'ka "was not able to rob him off" can be found on p. 467 in Vor 1928 ed. As for the horse his ownership is explained in The Thief, op. cit., p. 293.

59 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 312.

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mankind⁶⁰". As the revolution is an impulse "forward and upwards⁶¹" he will go "forward and upwards". Yet in his search for the right way he has no one to consult. He did not ask Atașez for the place to go and he does not share Matvej's beliefs: "He is right [...] but I'm right too⁶²." He becomes a fellow-traveller of the revolutionary forces in power with the possibility of joining the main stream. His toil will assure him a place in society, as his suffering has led him nowhere⁶³. He is "an ancestor of the men to come⁶⁴" as opposed to "the scum" and "the snails⁶⁵" by which names he terms the remnants of the past, including some high officials.

The new man who is not bound to anything on earth, except some moral principles of the past, who "has not

60 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 516.

61 Ibid., p. 428.

62 Ibid., p. 562.

63 Which is not necessarily Leonov's personal point of view, as proved by the transformation of Mit'ka in the new edition, but not that of Pêxov.

64 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 519.

65 Ibid., p. 503.

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met his master⁶⁶ will reach the sun, which is waiting to be tamed.

3.2 The people whose hands erected Sot'stroj are mostly "yesterday's peasants⁶⁷", the seasonal workers, men who are on the way to proletarianism.

It is a huge mass composed of hundreds⁶⁸, and quite symbolically it emerges from many parts of Russia, but with the exception of the few it remains nameless.

They, the unknown, the self-sacrificing, the powerful in their collective effort are taming the elements for the glory of the future state. Such should be the general idea of the novel written as the social command. The men are supposed to be brimming with enthusiasm for the first Five-Year-Plan. But are they?

Their social background may be the reason for their weak political consciousness. As Leonov explains, they came because they could no longer lead their peasant

⁶⁶ Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 363. William E. Harkins (Dictionary of Russian Literature, Paterson, New Jersey, Littlefield, p. 196) states that Mit'ka "in the end gives himself up to the police to be reformed in a Soviet labor camp". In the book: "No one met him at the station when he took his ticket for his long journey" (The Thief, op. cit., p. 563-564).

⁶⁷ Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 4, p. 236.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 238.

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life according to the old precepts, and the new ones still did not exist⁶⁹. So what they look for is work, the possibility to provide for their families, as prosaic as that. The work itself is the paramount necessity of their lives.

There are some instances of seemingly higher aims, such as Gorešin's agited speech: "[...] we are losing in this business more than you! [...] We are losing bread and work⁷⁰." So actually the real purpose, from the Soviet point of view, is just hinted at, and again to the fore is pushed the very old argument, the bread. To have it, workers are ready to suffer, in Western eyes, the most demanding sacrifices, such as the heroic attempt to fortify the condemned retaining works. It is made voluntarily. However from those hundreds there are no more than forty volunteers⁷¹. And what should be kept in mind is that Uvadiev was ready to fight till the end⁷² and that a short while before he had fired the seven who did not display the prescribed enthusiasm and were reluctant

69 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 110.

70 Ibid., p. 188.

71 Ibid., p. 193.

72 Ibid., p. 188.

to get into the icy water⁷³. The cruelty of the moment lies in the fact that the administration was perfectly aware of the futility of this attempt. Paradoxically only Renne, disliked by the workers, had the courage to mention the imminent danger and to suggest loss of timber rather than loss of men⁷⁴. For this human impulse he was humiliated. Burago thinks only of the psychological effect of such a feat, especially when it is undertaken at one's own peril⁷⁵. His stand naturally represents the official point of view, namely, that the human element does not count when a higher purpose is at stake.

Leonov does not let them perish but quite unexpectedly notices that they were working without a song⁷⁶. It would be too much to expect. But it seems that workers are really presented as, to use Renne's expression, "only superphosphate⁷⁷" for the future generations.

Not only does the management not care about the human life, it also does not manifest any interest in the workers' welfare.

73 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 184.

74 Ibid., p. 188.

75 Ibid., p. 194.

76 Ibid., p. 199.

77 Ibid., p. 190.

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There is a club and a flower bed, the old peasant homes are demolished and the new have a window for each member of the family, but it is not clear where the labour force is located. The fact is that the barracks were under the process of construction and the local "bothersome physician"⁷⁸ had to insist on the enlargement of the workers' living space. When finally erected they were prison-like⁷⁹. It suggests that even at the planning stage the barracks were unduly crowded.

And there is no mention of any cooperative or something of the sort, no place to buy anything except at the neighborhood villages.

The Workers' Committee is rather voiceless, a puppet-like organization. Uvadiyev can fire men in spite of its provisions⁸⁰; he is able to transfer them to piece wages contrary to all regulations⁸¹; he does not give the due severance pay in the amount of the prescribes six weeks' wages⁸². No wonder that in the newspaper the

78 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 220.

79 Ibid., p. 243.

80 Ibid., p. 184.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid., p. 236.

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management was accused of "criminal negligence"⁸³ towards the organized labour force.

The workmen's pay must have been very negligible since, when dismissed, they had nothing to take home. Then in mid-season they were unable to find other employment. So the first Five-Year-Plan did not create enough work for everybody.

As far as the management is concerned, it is neither loved nor trusted. The workers do not believe in the accidental break of the dam⁸⁴. There are moments when men feel enmity towards the administration⁸⁵. They also show solidarity as in the case of the hostile remark, they cover up the guilty⁸⁶.

They fear and dislike Uvadiiev and Burago. They detest Renne. At one time they are enthusiastic about Potemkin and have every reason to be. He is the one who at least thinks about their well-being. But they do not even know what their director looks like. Quite understandably when searching for the scapegoat for their troubles, they are all set to wheel him in the same

83 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 242.

84 Ibid., p. 236.

85 Ibid., p. 194 and 237.

86 Ibid., p. 237.

barrel in which they sent Renne from the construction's premises. They never mention Uvadiév, whose fault is at least equal. But he is the political commissar.

The workmen's feelings towards Renne are explained by his whole behaviour and even his appearance. He reminds them of the old times which are gone and remembered with ill feelings. "The 'todays' won't be held back by the 'yesterdays' anyway⁸⁷." They are clearly for the new times. But as for Renne, apart from the alleged mistake in the planning, all they have to reproach him for is his specialist's pay and a car. They were looking for some reason to let off steam and the old engineer was the easiest victim available.

As far as Uvadiév is concerned, they also notice mockingly his elegant, clean boots⁸⁸, but there is no question that they consider him to be the master, even if they "were looking with suspicion and gloom, the thousands exigent masters' eyes⁸⁹".

The representative of these masters has this to say to the one whose orders in fact he executes: "Eh, master, you are very stingy [...] You should drink our

87 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 267.

88 Ibid., p. 299.

89 Ibid., p. 297.

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blood little by little. Watch out, from a lot the belly may start to ache⁹⁰." It is supposed to be a joke, but how true to life!

Naturally they realize the necessity of stopping the river. They have to, otherwise there will be no work again. They must continue the construction at all costs even at the risk of losing their health; "we collectively contract rheumatism⁹¹". They work in sub-zero weather, they catch colds without proper clothing⁹², yet they do not complain.

But it is Uvadiev who writes: "[...] the lower the man was standing on the job, the better he understood the symbolical meaning of this period of works⁹³." They themselves do not talk about symbolism.

In fact the waterfront foreman expresses the workers' idea of the matter: "[...] during the past years I would swear, leave the work and [return] to wife, on the stove. And now don't I understand [...] whose are the funds⁹⁴?" He laments about the people, including the

90 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 300.

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid., p. 299.

93 Ibid., p. 297.

94 Ibid., p. 217.

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pregnant women and children, who were working to pay the taxes to cover the cost of construction. However his despair is exaggerated, as he is drunk. But still quite soberly he realizes that, even feeling no responsibility for the disasters, he still can be prosecuted⁹⁵.

Uvadiev himself uses the threat of persecution as the deterrent to the improper approach to work⁹⁶. And he is hoarse from urging the workers to action⁹⁷. It appears that he had to. So in what way does this new situation differ from the old?

This quasi-proletariat is assuming already some kind of superiority towards the villagers. It may be, however, more the result of regional differences than the class differentiation, as shown by the brawl in Makaryxa. It was provoked by reasons unconnected with politics.

The workers' attitude towards the party is disclosed by Akišin who touches on the subject in a round-about way. Prompted by Uvadiev's recognition of him as "ours", he answers:

-Who's - ours? [...] I am nobody's, I am my own [...] You think you rule me? I rule you, you paper soul. You like the quiet one, and he licks

95 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 217.

96 Ibid., p. 300.

97 Ibid., p. 187.

you, while he saves for you the hemp under the floor. I will always rail at you, but you ought to take care of me [...]⁹⁸.

He is able to boast of independence. "I have nothing to lose, commissar⁹⁹." Otherwise there is not much independence shown in Sot'. Certainly it does not look like the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictators are those who are at the top, not the masses. Perhaps they have to lead the yet unformed human rabble which, after all, is only the first generation, the ancestors of men to come.

Nevertheless there is little question that had this taken place in another country, even in pre-revolutionary Russia, there would be a cry over the capitalistic yoke. In Sot' it appears that the future masters are oppressing themselves.

3.3 During the same Five-Year-Plan, Skutarevskij observes a group of carpenters in the railway station. Five men are going to "Magnitka"¹⁰⁰, the Magnitnaja mountain, where will stand the present day Magnitogorsk. Sergej Andreiç sees on their faces solemn expressions

⁹⁸ Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 200.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 5, p. 293.

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which he compares to the former religious exaltation. The author states that they "are travelling to socialism¹⁰¹". But what they are talking about is money and this is confirmed by Leonov's remark "their forces are stored up for sale¹⁰²". As in Sot', they are peasants and they are very poor. Dressed in old "rags¹⁰³" all they can afford as a meal is one herring for each, taken with cider. The rumour of good earnings already lured their whole rural district. The work, as in the previous novel, opens new possibilities for a materially better life. They do not mention the social meaning of Magnitostroj and are not particularly enthusiastic about the place they are going to. They know that hardship awaits them. "[...] there you won't doze [...] and water must be rusty from iron¹⁰⁴" says one of them. Another is awed by the tempo of the construction. "It is odd, the immense millions and everybody is in a hurry. Even a flea [...] started to bite faster. That also willingly¹⁰⁵."

101 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 293.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid., p. 292.

104 Ibid., p. 294.

105 Ibid.

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The touch of political education is visible in their considering a Nepman as "lagging in life"¹⁰⁶. They display no interest in his misfortune. In this way, only by implication it is possible to presume that they have a feeling of marching with time.

3.31 In Skutarevskij they will probably have a master similar to Kunajev, himself an old worker. Completely devoted to the Soviet state and for that reason raised on the top, the powerful man has not many other qualifications. At least he reveals human warmth and presumably will take good care of them, if not hampered by another Uvadijev.

The boundless possibilities for the right persons in the new state is enhanced by the example of the simple man, who never expected to reach the zenith.

3.4 Matvej Nikeiĉ Ćerimov who was born in the village turns proletarian through conditions of life. He is paid by the piece, that is, by every man washed by him. And his occupation is a trade for him.

In a way he is a double and a contrast to Skutarevskij. His rebirth had to be slow and hard, as he was not a proletarian by blood, like Butylkin. By his example as by Mit'ka's in The Thief, Leonov proves that to

¹⁰⁶ Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 293.

really accept the revolution the man has to be naked, that is free from "restricting hoops"¹⁰⁷ of the past, which prevent the man's growth. And Matvej Nikeiç is made literally naked, being the attendant of the bath-house. However, he is tied to the past by seemingly unimportant elements, which constitute his life. By rejecting them, he becomes a new man. His transformation may seem to be sudden, but it is not. Skutarevskij noticed his inborn wisdom, Çerimov, the party man, was expecting the change as unavoidable, his capacity for the new role of the district depute was clear to the man who promoted his candidature. None of them was mistaken.

3.41 The elements of Matvej Çerimov's reeducation came in consecutive order.

Even if he was neutral in the matters of politics, his inclination was rather leftist, as he was satisfied with the fall of the tzar.

The contact with the industrial workers in his small bath-house was an initial base of political education. Another push towards knowledge was a desire to discover why the inoffensive white officer had to perish. So in his own way he started to educate himself. The

¹⁰⁷ Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 245.

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destruction of the old baths, a disaster for his habitual way of life, severs his connections with the past. He does not like the modern building.

3.42 By his election he is faced with the new responsibility, which, as a conscientious worker, he takes seriously. For him "it was like torture by confidence¹⁰⁸".

All he wanted from life was his solitary independence from the world, his own mountain. Now he was taken prisoner "once and for all, now he also became the Soviet power¹⁰⁹". There is no joy in his social elevation, he did not seek it nor expect it. Quite the contrary. Matvej Nikeiç is genuinely grieved because the new position gave him "[...] a sensation of being robbed by some trickery; he had nobody to make complaints against and nobody to deceive¹¹⁰".

3.43 But he accepts the new challenge and makes himself worthy of it by the sacrifice of the only possessions he has: his famous beard and his life-savings, the three golden pieces bearing the now shameful pictures of the tzars.

108 Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, translated by Alec Brown, London, Ed. Lovat Dickson & Thompson, 1936, p. 170.

109 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 138.

110 Ibid., p. 136.

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Thus renovated, he becomes the right man in the right place. He is wrong assuming that he will have no occasion for criticism. Not only does he ably reveal the enemy but he fights the near-sightness and stupidity of his fellowmen in power.

From a servant, the revolution has made him a master.

Leonov only notices the signs of his times, when such transitions are the order of the day. While he treats Matvej Nikeiç's past and election with humour, the conversion of the able and willing member of the masses reflects the conviction of its possibility and contains no trace of irony. He is "the guardian of the people's wisdom¹¹¹".

3.44 On the other hand honest mediocrity is ridiculed in the very episodic figure of the trade-union worker in The Road to the Ocean. This "very simple-minded man¹¹²", before finding an outlet for his political zest on the railroad, was a porter, then a stone-mason and a train-loader, after which posts the revolution sent him right

¹¹¹ Z. Kedrina, "Leonid Maksimoviç Leonov", loc. cit., p. 314.

¹¹² Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 136.

to university as a secretary of the party cell¹¹³. His transformation is bizarre, as he can't even talk properly. Such as he, put in the wrong place only because of his convictions and orthodoxy, will send to peasants of The Badgers high heeled shoes and bathing suits in Skutarevskij instead of sugar and nails. On the other hand, such converts as Ćerimov may be much more useful for the country. However they have to be found.

An example of good human material which is not properly used is evident in Fedia Butylkin.

3.5 Fedia Butylkin the glass-blower continues to work in "a simple fragment of a broken world"¹¹⁴, "the antique monument to prehistoric exploitation"¹¹⁵ as is remarked by Ćerimov.

However he feels no bitterness towards the "reliable master"¹¹⁶ who used to beat workers for committing mistakes. He was a German and was teaching him the trade.

But this occurrence of the past serves as a contrast to the present position of Fedia who, being a

113 Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", in Sobranije Soćinienij, Vol. 6, p. 564.

114 Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, op. cit., p. 116.

115 Ibid.

116 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 96.

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worker, is the master of the country. Ćerimov asks his advice on some problems of everyday life and accepts his suggestions.

"See, the old ones go, and now we're the front line¹¹⁷" says Fedia, who feels awe-struck and merry as the result of his new role. "We have faith in you¹¹⁸" as addressed to Ćerimov is the expression of the realization of his own new capacity to judge those who did it well. But he quite soberly appraises the new situation. He is not afraid of hardship, but sees all the shortcomings of the revolution as applied to everyday life. "There in the newly erected buildings it is easy, and you [try to] play a trick of industrial financial plan in our wonder [shop]; you will sweat¹¹⁹."

He is fully aware that some are leaving the trying conditions for an easy life and deserting the difficulties: "Comes here like a down-and-out scarecrow; then gets on a bit, and nothing on earth would entice him back¹²⁰." He performs his task where fate has put him. And he is a shockworker.

117 Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, op. cit., p. 125.

118 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 100.

119 Ibid., p. 95.

120 Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, op. cit., p. 120.

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He criticises the quality of a new glass on the market, knows that it could not be compared to the foreign-made products, but is bitter about others' criticism, as they are not aware of the reasons for it. "But then they mix in red lead over there and we can't even get potash¹²¹." "And even so we stretch our hand for export¹²²."

This proves his interest in his work and a certain pride in achievements. Yet there are some matters which he does not dare criticise before his friend: "he lowered his eyes and about a minute silently was struggling with the word which wanted to explode in him¹²³." He did not pronounce it. Probably it was connected with some discrepancy in production.

Butylkin is quite aware of the question of vigilance. The necessity for it he explains by the feebleness of human nature. Not everybody who is for revolution will stay that way. He condemns those who will break down on the road: "[...] let die the weak¹²⁴", yet

121 Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, op. cit., p. 120.

122 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 96.

123 Ibid., p. 95.

124 Ibid., p. 98.

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"Who are we... machines?... the enthusiastic alarm-clocks? And how many will fade ahead. And, God allow, that openly. Someone stays quite near you, and when you look closely — he is the same, who will first spit on revolution... if that will happen¹²⁵." It means he considers the revolution not only not strong enough, and like peasants in Sot', foresees the possibility of open struggle, but also recognizes the presence of concealed enemies of the government. He is conscious of class differences and is against taking advantage of the so-called remnants of the past. "Who constructs on wooden beams, which, in addition, were retaining the whole eternity¹²⁶?"

As for economic conditions, for him they are no better than they used to be. The worker still lives in the old, dilapidated house and this fact is emphasized by Leonov. While formerly his living quarters were maliciously describes as "the window opened directly to the midden, so that the portrait of a military leader on the wall was so fly-specked that at first glance it was not clear which was the horse and which was the general¹²⁷",

125 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 98.

126 Ibid., p. 99.

127 Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, op. cit., p. 119.

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in the new edition the "general" disappeared, but the sad situation is not altered: "even in the summertime the owners live without daylight and fresh air¹²⁸". And this notion of Ćerimov is even more depressing than the previous one. However there is hope. The Butylkins will soon move to a new house, which is in the process of construction.

Leonov puts forward the educational factor. The worker's wife studies at night, just as Mit'ka has the opportunity of schooling under the new conditions. Yet Fedia, who is an inventor of a washing machine for bottles, which are "the things naive and of questionable necessity¹²⁹", wasted on them "his most important — youth¹³⁰" in the desire to fulfill the norms set by the Five-Years-Plan, and continues to waste his strength and talents. Not that he is aware of this; he is happy.

3.6 To be a proletarian is a new social distinction and a reason for pride. Starting from Skutarevskij, only the older generation of proletarians is permitted not to be utterly fanatic with regard to the revolution which

128 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 94.

129 Ibid., p. 93.

130 Ibid., p. 98.

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made it possible. Such is an old nameless mechanic in The Road to the Ocean who did not buy state bonds because of his large family. The young railway workers are members of Komsomol, burning with desire to prove themselves in real difficult situations, and, at the same time, to eliminate the older generation by taking its place.

3.7 Among them is Sejfulla. He is the best example of reeducation of the village lad, who becomes a proletarian, but also a living illustration of Semjon Raxleev's idea of the influence of the town on the peasant. He left his village with the sole purpose of getting means to be married. After a few years the return will be for him a form of punishment.

He discovers the revolution is a force which makes him, a Tatar, acceptable to the Russian people on an equal footing. It gives him pride of achievement in the fact that he has become a real engineer, a post previously unattainable to the people of his nationality. He has no other choice but to become enthusiastic and to place Stalin's picture in his poor shack, which seems to Sejfulla's mother a bid for the possession of Sejfulla's soul¹³¹. The revolution wins.

¹³¹ Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 436 and 458.

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The young Tatar acquires a sense of belonging to the new world. His transformation takes six years¹³² during which he overcomes his past and assumes the aspect of the new man, the unit of the collective. He is helped by the elements necessary for such change. The natural one consists of belonging to the poor peasantry. His relative was a hero of the revolutionary struggle. Sejfulla is so young and gifted that his development in the right direction is assured.

The other element is represented by his desire to learn and by the influence of komsomol, which provides him with ideological training. Sejfulla consciously and with effort strives to assimilate himself, to be like his comrades. He gains the understanding of his social growth, of the importance of his task and of the great responsibility given to him. His new world outlook enables him to see his beautiful fiancée as a kulak's daughter. And he has all the necessary virtues of the proletarian: love for his work, a desire to take on responsibility, an enthusiasm arising from the perception of his usefulness. He fully recognizes his organization's discipline and is proud to belong to the Komsomol. One of

¹³² Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 457.

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his first actions after the disaster is an attempt to return his komsomol and shock-worker's cards.

He is still hindered by an illusory element, which takes the form of dreamy conversations with Mariam, being a remnant of his past and perhaps the result of his national origin. Thoughts about her in a way disturb the proper execution of his duty. Once he has definitely decided to part from her, he will be liberated from these subconscious meditations.

What is made clear is the fact of youth's belief in its boundless possibilities. It was the komsomol's pressure which forced the experienced men to accelerate Sejfulla's ascent and to give him, prematurely, responsibility without indispensable knowledge. However by placing every possible obstacle on the way of the locomotive, the author seems to dispense the young engineer of any guilt, by which he approves the rightness of his comrades¹³³.

3.8 The eventual and inevitable outcome of the peasants' question, at least for those who are taken away from their natural surroundings, is reflected in the

¹³³ And by this stand to atone his own guilt in the eyes of the youth, he was attacked for the character of Ženia in *Skutarevskij*. She was called "the Nothing" (*Komsomolskaja Pravda*, issue of June 15, 1934, as cited in L. Fink, *Dramaturgija Leonida Leonova*, Moscow, Sovetskij Pisatel, 1962, p. 150).

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formation of Sejfulla and Matvej Ćerimov. They are the right element for the replenishment of the proletarian ranks. But there is another class attempting to penetrate the proletariat: the remnants of the conquered classes. In The Road to the Ocean the reeducation of the merchant and of the former intelligentsia is shown to be not only slow and painful, but also practically impossible.

3.81 Omeličev accepts the new with the passivity of a man who is doomed to perish. He is bound with the class of masters only by a purely external factor, work. He cannot be fully converted.

3.82 In the case of Kormilicyn, Gorkij was of the opinion that "his rebirth is very poorly substantiated"¹³⁴. It is. By going to the bottom of the labour force, with the purpose of concealing his past, he suddenly shows interest in its ideology. If it is the work itself and the contact with the masses which bear such consequences, that he strives to become clean¹³⁵, he has no chances of reeducation, as it is not Leonov's intention. Even the fact that he finally denounces Gleb

¹³⁴ M. Gorkij, Pis'ma o Literature, Moscow, Sovetskij Pisatel, 1957, p. 491.

¹³⁵ Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 364.

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Protoklitov, which, according to the rules of the new humanitarianism, he was supposed to do, carries all the signs of baseness. He is the reverse of Sanka Velosiped.

The proletariat forms a homogenous clan as peasants, and it also distrusts newcomers. Its members display an infallible instinct, very characteristic of Leonov's characters, which, even in the person of the primitive Gašin protects them from such clever pretenders as Gleb Protoklitov.

3.9 In Russian Forest, about twenty years later, Serioža Vixrov has to prove himself by hard work to win the proletarians' friendship, but not equality, just as Mitia Vekšin was not accepted immediately.

3.91 During the war the workers of the Moscow railway are united in the defence effort. There is a full solidarity and unanimity in their goal — to thrust back the enemy. They may be the former komsomol members from Čeremšansk.

CHAPTER IV

THE INTELLIGENTSIA

4.0 The revolution was dreamed of, planned and prepared by idealistic members of the intelligentsia. Very few of them were looking forward to a new dictatorship, the dictatorship of the proletariat. When the bolsheviks took power, many of those who were organizing the upheaval were taken aback. The lack of enthusiasm resulted in repressions for those who did not emigrate.

4.01 Eight heroes are chosen to describe the fate of those spared by the first impact of revolution: "The fire-spitting virgin soil threatening with destruction and torment¹".

Most of them are professional men. The skill of some of them is used by the new state, others are not needed and discover that there is no place for them in the new life.

Seven persons represent the cultural heritage of the past, one is the product of Soviet conditions.

¹ As seen by Palčikov, "Belaja Noč", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 1, p. 382.

4.1 Fedor Andreiĉ Lixarev is not a "wicked Philistine"² nor "even harmful"³. He is the weak intellectual who in the world of the strong has to perish, like many from his social stratum. He is a famous professor with thirty years of practice, in the middle of the most important work of his life on mesozoic climate. He is so absorbed in his task that he considers the past more important than present. But contrary to Skutarevskij, similarly occupied with his professional interests, Lixarev notices the occurring change, which for him takes the characteristics of the mesozoic era⁴. As for his work he thinks that he is doing it for Russia⁵ and for "them"⁶, the people. The revolution with all the hardships which followed, just prevents him from writing. "Am I guilty that they needed to make this whole somersault⁷?"

4.11 This is not hostility but rather childish lack of concern for what is happening around him. While

2 M. Lobanov, Roman L. Leonova "Russkij Les", Moscow, Sovetskij Pisatel, 1958, p. 128.

3 V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, Moscow-Leningrad, Izd. Akademija Nauk SSSR, 1954, p. 17.

4 Leonid Leonov, "Konec Melkogo Čeloveka", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 1, p. 201.

5 Ibid., p. 269.

6 Ibid., p. 205.

7 Ibid.

revolution exists already he is not opposed to it. Jelkov is against the new; he does not trust the proletariat, he does not believe that it will be able "with their dirty hands to erect delicate buildings. They [...] will put asunder this delicate little house⁸".

But Lixarev tried to contradict his pessimistic ideas⁹ and at home he cannot forget the argument.

4.12 To maintain that Lixarev does not suffer from "the damned" sick questions of being¹⁰ is to overlook the meaning of Fop, the professor's double, representing the painful inner struggle which takes place in the old unpractical man, who is not only isolated from the masses but from the whole world. And as his discussions with himself indicate, his spiritual life is not as primitive¹¹ as it may seem to be.

4.13 Lixarev agrees that the time has come for the petty man to pass his examination:

⁸ Leonid Leonov, "Konec Melkogo Čeloveka", loc. cit., p. 232.

⁹ M. Lobanov, Roman L. Leonova "Russkij Les", op. cit., p. 128.

¹⁰ E. Starikova, "Tvorčeskij Put' Leonida Leonova", in Leonid Leonov, Sobranije Sočinenij, Vol. 1, p. 10.

¹¹ Leonid Leonov, "Konec Melkogo Čeloveka", loc. cit., p. 237.

What things will be made!... our Van'ka, he will go tomorrow to lay bricks, to construct this delicate building, for the whole world's astonishment and for the frightening of millions of Jelkovs, devil take them, eh¹²?

The main disagreement with Jelkov and a point of debate within himself is the future of the revolution. Van'ka is building, but will he not eventually destroy the product of his labor by removing the bricks one by one for his own use, as a result of the sheer imperfection of the human nature.

4.14 Fop expresses the professor's subconscious doubts, but Lixarev's reaction is a proof of his faith in the Russian people, when he declares: "The talk about such things should be made standing¹³." It means he recognizes the value of the effort and subsequently has a high opinion about the revolution as such. Not interested in human beings he is not entirely persuaded that "The nobleness, the truth has to be paid for with blood, and blood — it costs more than any truth¹⁴". This is Fop's formulation and the demonstration of its rightness consists in the fact, that to come to a certain nobility of

¹² Leonid Leonov, "Konec Melkogo Čeloveka", loc. cit., p. 237.

¹³ Ibid., p. 238.

¹⁴ Ibid.

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soul, the professor has to experience the loss of his sister. Furthermore his own death is the result of this particular phase of the revolution. With the death of Elena from tuberculosis¹⁵, the professor is completely lost. He has no ability to struggle for his livelihood. But under the influence of suffering he comes to realize many things which were previously beyond his reach. He grasps the truth, namely, that his work is not needed. Fop's words are just a reminder of his former belief in the importance of the pure science, of culture of which he is the representative.

[...] among the new instruments the humanity has axes and razors [...] and till the ax lies under a bench the razor should be in the case, and they should not be confused, otherwise either you will mar irrevocably the valuable blade, or hurt the face¹⁶.

Lixarev finally understood that the axe does not lie about any more, as it is swinging and that the delicate instrument of his brain has no value at all.

¹⁵ Leonid Leonov, "Konec Melkogo Čeloveka", loc. cit., p. 267, while Nathan Rosen (Leonid Leonov: The Reforging of a Fellow-Traveler (1922-1935), typescript, thesis, New York, Russian Institute, Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University, 1956, p. 26) states "Helena dying of typhus". Hemorrhages are not a symptom of that disease.

¹⁶ Leonid Leonov, "Konec Melkogo Čeloveka", loc. cit., p. 266; very similar statement was later used by Potemkin in Sot'.

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4.15 He burns his manuscripts to warm his room. Thus he liberates himself from the illusion of being "The salt of the earth"¹⁷. Naturally he still believes that "the best, its most important dreams, its holy inspirations, the fruits of sleepless nights the man [...] was confining not to steel, not to granite but to such [...] friend as paper"¹⁸. But he has to accept the fact that reappraisal of values is taking place. Being a Russian patriot he persuades himself that Russia has chosen the new path and he has no other way but to accept her decision. Passively he recognizes his own worthlessness for the future and regards himself as a former man¹⁹. There is no place for the professor of palaeontology in the days to come, when Russia

[...] will rise, will spread the sky with the ferro-concrete, will throw the highway over it. She [...] will make bread from the air, will roll on street-cars over the sky, wear the velvet trousers: life!²⁰

So he believes in the boundless possibilities of the

¹⁷ Leonid Leonov, "Konec Melkogo Čeloveka", loc. cit., p. 265.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 266.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 270.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 269.

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revolution²¹. But its future achievements are far from being the intellectual's heaven.

4.2 To Sergej Ammonyc̃ Manjukin the revolution left only life, making him "the scum"²² of the new society. But it could not deprive him of culture, just as Mit'ka killing the White officer was not able to take the most important, the treasure of his wisdom²³.

4.20 Manjukin is not "the victim of the old, pre-revolutionary Russia", quite the opposite, he is the product of the social revaluation, the symbol of the intelligentsia's degradation in the new conditions. Injured and beaten, while he is down he reflects on the reality of Soviet life, which eighteen years later Polja longs to eliminate. The old man has no hope of improving his lot, hence he looks forward to death. But personal misery does not prevent him from thinking about the destiny of Russia. His thoughts are in a way the continuation of Lixarev's.

21 The story was probably changed in 1960, as the first version stirred up severe criticism.

22 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, translated by Hubert Butler, London, Secker, 1931, p. 181.

23 Leonid Leonov, Złodziej, translated by Stanislaw Lesniewski, Warszawa, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1958, p. 428.

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4.21 He is not against the revolution. In the first place he had no esteem for the old government, and secondly, he knows that there is no return to the past. "[...] the old gods have been overthrown and insulted too deeply for them ever to return. One cannot rejuvenate the dead²⁴."

4.22 Like Lixarev, Manjukin recognizes the right of Van'ka's to prove their possibilities, as the fulfilment of life's laws.

4.23 Just as it happened with Favorov, Peter the Great comes to his mind, but he places Russia's present in the fourteenth century²⁵.

4.24 Manjukin similarly to Jelkov is sceptical as far as human nature is concerned. While he does not know what to expect from the people whom he used to meet only as his servants in the past, he is afraid of their transformation. He fears that the new bureaucracy and the petty bourgeoisie will arise and the dictatorship will be restored, "with a silver chain across his belly²⁶!" In this respect his views do not differ from Mit'ka's.

24 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 182.

25 Ibid., p. 380.

26 Ibid., p. 381.

4.25 The promises are too slow to come. While for Uvadjev the country is like a ship, Manjukin sees it as a train passing a long tunnel. He wants it to reach the light and for that purpose will not spare his beloved son, whom he asks to "Bore through the rock with your scull²⁷". Thus is reflected the despair of the old man but also a hope that eventually revolution will leave the wrong track and will become more human, as "what has been destroyed in streams of blood cannot be cemented together by blood again, and why should it be²⁸?"

So the question of the cost of revolution in human life appears again and will trouble many Leonov's heroes.

4.26 In a time when the trend to despise the achievements of the past generations was apparent, Manjukin naturally enhances the merits of forefathers.

[...] the young can only build their giddy structures on the firm shoulders of the old. They have no inkling that they too will one day be trampled underfoot by a grateful and business-like posterity²⁹.

This point will be proved by The Road to the Ocean as well as by the whole problem of the relations between the

27 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 182.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid., p. 185.

fathers and sons. As for this particular hero he will experience the cruelty of the next generation in the second version of The Thief in the person of Lavrenty.

4.27 As for the future Manjukin shows perspicacity and a knowledge of men. Contrary to what he is longing for, he foresees what is now termed the cult of personality. "You will build yourself a new Mammon and adore it passionately, for men cannot exist without idols³⁰." But the nature of this idol he cannot forecast. Out of Manjukin's certainty that the new man will be created, arises fear for his identity. The old man will not see him rise, but his son will. "Then you'll be terrified and in your terror you'll kneel down before this god or this monster. Who can tell³¹?"

This intellectual degraded by life does not live in the past alone. However, as its useless reminder, he will perish.

4.3 The former landowner was given no chance to prove himself useful in the new state. The situation of professionals was different. With the advent of the Five-Year-Plans and the beginning of the industrialization, the Soviet state's need of the trained people resulted in

30 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 188.

31 Ibid., p. 380-381.

recruiting such men as Filip Aleksandrovič Renne. Žeglov who found him in the Nep's "cave"³² was fully aware of Renne's feelings towards Soviet power. He heard that the engineer called bolsheviks "the fugitives from the hard-labour camp"³³, implying that they should have stayed there, and the old communist quite rightly appraised Renne as "an intellectual for whom the lights dimmed on the whole world with the start of revolution"³⁴. Nevertheless his skill was necessary for rebuilding the lagging economy of the country and he was accepted.

Actually Renne had his reasons to be slow in welcoming the dictatorship of the proletariat.

4.31 The intelligentsia as a whole social class was viewed with suspicion, and he found out that "the local power determining the degree of citizen's harmfulness by the eye"³⁵ could not approve of his white collar. Actually later his appearance, which he considered a kind of symbol of his status, was one of the reasons of his fall.

4.32 Renne is critical of Soviet incompetence to organize the country. The slow pace of development he

³² Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 4, p. 78.

³³ Ibid., p. 76.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 78.

³⁵ Ibid.; like Polovinkin in The Badgers.

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diagnoses as the inaptitude to build "a decent stall"³⁶. Unable to pretend, he talks openly about his misgivings; therefore it is not surprising that with such convictions he was not likes on the Sot'stroj.

4.33 It is strange however that all of a sudden it was discovered that he has "no taste for work"³⁷. Not only Suzanna knows that he is kept alive by being occupied³⁸, but previously it was stated that he had few other interests in life but his profession³⁹. There can be no doubt that he worked honestly and to the best of his possibilities.

4.34 Renne recognizes his employment as only temporary, until the new cadres of Soviet-educated specialists are ready to take his place; "we are only superphosphate for them, the cows, till the scientific synthesis of milk is found"⁴⁰. In this statement is visible the consciousness of the "they" and "we". Renne never identifies himself with the masters of the country. But it is possible that he does this from sheer stubbornness.

36 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 88.

37 Ibid., p. 187.

38 Ibid., p. 201.

39 Ibid., p. 80.

40 Ibid., p. 190.

4.35 It is a fact that while he is accused of looking on people as on commercial wood⁴¹ he was the only one to think about the danger of their work, which proves quite the opposite.

Renne preserves his dignity just like Manjukin and like him is downtrodden. The episode with the overshoes is reminiscent of Manjukin's relationship with Ćikilev: "[Are] my overshoes harmful for socialism⁴²?" It shows that there was no trace of solidarity between the men of the same profession and of the same social stratum. Renne became the victim of conditions to which he was unable to adapt himself.

4.4 Burago is a contrast but also a completion of Renne. In the preliminary plans they were supposed to be one person⁴³.

4.41 The difference between the two consists in the fact that Burago was involved at least in the 1905 revolution⁴⁴. This gives him an advantage over Renne whose interests do not transcend the limits of his work.

41 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 187.

42 Ibid., p. 191.

43 V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 167.

44 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 199.

Burago admits the expectance of revolution for a "thousand years"⁴⁵. Perhaps, like Manjukin, he thinks about the raising of the country from its backwardness, which implies that Peter did not do enough. As for Renne, even Peter was a catastrophe⁴⁶.

4.42 While Renne just criticises, Burago deplores the slow tempo of the reconstruction. He calls bureaucrats "snails"⁴⁷ who will prevent the overcoming of Europe. In this respect he is very much in line with a current policy.

4.43 He considers himself to be fighting⁴⁸, but Uva-djev who believes to be a soldier grants him only the name of a field engineer⁴⁹. Renne was not using any political catchwords but was executing his duty.

4.44 By his own admission Burago is no more than a fellow-traveller of the revolution:

I construct plants [...] and it is not important for me how you need to call that. I will be with you till the end, but do not demand from me more than I can. Socialism... yes... I do not know⁵⁰.

45 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 293.

46 Ibid., p. 137.

47 Ibid., p. 293.

48 Ibid., p. 199.

49 Ibid., p. 198.

50 Ibid., p. 292.

However he is not only loyal, but he talks and acts as a communist should. He accepts without any pangs of conscience the observance of socialist humanism. He wages the class struggle within his class. Persuaded that "Renne [is] a puddle which had no time to get dry after the rain, it should be helped to dry up⁵¹", Burago denounces him to his superiors Potemkin and Uvadjev. He is for separation of children, in this case Suzanna, from unorthodox parents; "let them admire from a distance a day of tomorrow, to which they will not enter⁵²". Thus he displays belief in the future, of which he wants to be a part, as well as constructor.

4.45 Renne's reluctance in accepting the revolution is explained by Burago's stand. Being a member of the old intelligentsia he feels his superiority over the new and, in many respects, primitive man: "The new Adam comes and distributes the new names to creatures living before him. And he rejoices⁵³." So this Adam brings actually nothing which was not tried before, except this, like Kalafat, he gives passports. But Burago is mistaken. He finds out that the coming race of men has something he does not

51 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 199.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid., p. 292.

understand. The old fashioned Manjukin interpreted this as a will of God⁵⁴. Burago calls it luck⁵⁵ in the face of which old "technology of the human possibilities⁵⁶" lost its meaning. His reason when confronted with their instinct and willpower gives in. Thus he becomes persuaded that the old standards of science are not applicable to the new times.

4.46 Still Burago is prevented from the blind belief in revolution: "No, I am already old: I remember and the French revolution and the misfortune of Icarus, and the Bible's tower [...]"⁵⁷.

4.461 Very similar arguments⁵⁸ were used later by Leonov himself explaining to what degree culture hampers the perception of the world in a new "materialistic essence"⁵⁹. However the same opinion is shared by Vissarjon⁶⁰, so actually it is hard to decide with whom Leonov wishes to be identified.

54 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 380.

55 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 293.

56 Ibid., p. 296.

57 Ibid., p. 293.

58 As noticed by Nathan Rosen, The Fiction of Leonid Leonov, typescript, thesis, Ph.D., New York, Columbia University, 1961, p. 97.

59 Sjergej Romov, "Vstreča s Leonidom Leonovym", in Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 43, issue of September 24, 1930, p. 2.

60 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 150.

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Burago is accepted by the revolution in spite of his rather undisclosed misgivings. He enjoys the right of near equality with the masters. He is the right man in the right place, strong and ruthless. He will prosper unhindered by the old moral standards.

But the question of culture, and particularly of ethics, will make the way to socialism a complicated one and painful one for another remnant of the old world, professor Skutarevskij.

4.5 Leonov closely watched the Industrial processes of 1930-1931, as is made clear from his letters to Gorkij⁶¹. He was shocked by testimonials of Ramzin, Groman's and Sher. The novel Skutarevskij is the result of his impressions, which may be the reason why the old scientist is of proletarian origin, "the representative of the most democratic strata of Russian intelligentsia⁶²".

This fact gives the author the right to feel sympathy for his hero and to show that not all members of intelligentsia are enemies of the state.

4.51 Sergej Andreiĉ Skutarevskij's celebrity was acquired before the revolution. He is not a man to be

61 F. Vlasov, Poezija Žizni, Moscow, Sovetskaja Rossiya, 1961, p. 82.

62 Leonid Leonov, as cited in E. Surkov, "Notes to 'Skutarevskij'", in Leonid Leonov, Teatr, Vol. 2, p. 502.

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particularly interested in politics. Absent-minded, he hardly notices what happens around him. His private life is completely subordinate to his work — his only interest, except music, and the reason for living. Skutarevskij's world-outlook, however, is leftist, with an inclination towards the Social-Democrats⁶³. He belonged for some time to the Marxist circle⁶⁴, but not long enough to learn even about Engels, whom he knew "by hearsay, and as for Bernstein, the only Bernstein he knew was the defunct dental surgeon⁶⁵".

4.511 While Leonov propagates the rise to "the height from which is best visible the barbarism of yesterday's stone age⁶⁶" the mountain of his hero consists of his realization of exceptional knowledge, self-assurance and his personal rightness. Only descent from it will bring him closer to men who are unable to follow him. Thus arises the problem of the individual and the collective.

⁶³ Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 5, p. 38.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 40.

⁶⁵ Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, translated by Alec Brown, London, Ed. Lovat Dickson & Thompson, 1936, p. 58.

⁶⁶ Leonid Leonov, "Speech on the First All-Union Congress of the Soviet Writers", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 8, p. 155.

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4.512 Skutarevskij sent his only son to fight for the revolution but is not able to fully accept the new order. Lenin's opinion of the intelligentsia, including Skutarevskij, cannot be wrong in Leonov's work: "O, Forces of destruction, I bless you because you are destroying a house I dislike⁶⁷." This was the Skutarevskij's main reason for desiring the revolution. However when confronted with the insults "science has suffered⁶⁸" Skutarevskij cannot answer positively the question whether he approves the means bolsheviks work with: "Yes, but [...] I have certain doubts⁶⁹." The situation of Burago is repeated. Seemingly he discards his misgivings one by one in the process of reeducation⁷⁰. If that was Leonov's aim, he failed.

4.52 Skutarevskij is amazed by the generosity of Lenin. This changes Skutarevskij's attitude towards the Soviet government, especially since he was able to find, differences notwithstanding, a common tongue with the leader. Not so with the third person present at the talk: "not

67 Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, op. cit., p. 60 ("Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 48).

68 Ibid.

69 Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, op. cit., p. 59.

70 V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 222-223.

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tall and thickset man, whom afterwards Skutarevskij was seeing on nearly all governmental photographs⁷¹". There is no doubt that this man is Stalin, who after Lenin's death introduced a new policy.

4.521 For the time being Petrygin is not mistaken in saying about Skutarevskij:

You're pleased with everything nowadays. It's your position... you've been bought. No, I don't mean for money... but people have got absolute confidence in you, and that's the most dangerous kind of money⁷².

4.522 The professor is well on the way to becoming a bolshevik. He has a scorn for the old ruling classes.

If their women were losing fire and their poets were silenced they were so because they belonged to a Herculaneum whose very outline was to be all but buried in the ashes of time⁷³.

That was, and still is, a very orthodox point of view.

4.523 That Skutarevskij did not condemn the human sacrifices of the revolution, is made clear by Arsenij's testimony.

I know your views about the country having a right to dispose of what you might call its stock of human material [...] it's no use whining over every single vanished species⁷⁴.

p. 45. 71 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit.,

72 Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, op. cit., p. 207.

73 Ibid., p. 71.

74 Ibid., p. 77-78.

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Since Skutarevskij was of this opinion already at the time of Arsenij's childhood, he did not have to adapt himself in this respect. The arrests of his friends and collaborators do not affect him because he has no warm feelings towards anybody, even to his own son, who deceived his hopes. There is no sincere concern in him for others, his is mostly self-centered attitude. He considers his professional approach towards material as a valid universal law, applicable to humans and to life in general. "All you see are electro-chemical processes"⁷⁵ says his son. "I am only a retort in your eyes... but then so is everybody else, eh"⁷⁶?"

4.524 The human element is of some importance in Skutarevskij's acceptance of his place in the new life. He has contempt for nearly everybody, as most of the people surrounding him are a long way, culturally speaking, beneath him. He had no understanding of the proletarians' right to take a sudden interest in his work. So he is sarcastic about it.

the porters' wives [...] we know they're all learning to govern the country... Not that I am against that. I'll be dead long before they finish learning⁷⁷.

75 Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, op. cit., p. 78.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid., p. 94.

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"The cabmen revise science, the scientists are occupied by making electric kettles, yes⁷⁸." Obviously there is no enthusiasm towards the new order, nor towards the so-called lower classes. He also makes fun of his fellow-scientists. This attitude will eventually change, when he recognizes that he is not so out of reach as he imagines.

4.525 Another barrier to the acceptance of the new way of life as his own is the problem of 'informing'. When he discovers the faulty construction of the electric plant he realizes he should make it known to the authorities. But he refrains from delation as he is not used to it. Arsenij later says: "You always taught me not to be a sneak⁷⁹."

4.526 One of the most important characteristics of the old scientist is his full independence of research — a striving towards yet unexplored possibilities for mankind, like the wireless transmission of electricity. He does not expect immediate results, naturally, but he hopes that he will be able to work without interference. In that aspect, the freedom of thought, he is confronted with the purely practical needs of the socialistic society.

⁷⁸ Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 270.

⁷⁹ Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, op. cit., p. 79.

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4.53 The defeat of Skutarevskij comes gradually.

4.531 He is dictatorial in his institute. He did not expect that his principals in Kremlin, whom he could call any time, whenever he needed help, would send him Ćerimov, who is directly below him, as his official assistant, and at the same time over him, as a political commissar. It is only a matter of time before Ćerimov transforms himself from a friendly and submissive pupil to a not less friendly, in his own opinion, master. And Skutarevskij is perfectly aware of his degradation.

4.532 In what is very ably termed as "barbed duologue"⁸⁰ Ćerimov gets hold of Skutarevskij and destroys his pride and self-assurance, thus preparing for the unconditional surrender to his and the party's will. The scientist trying to repulse Ćerimov's attack is confronted with, and has difficulty to accept, the fundamental laws governing the socialistic society, the principles of vigilance. The problematic crime consists of the contact with foreigners, the shadowing of the individual and the responsibility of kin for the offence committed by the member of the family. With the intention of proving the probity of his teacher the "comrade second in charge"⁸¹

⁸⁰ Ronald Hingley, "Leonid Leonov", in Soviet Survey, No. 25, July-September 1958, p. 72.

⁸¹ Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 235.

applies the well-proven methods of investigation. This is his first contact with this aspect of revolution, of which Skutarevskij had only heard before. He is afraid. He "howled"⁸² in a vain attempt to defend his "human right"⁸³. He seems to realize that during the "friendly" interrogation he is nothing more than a fox confronted with strings of the red-coloured rags. He even pronounces the words "gloomy chain"⁸⁴. When Leonov avowed that he was inspired by Bruegel's Hunters in writing Skutarevskij⁸⁵ he could not have anything else in mind.

4.5321 It is the instinct of self-preservation and of the continuation of species which causes the defence of the unloved son and furthermore the invocation of the name of Lenin. This reminder stops Ćerimov's procedure. But the tired scientist gives up his defence and unexpectedly denounces Petrygin. Actually he remains unable to inform on Petrygin, when he has already been arrested⁸⁶. Leonov covers up the fact, but it is money

82 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 235.

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid., p. 236.

85 Leonid Leonov, "Moje Źycie i KsiaŹki", in Wiadomosci Literackie, No. 47, 1933, p. 7.

86 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 325.

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that the authorities were looking for and found in Petrygin's home, which brought about his imprisonment. Otherwise it seems they had no clues against him. Skutarevskij does not comprehend the importance of his revelation. The question "have you written a report on Ivan Petrovič⁸⁷?" is unexpected for the investigator. Naturally it was first scientist's defeat, and a victory of Ćerimov.

4.553 The acceptance of Ćerimov's offer apart from other considerations was for both of them a part of a play. Ćerimov could have a constant watch on his teacher; Skutarevskij, being innocent, became safer and out of suspicion. The existence of the little house built especially for Ćerimov proves already his importance and superiority over the nominal director of the Institute who will live there as a guest. The old professor fully realizes the situation.

Still, it is strange... of course such is their position in the world, but bolsheviks do nothing without design. It would be more proper to refuse, but being more sly I accept⁸⁸.

4.554 Skutarevskij alone in his plight, is subjected to pressure from two combined forces. In his reeducation Ćerimov is helped by Ženia. It is the belated love,

⁸⁷ Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 238.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

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especially important as he did not love before, that pushes the professor to renounce his usual way of life, his family and, connected with it, tradition. Ženia in her youthful directness does not spare him.

O, how wrongly you live and... don't you see what is going on around you? [...] you will never finish your work, because it is not possible, that you spend national funds, speculate by your name and from stubbornness deceive the Council of National Economy⁸⁹.

4.555 Those doubts become his own. Not that he feels any culpability, but he begins to recognize the right of the state. He, the great scientist, spending huge sums on his project, notices all the economic poverty of his country: Ženia has a coat which is supposed to be water-repellent and is made from a special kind of readily absorbent material⁹⁰; she wears the remnants of galoshes and is unable to find a new pair⁹¹; "Nowadays tobacco is mixed with the stinging nettle⁹²"; he hears that in bread again appeared the cigarette ends⁹³ and he sees that the scientist is dressed like a beggar abroad⁹⁴. Skutarevskij

⁸⁹ Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 241.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 113.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 323 and 333.

⁹² Ibid., p. 122.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 10.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 330.

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does not attach importance to inconveniences of life, but nevertheless he observes the shortcomings of everyday life.

What is more, he recognizes the right of the new forces to replace him.

all the time Skutarevskij was quite clear that the only thing which had induced him to come down from his mountain was — feeling the freshness and thirst of the new race coming to take his place⁹⁵.

4.54 The elements of unavoidability of this process, of fear of the consequences, the notion of the enormous loss of state's funds, added to the personal tragedy of an unaccomplished task of his life, prepare and bring Skutarevskij's complete surrender to the man who came to replace him. The humiliated Skutarevskij is ready to become a watchman at his Institute. The man who used to deal directly with Lenin and was appointed by him personally, now hands in his resignation to a comparatively minor servant of Stalin, because he became "only a professor [...] and when [...] commissars are talking with me, they are cunning, they seek the information about me from Çerimov, not from me, myself⁹⁶".

95 Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, op. cit., p. 139.

96 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 282.

4.541 So he recognizes the superiority of the other who, only because of his party rank, will have the right to give him, a towering scientific genius, orders concerning the scientific matters. He will be watched in his every movement, he will always have the Dželladalejev-like man at his side. He accepts this. His "unparalleled pride"⁹⁷ is pulverized. His glory is fading. But still he does not submit to the lowering of his goal.

4.55 Even a morally-broken Skutarevskij will not serve the necessity of the moment. In this respect he remains independent. He still can say "Yes, but..."⁹⁸ if he has enough of will power to profess: "That sort of pace won't take us to socialism, if that's where we are going"⁹⁹. And if he suffers for the sake of the coming generations he will not leave them his unfinished task. "I do not intend to cede my rights to anybody"¹⁰⁰. "Don't forget that also in the future I will place that [project] as the central problem of the Institute"¹⁰¹.

97 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 336.

98 Ibid., p. 47.

99 Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, op. cit., p. 422.

100 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 340.

101 Ibid., p. 339.

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4.56 It is not certain for how long he will be able to continue, and, still less, in what capacity. While inside the walls of the institute, which was created by him, he feels rejected by his collaborators, is hounded by "the sensation of downtroddenness and isolation¹⁰²", in fulfilling the first assignment of Ćerimov, he reluctantly goes to the workers' meeting. The audience was "carefully and imperceptibly¹⁰³" prepared for a polite welcome. Instead it gave him an ovation. So his stand, his promethean search for human achievement previously unheard of, even his mistakes on the way towards it, are approved by the people.

4.561 Yet socialism for Skutarevskij is still far away, as is the case for many other Leonov's heroes. "Socialism it is a man upright, it is a man risen forever from all fours [...] and only there this word, man, will resound proudly¹⁰⁴." Gorkij's ideal will be realized somewhere in the future.

4.57 It is not certain whether there really exists a discrepancy between "the scheme and implementation¹⁰⁵" of

102 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 332.

103 Ibid., p. 346.

104 Ibid., p. 339.

105 A. Selivanovskij, V Literaturnyx Bojax, Moscow, Sovetskij Pisatel, 1963, p. 128.

the novel. The attempts to curb the human mind and the resistance to pressure is the theme, for example, of The Russian Forest. And the quoting by Kovalev of Leonov's explanation of Skutarevskij's rebirth concerns the play and cannot be well adapted to the novel. Even so Leonov talks about the "drastic necessity to go to work for the Soviet power¹⁰⁶". As for "the real world-outlook of the working class¹⁰⁷" Skutarevskij of the novel was, and remained, a 'fellow-traveller' of the revolution.

4.571 There exists one difference, perhaps unimportant for the Soviet critic, between the two Skutarevskij. In the play there is no question of the humiliation and fear. Skutarevskij is undisputed master of his Institute, nobody ever suspects him of anything as he is above suspicion. And what is more important, his experiment is a success.

4.6 Such men as Burago and Skutarevskij are professionals, and as such are urgently needed by Soviet government. They can talk openly of their misgivings and, in the case of Skutarevskij, even his family's crimes are eventually forgotten as far as he is concerned.

106 V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 220; also Leonid Leonov, Teatr, Vol. 2, p. 398.

107 Ibid.

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Gleb Protoklitov is of different stature, he is not irreplaceable. He is afraid even to reveal his origin, which, nevertheless does not harm his famous brother Ilja. Gleb represents the torment of the Soviet citizen, who is followed by his past which, in spite of his great efforts, will ruin his life.

4.61 Gleb Protoklitov accepted the revolution as an inevitability. His fault lies in fact that instead of going to the bottom and, like Omeličev, staying there, he decided to remain on the surface. The definition of his problem can be found in his thoughts

about the man's right for the second life, about an alleged responsibility for his father's crimes, and finally, whether the proletarian state does feel sufficiently strong to include the magnanimity into the practice of its high incentives¹⁰⁸.

As it is the preparation for the interrogation he does not include his biggest crime. He has taken part in the Civil War and was fighting on the Whites' side.

So his is a tragedy of "a brave man, without a murmur earning the right for life and for oblivion of mistakes¹⁰⁹". This right is denied him. He is haunted by everybody in his surroundings and having built his

¹⁰⁸ Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 6, p. 504.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 532-533.

immunity on falsehood he will be destroyed through his own fear of being discovered.

4.62 What is surprising is that the man who is arrested at the end is given not only "the best pages"¹¹⁰ but also some of Leonov's own biographical data. They are distributed in an equal way in Protoklitov's fictional as well as hidden life story. What is more, the fictional ones are well known; as for the hidden details, they, such as Gleb's, are waiting to be elucidated¹¹¹. These consist of: the holiday in the North during the Intervention, the poverty, the fatherless childhood, the reading of the Saints' Lives, which in the novel make Gleb's mother cry, while in real life it was Leonov's grandfather who was moved to tears, first yawning, then beginning to love the scripture, even the fact of having a brother who is the only one left of the family. Gleb was eighteen years old when the war started¹¹². Leonov was of the same age at the beginning of the revolution.

110 Gleb Struve, Histoire de la Littérature Soviétique, Paris, Ed. Du Chêne, 1946, p. 277.

111 F. Vlasov (Poeziija Žizni, op. cit., p. 11-12) has this to say about Leonov: "Many sources of light, just as by consideration of thrift, remained dimmed. In this respect the situation changed very little even now, when the name of the artist became known to the world."

112 Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 46.

Considering the above coincidences it would be unthinkable perfidy to make someone so similar to himself an enemy of the people.

4.63 But, for instance, Kovalev implies some "wrecking actions¹¹³", which, however, do not exist in the novel. His theory concerning Kormilicin's desire to become "an accomplice¹¹⁴" of Protoklitov's "secret projects¹¹⁵" is unfounded. It is enough to notice Leonov's appraisal of Kormilicin the blackmailer; the maliciousness and stupidity of his letters; this "physically repulsive¹¹⁶" "dead who wants to live¹¹⁷" to understand that all the possible scorn is heaped on this informer and not on Protoklitov. Hence all the suspicions concerning Gleb were inspired by rage, liquor and envy. The whole tragedy of Gleb Protoklitov consists of the fact that such a man was the sole witness of his previous sins. And "this unlucky wretch shared equal responsibility with one, whose head he had furtively carried to Kurilov¹¹⁸".

113 V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 299.

114 Ibid., p. 362.

115 Ibid., p. 361-362.

116 Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 528.

117 Ibid., p. 362.

118 Ibid., p. 532.

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4.64 The specific charges of sabotage are not proved by facts.

4.641 When Kovalev accuses of "[...] the discredit of komsomol members [...] initiative¹¹⁹" he seems not to notice that Protoklitov rightly estimated their lack of experience. But disturbed by Kurilov's interest in him and by the letter which was exposing him, he panicked. That was the main motive for giving up. He offers them the best locomotive available, as the public opinion was against him and he wanted to smooth over the incipient scandal.

4.642 As for "the worsening of the engine-shed's model work¹²⁰", the critic is like those newspapers, which enhanced the irregularities, but forgot, that in the first place the success was due to Protoklitov's merit, "that it twice received honorary diplomas and its chief was given an example to the laggards¹²¹". Protoklitov's emotional state had to affect his work. "Now this man was falling and the reasons of fall were lying in him alone¹²²", as he lost confidence in himself. There is no

119 V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 361.

120 Ibid.

121 Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 191.

122 Ibid.

proof of his malefactor's aims, no trace of his contacts with any wrong organization.

4.643 Protoklitov's "outrageous"¹²³ sending Seyfullah and his team on the difficult job actually should exclude the previous accusation. They could prove their initiative and possibilities. Furthermore this occurrence is well explained in the novel. Seyfullah had proved that he is a good locomotive engineer¹²⁴, "the additional work flattered them; it showed to which degree the people needed them"¹²⁵.

The decision was sudden because of "the sickness"¹²⁶ of one of the railway workers. The tutor was not sent with them, as there were only two available and both were occupied elsewhere¹²⁷. And naturally the accident was a real blow to Protoklitov.

4.644 Kovalev does not like the behaviour of Protoklitov who was harsh with the guilty men¹²⁸. But did he

¹²³ V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 362.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 322, "best engineer"; Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 436.

¹²⁵ Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", p. 438.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 323.

forget that it was the chief who could be held responsible (as he is now in Kovalev's opinion, "predetermining the outcome¹²⁹"). For some incomprehensible reason Protoklitov was supposed to pity Sejfulla, as being "also proletarian¹³⁰", but even the members of komsomol, his best friends, did not notice him on the street till the explanation of the affair. What is more, compassion, according to the new savoir-vivre, is considered the worst offence, as is apparent just two pages further. "Are you looking for pity¹³¹?" says Peresypkin with the intention of hurting him.

4.65 All this only proves how deeply Leonov understood Gleb Protoklitov's predicament, all the witch-hunting, so characteristic of that time. His "guilt towards Kurilov was somehow abstract¹³²". He was searching for Kurilov during the Civil War, but did not find him. He killed some bolsheviks and could be killed himself. As for the harmful details "They were not enough, so many years

¹²⁹ V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 362.

¹³⁰ Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", p. 453.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 455.

¹³² Ibid., p. 504.

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later, to make him dead physically, but there was enough of them to make him stumble for the whole life¹³³".

4.66 Undoubtedly at first the revolution was a disaster for Gleb Protoklitov. It destroyed his plans for future education, it brought great changes. Later it became hope, that with his mathematically prepared life story, his cultural background and knowledge he would be able to advance in a life in which he proved to be useful. All he wants is "simple and honest joys¹³⁴". He would like to get some kind of agreement with Kurilov, but he realizes that from such man he cannot expect any compromise¹³⁵.

4.661 Protoklitov adapts himself fully to the new conditions, he leads the ascetic life of a communist, works hard: "I execute my work honestly and sincerely¹³⁶." "I am the commander and our task is similar to military¹³⁷". He would like to have more power to force the others to treat the work in the same way.

p. 59. 133 Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit.,

134 Ibid., p. 350.

135 Ibid., p. 192.

136 Ibid., p. 359.

137 Ibid., p. 52.

Even if he lacks the enthusiasm of the true convert, he is not like Burago, who offers his services to revolution without his full ideological consent. Gleb Protoklitov "was trying to believe"¹³⁸. He makes an effort to learn, he reads Lenin, studies Marx. He is persuaded that he serves the revolution¹³⁹, at least this is what he says to Kurilov. His conception of the future is reminiscent of the Ocean: "The new man will create for himself iron slaves after his own image and likeness. In short, he will become god"¹⁴⁰. But he yawns talking about this distant future, and it is not clear if he is tired or simply bored.

4.662 Actually as he gives an impression of being an egocentric man, he may desire more than just life. He likes to rule and, as his progress from unskilled workman to chief proves, he could get farther, of course within the limits of the Soviet state. He is not a counter-revolutionary. Gorkij noticed his acceptance of the revolution and his understanding that there is no way back.

138 Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 369.

139 Ibid., p. 53.

140 Ibid., p. 369.

But he wanted Gleb to acknowledge his guilt, bravely accepting "about 10 years¹⁴¹" on Peçora or Kolyma.

Such an eventuality would not give his older brother a chance to denounce him, and, what Gorkij unfortunately did not realize, will destroy his ambitions and ruin the man. Leonov seemingly was better informed. Omeličev and Kormilicin both served short terms and both returned broken men.

4.7 Fjodor Talanov is very well defined by the words taken from another play, written by another author. As Rev. Anderson says about Dick Dudgeon:

This foolish young man [...] boasted himself a Devil's Disciple; but when the hour of trial came to him, he found that it was his destiny to suffer and be faithful to the death¹⁴².

The question arises whether Fjodor was faithful to the revolution or to his country. For those who wish to see it that way, the Soviet state and Russia may be identified as one, but it is just as well that they can be separated. According to some critics Fjodor is like Mit'ka Vekšin¹⁴³ and Vissarion in that he does not find his

¹⁴¹ M. Gorkij, Pis'ma o Literature, Moscow, Sovetskij Pisatel, 1957, p. 491.

¹⁴² Bernard Shaw, "The Devil's Disciple", in Three Plays for Puritans, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1952, p. 106.

¹⁴³ Vera Aleksandrova, "Leonid Leonov (1899-)", in A History of Soviet Literature 1917-1962. From Gorky to Yevtushenko, Doubleday, 1963, p. 188.

place in life¹⁴⁴. But there is a difference. He is the product of Soviet society. Being younger than Arsenij Skutarevskij he has been educated under Soviet conditions and has grown under communism.

4.71 Some discrepancies can be found in the fact of his alleged imprisonment for the murder attempt. "And he is not afraid of death: he slept in embrace with her for three years¹⁴⁵." Obviously it is supposed to be a condemnation of prison conditions, in which he contracted tuberculosis. But could he, by any chance, expect the death penalty? Not for his crime. Fjodor was not infected with dislike of the Soviet regime in the concentration camp. It has deeper roots. Furthermore a criminal offence in the USSR is much less serious than a political one, and the behaviour of his family towards him shows not only shame but political mistrust and, in some instances, bordering on fear of him. Thus it may be presumed that Leonov used his murder attempt as a cover-up.

4.711 Criminals in most cases are permitted to write without any restrictions. Fjodor did not write¹⁴⁶.

144 Gleb Struve, Histoire de la Littérature Soviétique, op. cit., p. 328; but the hero is called "Veniamin", which probably means Vissarion.

145 Leonid Leonov, "Našestvie", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 7, p. 378.

146 Ibid., p. 370.

4.712 Fajunin describes him as "[...] known to us as a fighter against the Soviet rule¹⁴⁷". Doctor Talanov rejects the accusation, but there must be some truth in it if he says: "we buried him [...] three years ago¹⁴⁸".

Why his loving mother does not object is a secret, unless she has lost all her feelings towards his son. While she worries about Olga she does require Fjodor's part in the defence.

4.713 Between Fjodor and Kolesnikov exists an old animosity, based on class differentiation. "In our trade school the students of gymnasium were not liked¹⁴⁹." And as children they used to fight¹⁵⁰. Fjodor's attitude towards him is full of distrust and enmity. He imagines that his father is forgotten in the evacuation preparations. "You became the accessory of the town, the communal inventory like its fire brigade's tower [...]"¹⁵¹.

He can accuse only the administration of the city, the communists in power, on whom his father is dependent.

p. 391. 147 Leonid Leonov, "Našestvie", loc. cit.,

148 Ibid., p. 397.

149 Ibid., p. 377.

150 Ibid.

151 Ibid., p. 375.

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Probably that which the old doctor accepted quietly, Fjodor, being a rebel, notices and remembered. He is wrong in his suspicions, but what he has to say must have its base in the past. The fact that chairmen made the doctor's work difficult is manifest from his own confession¹⁵². What Fjodor has to say only confirms this.

"Listen, are you really afraid of him even now¹⁵³?" With the addition of the sentence about the gun which does not shoot anymore, it is very characteristic and suggests that in the past the doctor was. Another remark seems to be dictated by rancor, but also it contains some truth:

"Are you not worried that papa will make blunders without your supervision¹⁵⁴?" The reaction of doctor Talanov, that is, his collapsing, is too strong if he indeed does not fear the harsh master of the town.

4.714 When Fjodor's father asserts "[...] the bad fire is burning you¹⁵⁵" and diagnoses his illness as "gangrene¹⁵⁶" he not only dissociates himself from his son

152 Leonid Leonov, "Našestvie", loc. cit., p. 399.

153 Ibid., p. 379.

154 Ibid., p. 378.

155 Ibid., p. 375.

156 Ibid.

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but recognizes his anti-revolutionary tendencies as being irremediable.

4.715 Fjodor considers himself "branded"¹⁵⁷, an outcast. Why does he say "They will not accept me"¹⁵⁸? For a guerilla a doctor's certificate is not necessary.

4.716 If it was a crime of passion and the woman in question was not killed, why is everyone so possessed by the desire of Fjodor's purification? Are they all, including the doctor, so blind that they cannot see that the prodigal son is seriously ill?

4.717 Fjodor is placed in a row with such characters as Pyljaev, Luka Sandukov and Porfirij Syrovarov as an enemy "of honest labours, families and Soviet people"¹⁵⁹, excluded from the memory of living.

4.72 Everything points to the fact that he was a political prisoner.

Fjodor is a devil's disciple, not sharing his family's creed. Like Dick Dudgeon he is cursed by his mother for lack of faith¹⁶⁰. But while Shaw's hero finds

¹⁵⁷ Leonid Leonov, "Našestvie", loc. cit., p. 377.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 337.

¹⁵⁹ S. Nikolajev, "Našaestvie", in Oktjabr', Nos. 4-5, 1943, p. 121.

¹⁶⁰ Leonid Leonov, "Našestvie", loc. cit., p. 401.

in Essie only human warmth, Fjodor's heart is burned by the sight of Aniska's sorrow. The suffering of the nation, as in almost all Leonov's war heroes, gives him the shock necessary for action.

4.73 The lack of enthusiasm for the revolutionary present does not prevent Fjodor from being a good patriot. But not once does he utter any word indicating anything more than his profound love for Russia. "I am Russian. I defend my homeland¹⁶¹." As for Kolesnikov Fjodor recognizes his superiority, not as a communist, but as a fighter. He envies him that he is able to take action against the Germans, while he is given no chance. But it is Tatarov who says "(superciliously) Well, it is a great honour to die as Kolesnikov¹⁶²". Kolesnikov veils the whole world for Olga and her companions and minimizes Fjodor's heroic action. They state, as of utmost importance, that Fjodor "did not injure¹⁶³" Kolesnikov's name.

4.731 Fjodor's explanation of his action, when asked if he did it for the sake of Kolesnikov, is very simple: "It is not true. Just everything curdled in me... after

161 Leonid Leonov, "Našestvie", loc. cit., p. 420.

162 Ibid., p. 430.

163 Ibid., p. 434.

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Aniska. I was beside myself¹⁶⁴." So it was clearly an inner impulse which had nothing to do with the heroic leader. In a very similar situation Dudgeon answers: "No... I am not so modest as that¹⁶⁵." "I would have done the same for any other man in the town¹⁶⁶."

4.732 The reason for using Kolesnikov's name is deeper than a cult of personality with which the partisans are infected, it goes farther than the glory of the Soviet power. "I thought [...] that they will be still more afraid when Kolesnikov already killed, will suddenly reappear¹⁶⁷." Once more he thinks about the enemies and his country. Dudgeon replays in the very same manner: "[...] let us cow them by showing that we can stand by one another to the death¹⁶⁸."

4.74 Shaw did not write on social order. Dick was not permitted to die. Fjodor was living in a country governed by socialist humanism and he had to perish to pay

164 Leonid Leonov, "Našestvie", loc. cit., p. 434.

165 Bernard Shaw, "The Devil's Disciple", loc. cit., p. 91-92.

166 Ibid., p. 94.

167 Leonid Leonov, "Našestvie", loc. cit., p. 434.

168 Bernard Shaw, "The Devil's Disciple", loc. cit., p. 92.

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for his former sins. However it is doubtful whether Leonov went as far as Fink who interprets Fjodor by: "His death — it is happiness. He received the right to die as a prize for the renouncement of egotistical errors¹⁶⁹". Something is wrong in the Soviet critic's appraisal. Fjodor is not a religious fanatic. The man proved to himself his real worth, he also demonstrated to others that he is no coward. He is not afraid of death and goes first to be hanged. He is proud, but why does he have to be happy? The tragedy consists of the fact that Kolesnikov did not come a few minutes earlier.

As the Old Man says: "Nobody asks permission to be a hero¹⁷⁰." And Fjodor does not ask for any reward. What he says is quite revealing. "I offered you life... and I do not expect the receipt¹⁷¹."

His mother is just like the one in the utopia of The Road to the Ocean. "He returned, he is mine, he is with us¹⁷²." That is all what matters to her, the puritan of the Soviet regime.

169 L. Fink, Dramaturgija Leonida Leonova, Moscow, Sovetskij Pisatel, 1962, p. 274.

170 Leonid Leonov, "Našestvie", loc. cit., p. 434.

171 Ibid.

172 Ibid., p. 438.

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The author himself is human. Leonov, by paying the price of about a page of Stalin's flattery, defends the ordinary man, his right for heroism and patriotism without connecting him in any way with the leadership of the party. Fjodor acts alone, nobody helps him, and he, the individual, achieves more than those who in a ridiculous ceremony in the face of death accept his life as a due for joining the collective.

4.8 Ivan Matveič Vixrov has nothing to hide and his past is spotless as far as the revolution is concerned. His social origin is right and, moreover, he was sympathetic towards revolutionary movement from the start. He also does not have to be reeducated in any way. Therefore he is different from the previously studied members of the intelligentsia, but he has something in common with every one of them. He has:

4.81 Lixarev's objections concerning the human cost of revolution. As he believes in "the holiness of life"¹⁷³, he deplores its waste before and after the revolution: "there is no darker sin than to spill uselessly even the dew-drop of life in such desert... as ours"¹⁷⁴.

¹⁷³ Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", in Sobranije Sočinenij, Vol. 9, p. 374.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 180.

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For the man who sacrifices his whole life to the forest, which in the novel means Russian people, such views are only natural. Except in time of necessity, like for instance, the war, human beings should be spared. From this point of view results "his provincial veneration of suffering, which was paid as due for human progress¹⁷⁵".

4.82 Manjukin's untimely admiration for the culture of the past, which Vixrov unsuccessfully tries to transfer to his adopted son. Vixrov manifests also his passivity and dignity when confronted with persecution.

4.83 Renne's feeling of injustice and also his belief in his own rightness. While their opinions on the revolution differ, both of them are actually in the same situation:

The existence of Vixrov in the science of forestry could be explained in any way — by the magnanimity of the epoch or, just the opposite, by the lack of its attention towards the forestry questions, but this already pronounced verdict was not subject either to revocation or even to discussion and only by the naiveté of the heart, by the poverty of imagination, by the lack of knowledge of the severe conditions of the age still the mercy could be expected¹⁷⁶.

175 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 375.

176 Ibid., p. 16-17.

As this thought is expressed jointly by Polja and by the author it contains a great deal of truth. Vixrov is merely permitted to work and despite his efforts he has no influence on the forest's policy. On the contrary, he is suspected of subversive activity.

4.84 Burago's determination to give the revolution his knowledge and energy to the best of his ability.

For too long I belonged to this category of scientists, until now wide — spread in the West, who see the debt of conscience in the irreproachable fulfillment of professional duty¹⁷⁷.

Similarly to Burago Vixrov is unable to accept reality with his heart: "I went toward the revolution through my forest and to tell the truth, as the result of constant beating through rather dense forest¹⁷⁸." In less poetical language, it simply means that Vixrov's way was painful and hard. He joined the communist party only during the war, as an expression of his unity with the nation and with its government. By that time his value was in some respects recognized by the party.

4.85 Skutarevskij's firmness in pursuing the aim of his life. Like Skutarevskij Vixrov was accused of "the startling inclination towards so-called independent

¹⁷⁷ Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 506.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 507.

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thought¹⁷⁹". While Skutarevskij's theory was hard to realize, Vixrov's was considered as being premature even by his best friend¹⁸⁰, the one who should have been influential in the country. All Vixrov's troubles take root in the fact that he dared to defend his point of view not only against other scientists' opinions but, and that occurrence is much more important, contrary to the state's policy. And, furthermore, Vixrov, like Skutarevskij, recognizes Lenin's wisdom¹⁸¹, but everything that happened after his death, starting from the first Five-Year-Plan, in the forest's economy is cautiously but strongly condemned. It is not surprising that Hingley notices: "Leonov packed into Vixrov's doctrine what was at the time politically explosive material¹⁸²" and also "the strong anti-Stalinist implications¹⁸³".

4.851 The explosiveness of Vixrov's theory lies in the fact that while "the most Christian gentlemen of the

p. 126. 179 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit.,

180 Ibid., p. 729.

181 Ibid., p. 342.

p. 70. 182 Ronald Hingley, "Leonid Leonov", loc. cit.,

183 Ibid.

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West¹⁸⁴ are made responsible for the destruction of Russia's forests before the revolution and for the crime of buying Russian timber after its advent, the trees for sale were cut in a great hurry and the democratic government did not stop to consider their age and the species. The concentration was on the easiest accessibility, "The main forest [...] like before was left aside¹⁸⁵" and central Russia suffered an incomparable loss. In proposing to move the forest industry to the North Vixrov reverses Leonov's stand of the Sot's time, where "the unemployed professor Madridov¹⁸⁶" came forward with the same idea, namely of moving Sot'stroj to the Peçora region and calculated, like Vixrov¹⁸⁷, the waste of forest on the earth. Then Madridov's article was "the sample of erudite weak-mindedness¹⁸⁸". Now it is Gracjanskij, Vixrov's critic, who is incompetent, but Gracjanskij defends the official, recognized point of view. So, indirectly, the government

184 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 343.

185 Ibid.

186 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 243.

187 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 338-345.

188 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 243.

is accused, that is, the post-Lenin rulers, as his policy was sound.

4.8511 By the way another Leonov's 'volte-face' takes place in Vixrov's conviction that "A dream for the builder of the human happiness [is] just as effective an instrument as the knowledge or the idea¹⁸⁹" and that, especially for the forest expert, the dream is indispensable. There was previously an argument between Kurilov and the author, who readily rejected his own point of view consisting of "The builder of our time is formed from the dreamer¹⁹⁰". Neither Skutarevskij nor Vixrov accepted Kurilov's "necessity".

4.852 The anti-Stalinist implications are obvious in the fact that the righteous man is slandered and nearly ruined by the unjust accusations of one man, who was acting according to methods prescribes and prevailing in the Stalin's era.

4.86 Only the extraordinary purity of soul and the strength of convictions could induce a man to say to his daughter in such circumstances:

189 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 349.

190 Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 124.

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Yes, it should be like that... always act in life in that manner: have faith! [...] making a sacrifice of himself to the most important and immovable¹⁹¹.

But beside the need of sacrifice the self-denial, the labor and privations in the name of the future generations, so well known from Leonov's other works, there is everpresent fear and the feeling of the hunted fox.

4.861 This sensation is considerably stronger than in Skutarevskij and comparable only to Gleb Protoklitov's and to Luka Sandukov's. But they were the enemies — or were they? Vixrov too is considered an enemy. His reputation "did not dry"¹⁹² even for twenty-four hours during the quarter of the century. The accusations were grave since one article of Gracjanskij's was "not unlike a pass to the gallows"¹⁹³.

4.8611 They consisted of: attempts to limit socialist construction¹⁹⁴; questionable and dangerous activity¹⁹⁵; ideas harmful to industrialization and the overlooking

191 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 511.

192 Ibid., p. 58.

193 Ibid., p. 451.

194 Ibid., p. 59.

195 Ibid., p. 61.

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bad working conditions under tzarist rule¹⁹⁶; family ties with a former landowner¹⁹⁷ and activity against the Five-Year Plan¹⁹⁸ — to name only a few.

4.8612 How did Vixrov feel with regard to the constant threat of spending a few years on Kolyma? In spite of moments of doubt, when even he himself comes to think that perhaps Gracjanskij, that is, the state, is right after all, most of the time he is persuaded of the justice of his claim. He is only misunderstood, his pen is unable to explain what he means. This leads to the conclusion that while condemning its methods, Vixrov believes in the fundamental justice of revolution.

4.862 But the time comes when he discovers the power of the forces of evil and his own meaninglessness. He is ready to withdraw from the uneven battle and to return to his former post of forester. This is similar to Lixarev's burning of manuscripts, to Renne's death and to Skutarevskij's decision to become the watchman, as it is the recognition of the futility of one's life's work.

196 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 464.

197 Ibid., p. 465.

198 Ibid., p. 471.

4.87 Gleb Protoklitov's misfortune lies in being prosecuted by his old friend. Vixrov's trouble is on a different level, but Gracjanskij is as jealous of his former comrade's success as is Kormilicin, and in a similar way spreads harmful rumors about his past. In Vixrov's case they are false.

These two heroes, in spite of their great differences, are also comparable in other respects, namely, both of them are given some of Leonov's biographical data. But Vixrov, in addition to this, is provided with the author's opinions.

4.871 Such a statement as "The forest for me is not a profession but a vocation [...] Like my father I was sent as the forest's intercessor¹⁹⁹" is the clearest example of identification of Vixrov with Leonov. The first part is a word for word declaration of Leonov about writing²⁰⁰, the second is closely related to Maxim Leonov's "Behest to son²⁰¹". The whole life of the old forest's defendant

199 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 771.

200 L. Bat', "Leonid Leonov o Literaturnom Trude", in Voprosy Literaturny, No. 2, 1960, p. 190.

201 V. A. Kovalev, "Poet-surikovec M. L. Leonov", in Russkaja Literatura, Trudy Otdela Novoj Russkoj Literatury, Vol. 1, Moscow-Leningrad, Ed. Akademia Nauk SSSR, 1957, p. 261-262.

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is an illustration and fulfillment of Leonov's father's will.

4.872 Vixrov's conception of the revolution coincides with the author's officially expressed views: "the October revolution was not only a battle for the just distribution of boons but perhaps, in the first place, for the human pureness²⁰²"; "humanity was in need of great purification by the thunderstorm and by tempest²⁰³".

There are a few explanations in the novel about the meaning of this purity, mainly by the old professor's way of life — which is ascetic, by his monk's moral standards, as well as by his basic human goodness, so different from the new generation's coldness and cruelty from which he dissociates himself²⁰⁴. He is longing for "perfect justice and bliss²⁰⁵" without which humanity will be only "pitiful and merciless insects²⁰⁶".

4.873 Vixrov's aims are fully confirmed by Leonov's remarks directed to foreign writers, in which he deplores

p. 65. 202 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit.,

203 Ibid., p. 66.

204 Ibid., p. 395.

205 Ibid., p. 374.

206 Ibid.

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some of the Western literature, and in general the Western way of life:

4.8731 "the decadence of social principles, the degeneration of ancient tabus, those moral bands of invisible steel²⁰⁷". Vixrov is bound by those bands, incomparably more than Skutarevskij. They concern his family ties and his restraint from denunciation.

4.8732 Regarding purity: "only very rigorous self-control on the part of all men, only absolute moral purity, like that of transistors' crystals can prevent many very unpleasant consequences²⁰⁸." Is it not Vixrov talking?

4.8733 As for the means of purification, which can be well West's fate:

the Bible's Sodom was destroyed by the fire from heaven [...] the sects' members [...] are waiting for thunders avengers from the sky, is it not true that when nothing more is able to cure the infirmity, it is the fire which heals it²⁰⁹?

This is just the development of Vixrov's thought about the revolution.

207 Leonid Leonov, "Pourquoi les occidentaux vivent-ils à l'enseigne du 'tout est permis'?", in Esprit, No. 7 (329), July 1964, p. 45.

208 Ibid., p. 46.

209 Ibid., p. 45.

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4.8734 Moreover Leonov's exclamation "Glory be to man²¹⁰!" coincides with Vixrov's high idea of human dignity, the principles of which he was trying to teach his wife²¹¹.

4.874 With Leonov's secrecy regarding his private life it is not possible to say in which other ways the author resembles his hero. Nevertheless as far as their literary career is concerned again many similarities can be found.

To begin with, Gracjanskij's first critical review of Vixrov's book took place in the middle of the twenties²¹². One of the first serious accusations of Leonov was written by Voronskij in 1924, "Leonod hardly can be called even the fellow traveller²¹³". Many others were basing their judgment on this article, just like Vixrov's opinion was formed by Gracjanskij's. Leonov, like Vixrov, has more critical appraisals "not unlike a

210 Leonid Leonov, "Pourquoi les occidentaux vivent-ils à l'enseigne du 'tout est permis'?", loc. cit., p. 49.

211 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 374.

212 Ibid., p. 450.

213 A. Voronskij, "Literaturnyje Siluety, Leonid Leonov", in Krasnaja Nov', Vol. 3, April-May 1924, p. 300.

pass to the gallows²¹⁴". His link with Trotskyism was hinted at in 1932²¹⁵ and in 1935²¹⁶, not to mention his brush with Stalin in 1940 and the serious trouble in 1946²¹⁷.

Vixrov, like Leonov, is accused of mysticism and "popovščina"²¹⁸, the thoughts connected with religious beliefs, the clergy and the church. In a state where only atheistic propaganda is permitted, this means trouble: "they declare all that as opium for the people and you..."²¹⁹" says Gracjanskij, who does not even risk calling the dangerous notions by their names. Naturally Vixrov is guilty of the author's preoccupation with the forest's devils and wood goblins, but in Leonov's works can be found symbols inspired by the Bible, and his horizons are marked by charming little old churches.

214 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 451.

215 A. Efremin, "Leonid Leonov", in Na Literaturnom Postu, No. 3, January 1932, p. 30.

216 V. Kirpotin, "Romany Leonida Leonova", in Proza, Dramaturgija i Teatr, Moscow, Goslitizdat, 1935, p. 68.

217 V. Gorodnickij and Ja. Varšavskij, "Černaja Magija, O Pjesie Leonova 'Ljonuška'", in Komsomolskaja Pravda, issue of October 15, 1946, p. 3.

218 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 465.

219 Ibid., p. 474.

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When to all this "the old Russian jargon"²²⁰ is added, the reader has a clear picture of the author himself.

4.9 As for Fjodor Talanov, the similarity between the two heroes consists of the author's new attitude towards them. Fjodor should be wrong and punished for his sins like Arsenij Skutarevskij and Luka Sandukov or at least like Mit'ka Vekšin to leave the way to a double interpretation of the author's intentions. Instead, thanks to the literary conditions created by the war, Leonov took the liberty to defend his hero. In an analogous way The Russian Forest is devoted to the demonstration of Vixrov' suffering and the justification of the hero, in whom there is no conformity with the communal and state aim. His work is not joyous, as it should be, the conditions of it are not favourable, he is not happy, but he is right, especially when he regards "as wicked people who in a peace time call for reprisals [...] according to the custom of the war time"²²¹.

4.10 Thus Vixrov is, in a sense, a continuation of Leonov's men belonging to the social stratum of

220 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 474.

221 Ibid., p. 463.

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intelligentsia. Talking about the forest he is permitted to smuggle the previously unthinkable ideas.

Evil, as personified by Gracjanskij, perishes. But Vixrov is too wise and too experienced not to suspect the ruse: "didn't he leave the hat and stick at the ice-hole to our simpletons with the intention of coiling them around his finger once again!...²²²"

Still Vixrov hopes that he will be able to send to his friend in his next book "a piece of our spring just as once I used to send a handful of Russian snow²²³!"

The motive of hope, just as Polja's closely related to spring, is optimistic. But this statement more than anything else reveals how Vixrov is tired of the winter and how he longs for a change from the revolutionary present.

222 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 808.

223 Ibid.

CHAPTER V

THE COMMUNISTS

5.00 In The Russian Forest, the officer of the tzarist Oxrana talks about the revolution and the revolutionaries. He has to know the feelings of those fighting for the betterment of mankind so his words reflect their ideas:

the revolutionary exploit is the readiness to dissolve [oneself] completely in the waves of the people, to vanish into them without trace, raising their wisdom and determination¹.

Such was the belief of those dreaming about the revolution.

5.01 But Čeredilov also has a word about the bolsheviks, not all but "many of them: who would like to be not a member of the chorus, but certainly no less than a choirmaster²". This statement concerns the rivalry of political parties in general, but it seems appropriate to find out to which degree the conductors dissolved into the masses.

5.02 Those studied are divided into two groups according to their field of action. Those working in the

¹ Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 9, p. 557.

² Ibid., p. 560.

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villages are The Rural Communists, those living in cities are The Urban Communists.

5.1 The Rural Communists in the first phase of the revolution are the lonely men whose attempts to change the face of earth are not always successful, even in the villages. Because of their insignificant number or perhaps in tune with the times of fighting communism they, as symbol of their power, always carry a gun. Such are the newcomers to Petušixa³, such are also Polovinkin, Groxotov and others in The Badgers. As for the local chairmen of the village councils, they seem to be unarmed. Furthermore they lack the driving power of convictions so characteristic of the men who had some contact with the city.

5.11 Until the coming of the new generation the party has to use the old human material. So the ideologically strong types like the blue man "But the bluishness of Arsen Petrov derived from the iron⁴" are joined by converts

³ Leonid Leonov, "Petušixinskij Prolom", in So-branije Sočinienij, Vol. 1, p. 175; not "Petushikhino" as in Vera Aleksandrova, "Leonid Leonov (1899-)", in A History of Soviet Literature 1917-1962. From Gorky to Yevtushenko, Doubleday, 1963, p. 176, nor "Petushikhin" as in Marc Slonim, Modern Russian Literature, from Chekhov to the present, New York, Oxford, 1953, p. 324.

⁴ Leonid Leonov, "Petušizinskij Prolom", loc. cit., p. 179.

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like Talagan. His talk is brimming with enthusiasm, he burns when he talks⁵, but he is not immune to weakness of heart in the most trying circumstances. The transformation of this hero embarrasses some of the critics, who are prone to attach a socio-political meaning to his former occupation as a common horse-thief. It appears that "he was [...] an elemental mutineer against the stagnation and the proprietary instinct of the prosperous part of the peasantry⁶". This line is continued even in the West, but the confusion is apparent when the hero's name is changed to Savosjan⁷.

Naturally the Talagan's strange metamorphosis may prove just the opposite. The manifest proprietary instincts of the hero are successfully overcome under the influence of the new religion. Talagan is the only communist in Petušixa.

5.12 Kovalev has trouble in enumerating the Soviet peasants in The Badgers. While first he names Čmelev and Groxotov⁸, he later changes his mind and mentions Čmelev

5 Leonid Leonov, "Petušixinskij Prolom", loc. cit., p. 175.

6 D. Gorbov, "Leonid Leonov", in Novyj Mir, No. 10, October 1928, p. 216.

7 David Burg, "Popytka Leonida Leonova", in Mosty, No. 7, 1961, p. 163.

8 V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, Moscow-Leningrad, Ed. Akademija Nauk SSSR, 1954, p. 28.

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and Anton⁹. As Anton forgot not only his family ties but also his peasant ways he is no longer a peasant. He belongs to the city and will be studied later. So in all objectivity only one Soviet peasant is left in Thieves. He is Čmelev. But this hero does not develop any political activity and, as a matter of fact, he does not lose his time on the fields either. He is neither a communist nor a true image of a peasant. All he is interested in is knowledge and he draws it in equal measure from his former landlord's books as well as from the Soviet sources. Even if his is a progressive mind, he is rather primitive and although the author and Semjon keep him in high esteem, in the eyes of his fellow-villagers he is just a chatter-box, "poboltaj"¹⁰.

If he accepts the superiority of the proletariat, and only in that way can be interpreted his references to the city, he is guided by the educational factors. But he insists that the city must understand peasants.

"Without understanding it is better to whip the water"¹¹.

9 V. A. Kovalev, Tvorčestvo Leonida Leonova, Moscow-Leningrad, Ed. Akademija Nauk SSSR, 1962, p. 45.

10 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", in Sobranije Sočinenij, Vol. 2, p. 162.

11 Ibid., p. 182.

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5.121 Other "best elements"¹² as called by Nusinov, are not appreciated by critics at large. Leonov, however, presents some Soviet activists in The Badgers. There is even a whole Soviet village, Ganders. It is true, they joined the communists as a result of the enrichment by a piece of land. The village is the source of the chairman material during the rebellion. But it cannot be called politically conscious if one of them can say: "International hydra!... She probably wears boots... and we [go] even to the wedding in bast sandals¹³."

5.122 Actually party members wear no bast shoes either. Both Groxotov and Polovinkin are from Ganders. The revolution opened for them a way for more or less comfortable life if not of particularly high moral standards. None of them is overworked, but both of them are conscious of their importance, especially Polovinkin. "I presume everybody likes me because I am needed by everybody. I am a public figure, I serve the society¹⁴." "I am too high to reach¹⁵." However under the influence of his

¹² As cited by Ronald Hingley, "Leonid Leonov", in Soviet Survey, No. 25, July-September 1958, p. 71.

¹³ Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 272.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 142.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 152.

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personal tragic experience he changes his way of life and becomes a conscientious and effective leader. Yet Polovinkin is a peasant spoiled by the city. During the rebellion he personally executes suspects judging the degree of their guilt by the eye¹⁶. This kind of revolutionary justice sharply contrasts with Semjon's and other peasants' disinclination for bloodshed.

5.123 Young Vasjatka Lyzlov is burning with enthusiasm. He is even over zealous. But somehow, as far as could be proved, critics do not mention him as an example of the generations to come. He is presented in satirical vein and it is said about him that he is so idealistic that "he will not spare his father and mother¹⁷".

5.1231 There is a certain analogy with Serjoža from The Blizzard: "he will get on in life [...] In about ten years he will be a merciless man¹⁸." But very idealistic too.

5.13 In Sot' Leonov suggests that youth joined the komsomol. But most of the time he indicates Pronka as a moving spirit of events, the same Pronka, who was

16 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 297.

17 Ibid., p. 162.

18 L. Fink, Dramaturgija Leonida Leonova, Moscow, Sovetskij Pisatel, 1962, p. 207.

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excluded from the youth's organization for brutality, and continues to act as if nothing happened. When his membership was restored is not known. For him, like for Ômelev, the revolution is the means to educate himself. He is engrossed in agricultural experiments, leads the anti-religious movement and takes part in every other activity, for example, in organizing the proper outcome of the peasants' vote. When the new seems to conquer the old and the komsomol's prospects should be better than ever, on the burial of Vissarion appears "an united detachment ready for any combat"¹⁹. Yet they are still just a handful of those who hope to conduct the reluctant peasant chorus.

5.2 The Urban Communists.

5.21 Anton, who as a boy "was a constant remainder of the depressing side of human existence, of a vale of tears without a glimpse of paradise"²⁰, for the sake of paradise became the "commissar of death"²¹. He is well predisposed for his task. Byxalov predicted "you could

¹⁹ Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 4, p. 287.

²⁰ Leonid Leonov, The Badgers, translated by Hilda Kazan, London, Ed. Hutchinson, 1947, p. 59. This sentence was removed from the later edition.

²¹ Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 319.

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kill people²²" and from his childhood he is full of hatred for the world: "you cannot forgive it [...] to Byxalov and to all of them²³". The revolution gave him the chance to square accounts, to avenge the injustice done to himself and to the others. The revolution made him a member of a new fraternity, the party, which replaced the old family ties. It gave him power to convert heretics with blood. The punitive hand of revolution believes in the unavoidability of peasants' submission to the proletariat's will.

5.210 He does not talk about future happiness as he is not a propagandist. He has a well tried method. If he finds "the tongue common with the peasants²⁴", he does not use any party slogans. He actually yields to their proprietary instincts, the magnet of the earth. In subduing them he is helped by the season of the year and by the unrevolutionary, old peasant habit of having a master.

5.2101 The bitter irony of the novel lies in the fact that while Çmelev recognized the city as the elder brother of peasants, in real life Anton will not hesitate

22 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 41.

23 Ibid., p. 64-65.

24 M. Lobanov, Roman L. Leonova "Russkij Les", Moscow, Sovetskij Pisatel, 1958, p. 32.

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to shoot his younger brother in cold blood just as it happens in Semjon's prophetic dream²⁵.

5.211 Pjotr Byxalov is the opposite of Anton. The good-hearted food commissar was suffering from the tzarist police for the welfare of all people, as he said: so that everybody could eat²⁶.

The revolution saved him from death but the mistakes of its executors deprived him of life.

His approach to peasants' problems is truly humanitarian and its softness is contrary to party's standing policy. Such as he could make the rapprochement between the village and the city easier. He tries to understand the differences and his solution is right: "it is necessary to remove the ancient peel, prejudices²⁷". As he has difficulty in adapting himself to demands placed on him he honestly sees no other way than to resign from his post. His petition to be sent to the fighting line because he cannot²⁸ do his work properly is the admission of his dissatisfaction with the reality of

25 Leonid Leonov, "Barsuki", loc. cit., p. 210.

26 Ibid., p. 41.

27 Ibid., p. 182.

28 Ibid., p. 168.

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things. However the party's discipline prevails and prevents him from mailing his letter.

In that his dream did not come true during his lifetime, and that the rule of the strong hand proved to be more successful than his own approach, he is close to Potemkin.

5.22 Matvej, a first example of Soviet educated intelligentsia, has a narrow-minded, strictly party-defined world-outlook. This "volcanic soul"²⁹, a physician, is persuaded of the right to destroy the human beings in the name of the class struggle. While "the fiery words would pour"³⁰ when the revolution is concerned he has no use for the family ties: "the relationship is a pure accident"³¹.

5.220 A fanatical believer in the unbound possibility opened by revolution to a man's mind, he reflects the rapture for the rationalistic principle of the communist teaching. He is clearly a disciple of Kalafat's wisdom. Under the influence of the just beginning industrialization Matvej seeks conformity even in such abstract

29 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, translated by Hubert Butler, London, Secker, 1931, p. 96.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., p. 208.

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notions as happiness, which, according to him, can be made almost on the assembly line. "Happiness [...] can be manufactured as easily as galoshes or that electric bulb³²." And in that respect he does not differ much from Çikilev.

When one day men discover everything, and measure and weight and calculate everything [...] when they are in a position to change everything, then there will be happiness³³.

5.221 Ataşez is awarded a high post by revolution. He accepts personal prosperity as a necessary conformity with his foreign advisers. "We'll put on top hats, if we've got to³⁴." The straightforward, gay man of the very recent past now is changed. He became "stiff-necked³⁵". He has a car, a well dressed wife, the petty bourgeois worry about cutlets and soft-cushioned chairs. For him "The new century began in the year 1917³⁶".

The main problem of the revolution is connected with the electrification and the construction, that is, the material elevation of the country. As for the

32 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 205.

33 Ibid., p. 204.

34 Ibid., p. 154.

35 Ibid., p. 155.

36 Ibid., p. 154.

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humans, he is worried only about his own people, the communists: "to us a good man who sticks to us is worth more than gold³⁷."

Atašez is prone to take the efforts of others on his own account. "Our bricks are dearer than other people's, because we knead them with our own hands³⁸." That is a slight exaggeration as his hands happen to be manicured³⁹.

He is a master of life. Not only he says "I can take you at any time... and I can also not take you⁴⁰", but full of confidence in the rightness of his behaviour and in his strength he can say "I'll shoot you down⁴¹".

5.23 Ivan Abramyč Uvadjev is a party man who is introducing socialism to the village which is lost in the wilderness. As Sot' is "A tiny mirror reflecting the whole complex distribution of forces in the country⁴²" this hero is a generalization of the men who helped to realize party's difficult task of reconstruction. In him

37 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 466.

38 Ibid., p. 154.

39 Ibid., p. 150.

40 Ibid., p. 467.

41 Ibid.

42 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 249.

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Leonov's former bolsheviks are blended into a more perfect pattern, as a model of the new man. Uvadjev is a variety of Arsen Petrov, but he is "cast from the red iron⁴³".

He is a further development of Anton, as he also was burning and firing, slashing and chopping his country-men, as is revealed by the disgusted Varvara⁴⁴. Just like Polovinkin he is a reformed ladies' man with the distinction that, as he was a step higher on the revolutionary ladder, he used his commissar's allowance of chocolate to attract the impoverished aristocratic women, the class enemy. Leonov uses this detail to further enhance the role of creative work in the transformation of the strong man's inner emptiness during the Nep period into the satisfaction of well performed duty at a time of reconstruction.

5.230 Uvadjev's approach to the task is that of a soldier. He deprives himself of all the pleasures of life, because he needs all the strength he can muster.

He believes in international revolution. Not only does he learn German, foreseeing (in the late twenties) its possible usefulness in the future, but even listening

⁴³ Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 137.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 74.

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to negro music he detects in it "the winded spring"⁴⁵ the force of which will be eventually used against capitalism.

5.2301 As an ancestor of men to come he is strong and primitive. He has no use for the remnants of the past. He lacks spiritual culture and he admires the materialistic values on this step of the development of communism. He is not hampered by the old standards of morality. He is proud of the new.

[...] in our era it is necessary to think big: by the dozens of plants, by the thousands of hectares, by the millions of people... not to grind creative thought⁴⁶.

The Soviet system is the only one he can recognize and he hates capitalists. "He who can be satisfied under any other system already is an enemy to me"⁴⁷.

As a matter of fact he was not so very unhappy under the old: he was a "well nourished foreman"⁴⁸ and to add lustre to his past he adopted his wife's family story⁴⁹.

5.2302 The revolution gave him power and he uses it for its benefit. He perceives somehow the difference between

45 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 171.

46 Ibid., p. 106.

47 Ibid., p. 107.

48 Ibid., p. 68.

49 Ibid., p. 73.

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Peter's knout and his own despotic methods in the modernization of the country, explaining it by the Marxist approach⁵⁰. Actually in the first stage of operations there is not much disparity. He is not particularly interested in the fate of people put under his care. He exercises the prescribed dictatorship. "The truth is that in what I now believe⁵¹." He believes that party, which made him, is a benefactor of the population even against its will. The party gives, or will give the villagers: "electrification, medical help, schools, work in the kombinat⁵²" and will introduce them into the proletarian family. In accomplishing this he is ruthless, proving that the end justifies the means. He lies if necessary; thus he tells the workers that the reductions have a temporary character⁵³. He acts against the law and against the best contemporary interests of the people when persuaded that such actions are necessary for the future of construction. Thus he ordered to free those arrested for

50 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 9.

51 Ibid., p. 186.

52 Ibid., p. 123.

53 Ibid., p. 236.

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the brawl⁵⁴; he fires men⁵⁵, reduces their wages and changes the provisions of the Workers' Committee⁵⁶.

5.2303 He is the master and as such he does not seek the opinion of his subordinates, and their attitude leads to serious mistakes. But he recognizes the right of the strong. When his alleged teacher, Potemkin, is sick, Uvadjev listens to his wise words with a grimace⁵⁷. However they penetrate his mind, which recalls Vekšin's case. But Uvadjev's second transformation is helped also from above. He is received in the Kremlin and probably given a lecture, as there he was presented with a letter written against him. He must have been introduced to the new party's policy, as after the audience, he meditates not only about the intricacies of the government and the future of the country, but he thinks that "The time of great maneuvering was coming, and, perhaps, the real heroic spirit of revolution consisted exactly in this"⁵⁸.

5.2304 While he used to build socialism alone, as was satirised in the cartoon⁵⁹, now he recognizes that the

54 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 258.

55 Ibid., p. 84.

56 Ibid., p. 184.

57 Ibid., p. 261.

58 Ibid., p. 266.

59 Ibid., p. 247.

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real strength is in the collective effort. When Varvara says "you are alone", he has a new answer: "We are more than one⁶⁰." He begins to share with his men the danger and the hardship, just as it should be. With their help the future seems to be assured. The new generation, as symbolized by Katja, for whose happiness he is struggling, will read the book printed on his paper.

By manifesting some human feelings Uvadjev became a really good bolshevik. Men like him put into execution the Five Year Plan. But his interests are not only limited to construction. There is a moment where he thinks about the whole country. Naturally he justifies the general policies of the government and quite abstractly greets the third purge in the short history of USSR, which was taking place at the time of writing:

The rudders were breaking, they were replaced by the new ones. The success of the cruise on which the ships of yesterday's mankind had not ventured calling, depended only upon the wisdom of the captain and the endurance of the crew. The efforts made on the eve were being forgotten, as were forgotten the names of its pioneers; there was no time to repeat hundreds of thousands of names⁶¹.

60 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 303.

61 Ibid., p. 266. Z. Boguslavskaja (Leonid Leonov, Moscow, Soveckij Pisatel, 1960, p. 156) leans towards opinion that Uvadjev was thinking about Sot'stroj, and by implication about the country. But the "steering of the ship" (Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 264) and the above quoted passage leave no doubt whom Leonov had in mind.

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5.2305 The wording of this passage is clearly Leonov's. His narrow-minded hero is not able to express himself in such grandiloquent symbols, nor with such diplomacy. Leonov, the chronicler, did not miss the opportunity to smuggle in a nostalgic word for the forgotten pioneers of revolution, covering himself by the praise of Stalin.

5.231 While critical reviewers' attention and credit for Sot'stroj is given in most cases to Uvadjev, it is Potemkin who dreamed it from non-existence, who projected it, fought for it and used his best endeavours for its realization. He is a tragic hero not only because of his mortal illness but because the fruits of his work were harvested by somebody else. He dies nearly forgotten and not even a picture of him will remain on Sot'stroj⁶². It should be, but it was not taken.

5.2310 There are hints that he could be arrested. His absence from the meeting provoked ambiguous questions about the nature of his sickness⁶³. Further on Leonov plainly states: "somebody even expressed his opinion aloud that the ailment is one of those which often affect public men who fail in their work⁶⁴". His disappearance

62 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 261.

63 Ibid., p. 164.

64 Ibid.

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from Sot'stroj occurs right after the disaster, when, surprisingly enough, nobody was held responsible for the failure of the dam. And he himself says quite mysterious words. "I will tell you a secret: tie your fate together with the success of enterprise, and when downfall comes then you are also finished⁶⁵." Furthermore it was Uvadjev who asked the headquarters to remove Potemkin from his office⁶⁶.

5.2311 To his great amazement and not without bitterness Potemkin discovers from his doctors that inside him the white cell count is higher than the red. "I thought this happens only among people, the reds and the whites⁶⁷."

Incidentally Gracjanskij by the author's will suffers from the lack of red blood corpuscles and in this case Leonov makes no secret that he is the enemy of the people.

Of course Potemkin's disgrace is only a hypothesis. The government seemingly takes good care of him. 5.2311 Potemkin is given so many real human features, so much warmth that he has to have most of the author's affection. He is called "the citizen of his epoch and a

65 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 261.

66 Ibid., p. 187.

67 Ibid., p. 186.

son of his class⁶⁸". He is a contrast to Uvadjev, and between those two heroes occurs a conflict of two humanistic conceptions.

5.2312 There is an opinion that "he was dreaming about [...] the material basis of cultural revolution in the country⁶⁹". It is only partly true. What he was dreaming about is human happiness. The above sentence is more appropriate in connection with Uvadjev, whose only worry was the execution of the Five Year Plan at any cost. Potemkin is concerned with the human factor, the betterment of the living conditions of Sot' district. For him really the care of people is of the first importance. He "was dreaming about the proletarian isle between the great peasants' ocean⁷⁰". But how he imagined the workers' future is quite revealing:

By the electric light peasants collectively have high caloric dinner and admiring with gratitude the picture of the kombinat, listen to music from the radio⁷¹.

This rosy picture is primarily concerned with higher standard of living. There is no mention of the red

68 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 104.

69 V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 153.

70 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 58.

71 Ibid., p. 59.

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corner; the picture is of kombinat, not of the leader. By assuring peasants' work and the minimum of comfort "the slogans about socialism descend from the street-panels⁷²". Yet without the construction, the revolution would not reach Sot'.

5.23121 However the cultural elevation of local people is joined by Leonov's own idea of profit for the whole state, which will derive from the future production of cellulose and of paper. In prompting the stubborn officials Potemkin uses such arguments:

Maybe the kombinat is really not needed and the newspaper can be printed on the plywood, on the birch-bark or simply on the clouds, the way it is done somewhere in eccentric America⁷⁴?

5.2313 He is an enthusiast for revolution and he imagines that everybody should be. He congratulates peasants with the victory of socialist construction; he is persuaded that capitalistic Russia could not spend so much on the cellulose kombinat⁷⁵; and he believes that only by reading Soviet papers Renne cannot help but be "convinced

72 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 59.

73 Ibid., p. 65.

74 Ibid., p. 63.

75 Ibid., p. 137.

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in our rightness⁷⁶: "you still see in us [...] vagabonds encroaching upon history [...]. Well, vagabonds are ruling gods⁷⁷."

5.2314 Yet Potemkin's idea of the revolution is different from Uvadjev's. There is in him no trace of hatred, social vigilance nor any visible consciousness of the class struggle taking place on the construction site. For a communist he is unbelievably tolerant. "I like sceptics, they are like salt" he says to Renne⁷⁸, simultaneously warning him not to repeat that to Uvadjev. He is the political master on Sot' while Potemkin is just head of the construction. And Potemkin is opposed to violence.

I understand, dictatorship [...] but, you see, there is a razor blade which is used for shaving and there is an axe, with which to fell the trees [...] and if [they are] confused [by someone] in a hurry either [his] mug will be skinned or the costly instrument will be spoiled⁷⁹.

5.2315 It is also Potemkin who prevents the destruction of the monastery⁸⁰ and wants to leave it as the remainder

76 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 137.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid., p. 187.

80 Ibid., p. 138.

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of the past. This attitude is plainly dictated by Leonov's love of rustic Russia.

Every little detail adds sparkle to the image of this lonely, misunderstood visionary. The ideal type of party official has no other interests except the well-being of his people and country. He is persuaded of peasantry's right to share the benefits of industrialization, and above all, that the rulers ought to take into consideration the wishes of the common man:

You still like to look up [...] and you [should] look down down, from where the millions of eyes look at you. You should consult those below, ask how is it going. Only a few more [...] blunders and their confidence will be shaken⁸¹.

5.24 Potemkin's idea of consulting the masses in some degree is followed by another hero of the Industrialization Period. Contrary to Uvadjev who works among the plain working people, Ćerimov's task calls for ruling the best brains of the country. Nevertheless he attempts to confirm the rightness of his approach by seeking the opinion of a proletarian, his old friend Fedja Butylkin.

5.240 Nikolaj Ćerimov is a representative of the new Soviet educated intelligentsia, one of the future

⁸¹ Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 261.

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academicians⁸². The man by hard work reached the position of the political head of the Institute of Scientific Research. He resembles Uvadjev in many ways, actually he could be the former's improved equivalent. Just as Uvadjev's advancement was not a result of his technical knowledge, Ćerimov's appointment, and especially advancement, is not particularly connected with his scientific achievements. "The party still had too few scientific men they had no choice, so that his appointment in itself was not a recognition of real value in him⁸³."

His so-called invention was a plain borrowing of Skutarevskij's work, and what is more, it was already known in foreign countries. Therefore it was actually a plagiarism. Yet it was widely hailed by the press, and Skutarevskij's pupil made no attempt to minimize his undeserved glory. No wonder that his "biography heavy not with a list of scientific works, but of all his social labours⁸⁴" could not include any publications. Ćerimov

⁸² Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 5, p. 298.

⁸³ Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, translated by Alec Brown, London, Ed. Lovat Dickson & Thompson, 1936, p. 90.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

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has to his credit only one little booklet and he is very proud of it.

Skutarevskij says that he "sees science as his party's duty [...] it is not enough"⁸⁵. But the old man is just out of step with the time. Ćerimov is more appreciated.

5.241 He is one of those whose "names, rough, self-generated names were approaching the zenith"⁸⁶. Ćerimov's approaches it with the full assurance of his right. He is particularly well defined by Arsenij as "mechanism, which was aware of its responsibility"⁸⁷. In fact he proves so mechanical in the application of the party's teaching that: he talks like an editorial of the newspaper⁸⁸; when engrossed, he sketches Lenin's profile⁸⁹; in his sleep he carries on political discussion and plucks hair from Kautskij's beard⁹⁰. This last occurrence corresponds to Uvadjev's dream, in which he continued to build

85 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 274.

86 Ibid., p. 285.

87 Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, op. cit., p. 105.

88 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 240.

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid., p. 298.

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socialism⁹¹. Both are preoccupied only with their work and their duty — from the political angle, of course.

5.242 Skutarevskij's description of Ćerimov can be scarcely surpassed:

almost a young forest animal; hidden deep in his heart, like a revolver holster — his party card; crystal clear about the reasons for his presence in the world; knowing what he wanted⁹².

Ćerimov's main purpose in life is to create revolution:

"I not only believe, I create it my every day, every hour⁹³." The reason for his presence in the Institute, apart from the scientific work, he understands as the introduction of political meaning to scientific research, its direction towards more practical goals, needed for state economy, and also the assurance of vigilance, which was totally lacking in this highly secret institution. He proves his usefulness to the party by discovering spies not only among the nearest collaborators of the chief but also in the latter's family.

5.2421 Ćerimov's desires, apart from performing his task, imperceptibly rotate around the notion which he expresses by: "One vegetation had rotted away, and a new one has

91 Leonid Leonov, "Sot'", loc. cit., p. 10.

92 Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, op. cit., p. 138.

93 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 141.

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begun to spring⁹⁴." With every sign of polite esteem, even admiration towards his teacher, he endeavours to take the reins of the power into his proletarian hands. This he does behind the back of the old man and with understandable success. Still "in outward appearance⁹⁵" he is Skutarevskij's subordinate.

5.243 His beliefs reflect the party's policy. Knowing that Skutarevskij is "compromised as far as the intelligentsia is concerned⁹⁶" he nevertheless subjects him to humiliation, by interrogating him, when it was not necessary. He is persuaded that:

the old conception of morals, based on a slavish, dishonest compassion towards man, all the complex of age-long and false conceptions of friendship, of blood ties and social relations prevents Skutarevskij from pursuing his right line⁹⁷.

Naturally Ćerimov wholeheartedly accepts the new morality and the whole way of life since everything he has has been given to him by the party. He has no family, except the bath-house attendant, and no friends except Butylkin, whom he sees very seldom.

94 Leonid Leonov, Skutarevsky, op. cit., p. 105.

95 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 100.

96 Ibid., p. 236.

97 Ibid.

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Objectively speaking, some traces of cruelty could be found in this rather likable commissar. In Skutarevskij he was looking for the moments when he was susceptible to injury⁹⁸. The man, as an individual has no importance for him. That is the reason why he insists on sharing of the achievements by all the members of the collective. He just does not understand Skutarevskij's longing for personally accomplishing his cherished experiment. "If not you, then another will carry on toward this unrealizable goal⁹⁹."

5.2431 In the play under the same title Ćerimov is wiser. "He will remove from his way everything which hampers the living in conquering the dead¹⁰⁰." He reveals much more esteem for Skutarevskij's exceptional knowledge. But he is incomparably more dependent on his chief, who as unquestionable head of the Institute is above suspicion. 'We' means the party, which will do everything to help.

5.244 In the novel Ćerimov starts talking by 'we' comparatively late, when his superiority is assured. "We believe in you unconditionally [...] We are satisfied

98 Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 237.

99 Ibid., p. 340.

100 Leonid Leonov, Teatr, Vol. 2, p. 352.

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with what you achieved. And we are certain that you will continue your work¹⁰¹." The sense is similar, but the situations differ. There Ćerimov is the guardian of science, and of the man who is needed. In the novel he is everything: the party, the proletariat, and 'I' Skutarevskij is just a scientist whose experiment failed and it is "unrealizable" anyway. It sounds like a pat on the shoulder. It brings to mind the last talk of Uvadjev with Potemkin. The revolution will make Ćerimov grow, while Skutarevskij will soon die.

5.245 But in everything Ćerimov says and does, even when he pries into people's most private affairs, or notices in the beautiful picture only the torn tights, as a manifestation of the imperfection of industrial production¹⁰², he is the man of his time. His behaviour is inspired by duty towards the preservation and defence of the well-being of his state, which gave him the power. This trait will become prominent in Leonov's following works.

¹⁰¹ Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 338. Ernest J. Simmons, Russian Fiction and Soviet Ideology, Introduction to Fedin, Leonov and Sholokhov, New York, Columbia University Press, 1958, p. 122: "But we have never had unconditional faith in you" is just the opposite to Ćerimov's words.

¹⁰² Leonid Leonov, "Skutarevskij", loc. cit., p. 306-308.

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5.25 Kurilov's casual acquaintance in the hospital has this to say about the Soviet books: "I am bored with our saints' lives. I am the saint myself¹⁰³." In spite of this Leonov attempts to add one more to the galaxy, creating an ideal type of the party man from the older generation.

5.250 As the events during Leonov's visit to Sorrento indicate, Gorkij was supposed to be the prototype of Kurilov. His reaction to the finished novel proves that either he did not recognize himself, or he disapproved of his image¹⁰⁴. This suggests that the primary plans were altered in the course of writing.

5.2501 The discrepancies between the model and the hero obviously are the result of somehow inexplicable transformation of the writer into an officer of the Čeka. This is the reason for the duality of Kurilov's character. Considering his position some of his views are quite unusual. Notwithstanding all the possible changes Gorkij is still recognizable both physically and in other ways as is noted by Kovalev¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰³ Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 6, p. 518.

¹⁰⁴ M. Gorkij, Pis'ma a Literature, Moscow, Sovetskij Pisatel, 1957, p. 490-491.

¹⁰⁵ V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 300-301.

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5.2502 Most critics stress that Kurilov educates and influences men¹⁰⁶. So the main idea of the novel is expressed by Aleša Peresypkin, the budding literator, saying about his adopted father: "the father and gardener of many people like me¹⁰⁷". Those words clearly refer to Gorkij, who used to help financially and morally the young and needy writers. Leonov did not have to draw them from Stalin's wisdom¹⁰⁸ as once Gorkij himself wrote him: "[...] my pursuit [...] is a little similar to the work of gardener — here is the material for not a bad calembour¹⁰⁹!" Instead of the calembour his statement inspired two works of Leonov. Makkavejev is made a gardener, even if symbolic, Kurilov is symbolically the gardener as the grower of the young generation, but being a "pitiless¹¹⁰" "hunter¹¹¹", his duty also calls for weeding.

¹⁰⁶ For example, A. Selivanovskij, V Literatur=nyx Bojax, Moscow, Sovetskij Pisatel, 1963, p. 286.

¹⁰⁷ Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 467.

¹⁰⁸ V. A. Kovalev, Romany Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 306.

¹⁰⁹ M. Gorkij, Pis'ma a Literature, op. cit., p. 358.

¹¹⁰ Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 9.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 341.

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5.251 Actually there are three faces of Kurilov: his past, his present and his future.

5.2511 At first he is fighting for revolution, then preserving communism. His sickness may be the result of his prison experiences. He was a martyr, believing in victory with the quiet assurance of the first Christians.

"The Soviet power will come, that is all¹¹²." No wonder that Leonov calls the revolutionaries "the apostles of socialism¹¹³" by means of Ilja Protoklitov.

Kurilov's actions while enjoying good health are the prolongation of Anton's. His relations with his wife bear a marked resemblance to Uvadjev's. He is an able investigator, like Ćerimov. Kurilov exaggeratedly leans on his proletarian instinct, having no tangible proof of Protoklitov's guilt, but his suspicions prove to be right. In his fanaticism he is like his sister Klavdia, but while she is cold and feared by everyone, he is not ashamed to manifest friendly feelings.

5.2512 In the second he is further mellowed under the influence of his latent illness. Then appears the new Kurilov, who, when removed from his work discovers the

112 Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 272.

113 Ibid., p. 534.

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beauty of the world and displays the warmth of his soul. If he defends the new generation from such unorthodox men as Kutenko, he nevertheless notices the appearance of the new goal of the youth, the icy purity, later so well developed in Polja's generation in The Russian Forest.

5.25121 Kurilov's views on morality seem to clash with the new times. For him "the new morality was still partly based on the vague norms of the individual conscience¹¹⁴". This notion makes him recognize in the case of the compromised Omeličev such old fashioned conceptions as gratitude, simple pity, the desire to help the man in building his second life, after having already suffered for the mistakes of the past. He even goes so far in his communist conscience as to let Omeličev remain near the bed of his sick child. It appears that he should not. "The real humanism would demand [...] the isolation of Luka from his father¹¹⁵." It is not the social humanism, says the critic, who as a matter of fact later on learned its benefits on his own person. So it was coming. The komsomol members strive to conquer any human reflexes. It is manifest in Sejfulla's case.

114 Leonid Leonov, Road to the Ocean, translated by Norbert Guterman, New York, Fisher, 1944, p. 246.

115 A. Selivanovskij, V Literaturnyx Bojax, op. cit., p. 292.

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And although all of them without exception felt sorry for this comrade, each of them tried to speak more harshly and severely as though this implied harshness toward himself¹¹⁶.

The whole air of the era to come is shown in one sentence:

"The judges exchanged glances; they felt awkward for Katja, who ventured to defend the guilty man¹¹⁷."

5.25122 Kurilov seems to be satisfied with the existing conditions. He is even prone to idealize them.

[...] wealth is being accumulated in this country and the people freed from want, and, having learnt to appreciate beauty, are becoming increasingly generous yet exacting towards their artists¹¹⁸.

Where he saw people free from want is hard to say. Perhaps in the fact that Marina who wore for so long her incredible shoes finally gets a new pair which is too small for her. In his ascetic way of living he does not need much (Protoklitov keeps his room nearly empty to resemble the others'). On the railroad the poverty is so prevalent that even the most necessary materials are lacking. There is no sign of wealth anywhere. So it only proves that "he is out of this world¹¹⁹". He is a romantic.

116 Leonid Leonov, Road to the Ocean, op. cit., p. 411.

117 Ibid.

118 Ibid., p. 457.

119 A. Bolotnikov, "Doroga na Okean", in Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 23, 1936, p. 5.

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What he wanted from fate is the boyish kind of heroics, to die in a glory.

Still it was possible to spend a remainder of one's life in a more intelligent way. And he regretted that he was not fated to screen a great leader with his body, or fall before a firing squad so that his death may serve as an example for others¹²⁰.

Such ideas also manifest the attachment to his country and the dissatisfaction with the achievement of his life. Like Uvadjev who escaped from real difficulties to the world of his imaginary Katja, Kurilov justifies the present but seeks comfort in a vision of future. From the dreamer's quality of Kurilov and his fundamentally optimistic belief in the victory of communism is born the fantastic Ocean, the paradise of generations to come.

5.2513 His excursions to it constitute the third phase of his world outlook, closely connected with the two previous ones, with the considerable predominance of the first, and the most revealing. From Kurilov who declares "We are not mechanisms, we are building our society for the human beings¹²¹" one has the right to expect more thoughts concerning the humanity's happiness. But despite

120 Leonid Leonov, Road to the Ocean, op. cit., p. 414.

121 Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 144.

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his protestations his new world could be the realization of Matvej's and Čikilev's dreams.

5.25131 The goal of the world revolution will be achieved by war and communist underground activity in the capitalist part of the globe. To "arrive to the natural state of the man — to be free to enjoy the product of his hands and thought, not to be exploited by anybody¹²²" the world's population has to go through hell and fire. Here Kurilov's basic humanitarism is surrendered to the party's teaching.

All people against their will were harnessed to the plough of penal servitude ploughing the map of the planet. Nobody would be able to tell whether was more of greatness or baseness in this human tragedy¹²³.

5.25132 What they come to is unsurpassed technical excellence. Everything is mechanized, including the actions of the people, who become like robots. They are indeed "the statistical units¹²⁴" and no wonder that the ancestors are "ashamed to bother [them] with questions about happiness¹²⁵". They are simply too busy to think about

122 Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 418.

123 Ibid., p. 125.

124 A. Selivanovskij, V Literaturnyx Bojax, op. cit., p. 297.

125 Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 123.

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it, and as Čikilev said "Thought, that is the cause of suffering¹²⁶".

5.25133 Their only purpose in life seems to be work. They are "possessed¹²⁷", "preoccupied¹²⁸" and "worried¹²⁹" by it. All this perfectly fits Kurilov's idea of the role of "creativity¹³⁰", which contrary to proprietary instincts will inspire humanity to really great deeds. But, as is shown by Leonov, the reason leaves no place for the soul. The uniform mass certainly is ideologically trained, but, like the bee-workers, is devoid of personal feelings. They have poets. But what do they write about? The poem which is mentioned is highly didactic. In fact it is a short lesson on the subject of the benefit of walking, the heart function and the contraction of muscles¹³¹.

126 Leonid Leonov, The Thief, op. cit., p. 264.

127 Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 123.

128 Ibid., p. 577.

129 Ibid., p. 418.

130 Ibid., p. 275.

131 Ibid., p. 423. Even if it is not a pebble thrown in Gorkij's direction, the episode is revealing for the writer, who during the writing in 1934 seemed so wholeheartedly embrace the social-realism.

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5.25134 As far as the population is concerned the author opposes Kurilov's idea of the men, "cleansed from the original filth¹³²":

But you intend to build a Christian paradise out of our Ocean! You aspire to stuff it with cherubims and the imperturbable monuments [...]. Let them fight, suffer, part... the life consists of this¹³³.

Kurilov however wants the new world absolutely pure, without dust or flies, in which his human specimen will be super-human models of the self-sacrifice for the state, in this case for the world-wide state.

The mother, who thinks that she lost her children and her husband, is inhumanly stoical.

And if not the greatness of her sorrow rejuvenated her, it means — it was the proud joy of the consciousness that to the enormous motherland she gave the best of that what she possessed¹³⁴.

No living mother will be "rejuvenated" by the loss of her family, unless she has a heart of stone. The one in question is just a monument of the communist virtue, a mother of gods of the new religion. By the death of her sons she acquires the whole humanity as sons. But the right of individual feelings is replaced by the

¹³² Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 422.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 134.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 422.

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collective one. This mother shares the grief of the whole globe rather than the reverse¹³⁵.

5.25¹³⁵ What is noteworthy is that Kurilov has a chance to find out that the future generation not only does not keep in reverence those who created, in his opinion, the best of worlds, but just the contrary, it does not know their names¹³⁶, which coincides with Uvadjev's meditations about the ship. And if Kurilov imagines that "I will never die, from here I see how much of me [is] in the future, in the descendants¹³⁷", by the irony of fate, and with the help of the author, it is the enemy of the people, Pylajev, who is not mistaken: "[...] let's not extort the hand-clapping from the descendants¹³⁸." When they finally notice their creators they spit on them¹³⁹. And while Kurilov rejects this episode, Leonov insists that "[...] perhaps this is the luckiest incident that

135 Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 422.

136 Ibid., p. 305.

137 Ibid., p. 117.

138 Leonid Leonov, "The Orchards of Polovčansk", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 7, p. 134.

139 Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 133-134.

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has happened to us here [...] ¹⁴⁰". So, even if the author in the final account "contrived to put a plus sign ¹⁴¹", he also deprecated the idea, born in mind of the political commissar.

5.252 For the purpose of fully understanding the communist Kurilov's dream, the author's additions should be singled out. The difference between the two lies in the fact that all displays of human activity not connected with war and work are observed during Kurilov's absence or while he is busy. Things such as music ¹⁴², newspaper ¹⁴³, the simple fatigue of the school boy learning his history ¹⁴⁴, the manifestation of tenderness and love, and even rain ¹⁴⁵, by which he is drenched, are noticed by the author alone. As a fine touch of humour Kurilov's travelling companion introduces also vigilance in the new

¹⁴⁰ Leonid Leonov, Road to the Ocean, op. cit., p. 114. This sentence was removed from the later editions.

¹⁴¹ David Burg, "Popytka Leonida Leonova", in Mosty, No. 7, 1961, p. 173.

¹⁴² Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 423.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 577.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 578.

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world. But when applied to Kurilov's person it is accepted with dismay¹⁴⁶.

Kurilov's revolution is intended not for people but for the giant machines. Out of it will result the iron man living in the soulless world. It is well demonstrated in the case of man, who reaches the sun. Certainly he has a symbolic meaning. He looks at the sun directly, without blinking, but he cannot see the flowers. He is blind¹⁴⁷. And this confirms the conclusion reached.

5.26 The time of terror to which The Road to the Ocean was an introduction and The Orchards of Polovčansk become the first act against Leonov's primary intentions¹⁴⁸, is blatantly and fully illustrated in The Wolf.

5.260 The theatre had a serious problem with the interpretation of Roščin, as it could not decide whether he was a negative or a positive character¹⁴⁹. This is quite understandable as the public was spoiled by Kurilov, who in the first place was not meant to be the rank and file

¹⁴⁶ Leonid Leonov, "Doroga na Okean", loc. cit., p. 304-305.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 424.

¹⁴⁸ E. Poljakova, Teatr i Dramaturg, Moscow, Vserossijskoje Teatralnoje Obščestvo, 1959, p. 247.

¹⁴⁹ I. Ja. Sudakov and I. F. Popov, "O pjesie Leonida Leonova 'Volk'", in Novyj Mir, May 1939, p. 230.

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communist, and by Otšelnikov, whose only reason for being on the stage was to catch the villain.

5.261 In this capacity Otšelnikov is smarter than Makavejevs, stronger than a professional boxing champion and personified the hope of the nation in every other respect. As such a clever and successful fisherman he uttered a sentence which was not noticed at all, at least by the critics: "You won't sweep the whole sea with the hard trawl. Especially such a sea¹⁵⁰."

5.262 When the sweep-up was shown in full action Roščin encountered some difficulties. The hero who regards himself as "the very axle of the wheel¹⁵¹" returns to the old models. He may be Kurilov's continuation, but is devoid of Gorkij's attributes, such as personal charm, humanitarianism, culture¹⁵² and the professional writer's fantasy. He has Uvadjev's narrow-mindedness as well as his wooden tongue. The sample of Roščin's oratory provides few details concerning his orthodoxy. In a toast

¹⁵⁰ Leonid Leonov, "Polovčanskije Sady", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 7, p. 164.

¹⁵¹ Leonid Leonov, "Volk", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 7, p. 194.

¹⁵² B. Jasienski, "Idejnyj Rost Xudožnika", in Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 27, 1936, p. 2, notices with great satisfaction Kurilov as first really cultural communist.

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to his daughter, who is supposed to be married, he is concerned not with her happiness but with the continuation of the species: "us, the men of to-morrow¹⁵³". There is the pride of accomplishments of the revolution:

Enter, the home is built for you. Who are we, ourselves, the builders? Who are you, mother? A cook. Lenin was writing about you, when you were not considered even a human being [...]. Most important, life is flowering¹⁵⁴.

5.263 Roščin tries to enhance the growth of the new society, of the new justice in human relations. But he does not want to see — as proved by Nastja's words: "Behind your work sometimes you do not see the life [...] Rather you see [...] what is pleasant for you¹⁵⁵" — that his mother, newly promoted to the human being has nobody to talk to in his home except the wash-stand¹⁵⁶. Furthermore, his son-in-law's family, just like in the old times, has to ask forgiveness of the man who has insulted them, because he happens to be Roščin's old friend¹⁵⁷.

153 Leonid Leonov, "Volk", loc. cit., p. 197.

154 Ibid.

155 Ibid., p. 194.

156 Ibid., p. 190, 191, 194.

157 Ibid., p. 227.

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As for the flowering life it is as much a cliché as Magdalinin's statement "In Roščin's home one tells no lies¹⁵⁸".

5.2631 Roščin knows perfectly well that in the country the plan is not fulfilled¹⁵⁹.

5.2632 He complains of the lack of people to work with, and he has contempt for his collaborators¹⁶⁰.

5.2633 He is overloaded with different commitments.

5.2634 His personal life is muddle.

Ksenja's sarcastic remark is fully justified "we are building a stable Soviet family¹⁶¹". In his home are new laws of family and human relations. Jelena may well personify the contact with the masses, so necessary for a communist. Why are they ashamed and hiding their love with the coming of the Soviet morale is not clear. Perhaps he is old-fashioned, as he comes from the peasant stock.

5.264 Roščin, the old communist, reaffirms Leonov's idea about the differentiation between the old guard and the new generation. It is best seen in relation to

158 Leonid Leonov, "Volk", loc. cit., p. 227.

159 Ibid., p. 193.

160 Ibid., p. 194 and 195.

161 Ibid., p. 193.

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vigilance. While his environment is suffering from "the collective persecution mania"¹⁶², Roščin is too busy with his many tasks to take part in the witch-hunt. But in order not to lag behind he listens to Magdalinin's informations, which can be false. It is possible that he untimely puts trust in men, which now is considered to be the motto of the party's teaching, while during the time of the play's action, the order of the day was plain unsubstantiated suspicion.

The malicious assertion that "Only the intellectual Roščin uses reason and that is why he appears to be always in error"¹⁶³ proves only that, in contrast to the other characters, Roščin does not use dreams and feelings as a basis for accusations. Otherwise the statement is wrong on two counts: the hero is not an intellectual; after some blunders he finally suspects Magdalinin, and shows a good sense in checking Luka's alibi.

But he will never have enough proof to arrest him.

5.27 The Ordinary Man Pavel Svekolkina's aims take on a special meaning if the time of his creation is taken under consideration. The writing of the play was begun

¹⁶² K. Rudnitskij, "Dramy Leonida Leonova", in Teatr, No. 7, 1958, p. 82.

¹⁶³ B. Emeljanov, "Čornyje Maski", in Literaturnyj Kritik, Vol. 2, February 1939, p. 125.

during the vicious attacks of the party press on the author of The Blizzard (1940).

There is no mention of his party affiliation, but Paša Svekolkina is "a real communist"¹⁶⁴. Contrary to his artist friend, Ladygin, who is preoccupied only with material goals, Svekolkina strives for beauty in life based on improved human relations. Not only does he believe in the future, like his predecessors, for instance: art "will gush on the streets with the purpose of beautifying the life itself"¹⁶⁵, but he works also towards making the present a time of happiness. He is inconspicuous, modest, not boasting about his high position of "people's commissar, the deputy [of the Supreme Soviet], the scientist"¹⁶⁶. Nobody fears him. His mention of Kolyma to Konstancja Lvovna¹⁶⁷ has an educational purpose. He does not try to carry his threat, just the contrary, he treats her in gentlemanly way and offers his help to her. But Svekolkina performs his work even when on holidays. Ubiquitous, he learns everything about everybody and intervenes only when his assistance is needed. He resolves

¹⁶⁴ L. Fink, Dramaturgija Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 224.

¹⁶⁵ Leonid Leonov, "Obyknoennyj Čelovek", in Sobranije Sočinenij, Vol. 7, 1961, p. 327.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 359.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 344.

conflicts: in a gentle way he helps people to understand their mistakes. He is perfectly aware that he is a leading force in peoples' lives in his capacity of a wise, understanding and loving friend, who believes in honesty and justice. And for that he uses his government connections, as in the case of Aleksej Ladygin's premium. His world outlook is full of optimism.

The unusual does not live, it dies like every abnormality. Only the very ordinary is eternal. Different beauty knocks at the world and if tomorrow the door will not be open to it, it will break the walls¹⁶⁸!

Svekolkin's cue has a much larger meaning than Kira's drive towards a beautiful, unusual life. It is continued by the "Voice" which in pathetic words propagates the "heroic ordinariness"¹⁶⁹. This pretentious propaganda negates the sense of the previous one. It seems that it would be more proper to judge those good communist words in a different manner. The unusual is the complex of fear which was given such a predominant role in Leonov's earlier plays. The beauty is normal human warmth, as contrasted with the egotistical reserve of the new Soviet Philistines.

¹⁶⁸ Leonid Leonov, "Obyknovennyj Čelovek", loc. cit., p. 346.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

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5.28 During the war, communists in Invasion and in Ljonuška are the leaders of the partisan movement behind the front-line.

5.281 Kolesnikov, the chairman of the district executive committee, is, in his opinion, the unchallenged master of the town¹⁷⁰. He is not mistaken. There are no German collaborators except three shady figures.

As a party member he considers it to be his duty to remain in the rear of the enemy and to organize the resistance. This he does brilliantly. He regards the occupation as a transitional period and has no doubt about the outcome of the war.

5.2811 His human traits are strictly confined to the limits allowed by the party. Guided by the vigilance he can feel sympathy towards Fjodor and even wish him luck, but he will not take the liberty of including the compromised man in his detail, be it the brother of his fiancée and the son of his friend. He will accept, however, the sacrifice of his life. Like the pastor of The Devil's Disciple he will bring help in a daring exploit, but Kolesnikov comes too late to save him. Nothing indicates that he went with that purpose in mind.

¹⁷⁰ Leonid Leonov, "Našestvie", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 7, p. 424.

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Contrary to Kurilov, he will not permit himself to be grateful to the enemy and will not accept his offer. But then Fajunin is the real enemy, while Omeličev belongs to different category.

5.2812 Kolesnikov's sense of duty as a leader is mixed with self-conceit. To preserve himself he does not hesitate to expose Olga and her family in seeking help when wounded. He should have known that they could be shot for this.

As self-criticism is a weapon in a struggle for communism, he, moved by the doctor Talanov's readiness to protect him, indulges in it. From his words, it may be seen how difficult was Talanov's task under his rule.

5.2813 Quite obliquely Leonov shows that the war was in some way beneficial for the party member, in that he learned his mistakes in the appraisal of men. But Kolesnikov in the last scene is still the iron man, the master, so it can be presumed that he did not undergo any considerable change.

5.283 Travina, the instructor of the district committee, plays a very minor role in Ljonuška. She is only interesting as a woman-leader of the peasants' resistance. In a quiet way she dominates the situation, but her behaviour, while it commands respect, does not inspire any fear. Peasants even permit themselves to suspect her of

mystification¹⁷¹. It is doubtful whether it could happen to a man and at another time. After all "this gun does not shoot any more¹⁷²", as said Fjodor about Kolesnikov on the eve of the German occupation. So when Drakin accuses her of lack of the human feelings: "Is there anything in your stone chest except the party card [...] ¹⁷³?" it is explained that she is fully human, she only plays the stone-hearted. Not knowing peasants she commits mistakes, this woman with the gun, who wants to inspire them to fight by showing them the sight of human misery. Naturally she believes in victory and in a bright future. She loses her son and says to Ljonuška: "You are lucky. When yours will be born there will be light in the world. After great [deal of] blood always comes great happiness. Preserve it [...] Fight for it¹⁷⁴!" Why the blood is needed to achieve happiness is not clear. Perhaps she remembers the human losses which were caused by the revolution and the happiness which came afterwards. But in this precise moment Temnikov is brought in, and when he

¹⁷¹ Leonid Leonov, "Ljonuška", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 7, p. 471.

¹⁷² Leonid Leonov, "Našestvie", loc. cit., p. 379.

¹⁷³ Leonid Leonov, "Ljonuška", loc. cit., p. 472.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 473.

dies Lena has no personal happiness to preserve. It will be hate and vengeance which will inspire her to fight with the Germans for the preservation of the state and its well-being, and in the final analysis, this is the reason for Travina's presence in the village.

5.29 The Russian Forest as far as Polja is concerned covers the transition from the period of terror to the first years of the war.

Polja Vixrova absorbs all the characteristics of the ideologically right new generation depicted in previous works of Leonov. But this member of the Young Communist League is given the prominent role; in fact she is the main hero of The Russian Forest. On her, as one of the future masters of the country¹⁷⁵, are placed the hopes of the older generation, to which Leonov also belongs.

To warrant this confidence, in the process of becoming the real human being, she undergoes the most significant transformation of all Leonov's heroes. This transformation has three phases:

5.291 Polja is a fanatical believer in revolution and in the undisputed rightness of the party which organized the country and imposed upon it the standards of life.

¹⁷⁵ Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 9, p. 711.

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She is so enthusiastic that she gives the impression that for her "communism is already built¹⁷⁶". Actually what she knows about the revolution is only that which she learned at school "about the significance of the proletarian revolution for the universal happiness of workers¹⁷⁷". And on the basis of her meager knowledge she talks with such fervor about the benefits of communism and about its ideals that even the Soviet critic terms it as "the strange excitation of social consciousness¹⁷⁸". Naturally she expresses a very idealistic point of view. However even at the start of her conscious political life she believes that "communism calls for destruction of pain, evil, untruth, that is, everything ugly¹⁷⁹". She appears to be completely happy.

5.2911 The author encounters on her way a multitude of economic inadequacies, which she just does not notice, as she has grown among privation. Included in these economic deficiencies are: poverty, the government's care only for

176 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 32.

177 Ibid., p. 227.

178 Marc Sêglov, "'Russkij Les' Leonida Leonova", in Novyj Mir, No. 5, p. 227.

179 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 32.

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external beauty in construction, the discomforts of everyday life and also such characteristic features of the Soviet life as the one-channel radio (which results in Polja hearing from every window of many great buildings the same melody, which she imagines to be "the invitation to life"¹⁸⁰).

5.2912 Shielded by the elders and by Komsomol she does not know anything about reality or the repulsive aspects of existence such as "the serious sickness"¹⁸¹ of the country, as represented by Gracjanskij.

5.2913 Like her whole generation educated on party slogans and having no personal experience of the intricacies of being, Polja longs for unheard of purity of soul. She strives for the moral peaks "where it is so painful and fearful to respire"¹⁸². Such aims are not approved by Soviet critics. For one of them they have "joyless

180 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 10.

181 E. Starikova, "Russkij Les" Leonida Leonova, Moscow, Izd. Zudožestvennoj Literaturny, 1963, p. 88.

182 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 357, which may be Leonov's interpretation of the popular verse of the Soviet song: "where the man respire so freely".

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shade¹⁸³". The "icebergs' peaks¹⁸⁴" and "Alpine pride¹⁸⁵" give shivers to another. But this coldness is for Polja the very essence of perfection. In this sentimental vacuum no place is left for compassion toward men and still less for tolerance. The ideal is expressed by one of her friends who would like to have "a heart of stainless steel¹⁸⁶". The new generation is on the way to becoming the new race of visionary supermen, with a heartless attitude towards men, similar to that of Gracjanskij's.

5.2914 "What could happen to the student in the Soviet state, where, seemingly, the youth alone serves as a safeguard from the misfortunes¹⁸⁷?" asks Leonov, and soon after provides the answer. Polja's apparent happiness and satisfaction with life is marred by the existence of the secret tragic element. It is her "spoiled genealogy¹⁸⁸", the disgrace, which just like Zoja in The

183 E. Starikova, "Russkij Les" Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 241.

184 Mark Ščeglov, "'Russkij Les' Leonida Leonova", in Novyj Mir, No. 5, 1954, p. 224.

185 Ibid.

186 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 54.

187 Ibid., p. 7.

188 Mark Ščeglov, "'Russkij Les' Leonida Leonova", loc. cit., p. 225.

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Blizzard¹⁸⁹ she is trying to hide even from her boyfriend. No wonder. The persons of her age blinded by inhuman purity would not tolerate the best friend having a father with a tinge of politically suspicious ideology. "It is well that friends do not read those little articles¹⁹⁰" because they would have persecuted Polja with mockery and questioning with regard to the garbage-pile on which she contrived to pick up such a father.

5.29141 In such circumstances Polja has no choice but to hate him, at least that she believes she should, because the weight of father's unsolved secret¹⁹¹ prevents her from reaching her ideal and gives her an inferiority complex.

Such an attitude is the direct result of education and of fanaticism, and Polja suspects her father of heresy, of undisclosed crimes towards the state.

5.292 Polja's slightly distorted notions begin to change upon her arrival in Moscow. She comes to live on a dead-end street, which, as is typical with Leonov, takes on a symbolic meaning. Even the name of the street

¹⁸⁹ L. Fink, Dramaturgija Leonida Leonova, op. cit., p. 206.

¹⁹⁰ Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 15.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 227.

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"Blagoveščenskij¹⁹²" can be roughly translated as a 'good prophecy'. When she leaves it she already has a new purpose in life, that is, to avenge her father's misfortune.

Three factors help her in understanding her mistakes and in recognizing that there are some sides of revolution which are "dark, usually hidden from the little ones¹⁹³".

5.2921 The meeting of Natalja Sergejevna, the old lady from a different century and of an alien social environment. From her Polja learns that "the highest laws [are the ones] — written in the heart¹⁹⁴". Such an opinion contradicts her former beliefs. Later she will understand it better.

5.2922 The acquaintance of Gracjanskij whose main concern is to discover and unmask "the root of evil¹⁹⁵". He began his career by crushing a famous professor¹⁹⁶ and persecutes Vixrov. It is not important whether

p. 10. 192 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit.,

193 Ibid., p. 228.

194 Ibid., p. 217.

195 Ibid., p. 451.

196 Ibid., p. 61.

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Gracjanskij is a former provocateur or just a plain Soviet citizen without any compromising past. What really matters is that Polja representing the Soviet youth, revolts against the man, who personifies "the social phenomenon¹⁹⁷", the product of Soviet conditions and in no case "the remnant of the old world¹⁹⁸". If this last view were accepted, all those at the top who tolerated his methods, should be numbered among those same "remnants", because Gracjanskij's scope of activity was "of somehow undetermined type, however not in the least subject to discussion of mortals¹⁹⁹". He was so high on the social ladder that he could refuse to receive Krajnov, who had a prominent government's post.

As for his aims, he tried "to delay the process of crystallization in the scorching stream of revolution, the work of which [is] — to flow and to burn [...] ²⁰⁰".

This man is one of the 'untouchables' of the Soviet state and the existence of such was revealed to a

197 Pavel Gromov, "Svojeobrazije Soderžanija", in Zvezda, No. 8, 1955, p. 135.

198 E. Knipovič, "'V Zaščitu Žizni', O Romanie L. Leonova 'Russkij Les'", in Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 24, February 1954, p. 3.

199 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 527.

200 Ibid., p. 386.

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young, idealistic girl, believing in the fundamental integrity of her leaders.

5.2923 The prelection of her father is the climax of Polja's understanding that not everything is as bright in the country's life as she believed. She realizes that injustice has been done to Vixrov. She admires the reaction of Kasjan, which, seemingly very natural, in the USSR is connected with "courage"²⁰¹ and "the noble heart"²⁰². What this hero has to say is "I hate... fascism in any form, the double play, the assault from behind the corner I hate"²⁰³!" He uses 'fascism' as the most offensive word he can think of, and so does Leonov, who, however, protects himself by making Gracjanskij the contact-man of the foreign power. The boy, naturally, has no inkling about this circumstance. Furthermore the action takes place in the heart of Moscow and Gracjanskij's pupil acts in the best tradition of the social vigilance. He suspects and accuses. He exercises his sacred right to criticize, and his public criticism has the usual sting to it. "Polja looked about pitifully,

201 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 353.

202 Ibid.

203 Ibid.

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seeking support and interference, but the audience [...] was silent²⁰⁴", very much in keeping with the usual attitude in such cases.

After this new experience Polja's search of purity takes on a new meaning.

It is not to have a war and to live without mutual resentment, not to kill the little ones, that no one was treading upon those getting weak [...] everybody might become weak on the great way, is it not true²⁰⁵?

She goes to war, not to earn forgiveness for her father, not to clear his and her name²⁰⁶, which in her sorrow she had been ready to do not so long before. She must earn by her deeds the moral right to carry out her just vengeance²⁰⁷.

5.293 The hardship of war, the contact with people she would never meet, except in similar conditions, teach Polja some facts of life previously unknown to her. The change which occurs in her world outlook is induced by the war itself, which she sees as "first of all a huge [...] disorder, where the most improbable becomes

204 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 352.

205 Ibid., p. 512.

206 Ibid., p. 133.

207 Ibid., p. 779.

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possible out of dislocation of the logic of adjusted, comprehensible life²⁰⁸".

5.2931 Polja discovers that the worth of people is not dependent on their political creed.

5.29311 The boy is a hero despite the fact that he does not belong to the Komsomol.

5.29312 The kulak who saved her at the cost of his life is not a beast after all.

5.2932 She learns the laws of the heart by the example of the poor peasant woman who, without any display of suspicion, helps her to the best of her ability.

5.2933 Polja, who previously considered the church marriage of her comrade "an effrontery²⁰⁹", is moved by the touching blessing of the old woman who crosses her.

5.2934 But Polja's iceberg purity is not affected. She comes to

the vague conclusion that before dawn arrives on the earth, on it must change the generations of builders and warriors, of the giants with the iron hearts, merciless towards themselves and persistent like auger or plough, with a dream welded on plough shares²¹⁰.

p. 638. 208 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit.,

209 Ibid., p. 54.

210 Ibid., p. 648-649.

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This thought seems to reverse the whole benefit of Polja's personal experiences. Nevertheless her fanatical Soviet patriotism could be only augmented by the war.

She, the Komsomol member, "the tomorrow of the world²¹¹", believes in the world-wide revolution. She approves the iron hearts of those who brought it about on her soil. The Thief's plough of the Civil War, the Antons, Uvadjevs and Kurilovs are close to her heart. She buries the hand of a fallen communist with a piety reminiscent of pagan rituals or Christian enshrinement. But even in that hard judgment there are some new shades:

5.29341 The giants should be merciless toward themselves, not toward others.

5.29342 The plough is intended for those who should be converted, in this case, the Germans, and then, of course, the capitalists.

5.29343 The dawn is far, far away.

5.29344 The conception is, after all, vague.

5.2935 As far as the Soviet state's domestic problems are concerned, there is no doubt that the war in a sense was beneficial for Polja. She overcame fear, gained self-assurance. She also obtained the moral right to pay

211 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 675.

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her "little debt"²¹² to Gracjanskij. She is not hampered by the quarter of the century's fear of the older generation. Her youth knows neither the meaning of fate nor the passiveness resulting from years of hardship. Full of optimistic belief that justice will prevail she says to her father's tormentor: "This is only a deposit..."²¹³

Her deed is not of a purely personal nature. The revenge involves the whole country.

But it seems there is nothing I will not part with just to get rid of every kind of trash [...] that at least our children enter into a clean house²¹⁴.

It can only mean that Polja does not confine Gracjanskij's methods to him alone. Furthermore she understands that her "house" is not clean, as long as denunciations exist, — spying on one's neighbor and benefits acquired at his expense.

5.294 Thus comes the reversal of "It is good to live in the clean house"²¹⁵ of The Wolf's time. Those cleaning it by means of suspicion, based on feelings, bad dreams, instincts and presentiments, those measuring guilt only

212 Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 779.

213 Ibid., p. 783.

214 Ibid., p. 778.

215 Leonid Leonov, "Volk", loc. cit., p. 271.

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visually, as was repeatedly brought out in The Badgers and Sot', are put in the same category as Gracjanskij, who suggested, hinted and slandered.

5.295 In this respect Leonov is far ahead of Erenburg's Thaw, since Russian Forest was created during Stalin's life. The now famous episode of the breaking of ice under the heel of Erenburg's hero finds its earlier counterpart in Leonov's novel. It is not as realistic, but equally significant.

Leaving the dead-end street, where Gracjanskij lives, Polja is aware that her dreams are shattered, but she is alive with hope:

In the turmoil she did not even notice that her favorite evenings were approaching, on the turning point of winter, still covered with crunching ice but already imbued with the feverish longing of hope²¹⁶.

And while some Western experts judged even the title of the last Leonov's novel to be "monotonous and exhausting²¹⁷" as of a "tedious moral tract on forest conservation²¹⁸", Hingley's perceptive mind was needed to

²¹⁶ Leonid Leonov, "Russkij Les", loc. cit., p. 784.

²¹⁷ M. H. Futrell, "A central Soviet Novel: Leonov's Sot'", in Renaissance and Modern Studies, University of Nottingham, Vol. 3, 1959, p. 111.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

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discover, contrary to the prevailing opinion, "the best piece of 'thaw' writing"²¹⁹.

5.3 The disarmament of the prosecutor is repeated in The Golden Chariot by Timoša, who, by destroying the compromising letter, makes harmless "the conscience of war"²²⁰ Bierjозkin. Thus Leonov condemns all kinds of moral prosecution for the sake of happiness of the young generation. Such people as Polja and Timoša will replace the old leaders after the war. They will introduce new meaning to abstract ideals and goals. They are ready for hard work. Both of them have confidence in the future. But Polja is not yet confronted with the harsh reality, while "Timoša is the poor war-maimed reality"²²¹. He has to organize his whole life anew, he has to start from the beginning. And this is not an optimistic solution.

219 Ronald Hingley, "Leonid Leonov", loc. cit., p. 70.

220 Leonid Leonov, "Zolotaja Kareta", in Sobranije Sočinienij, Vol. 7, p. 547.

221 Manya Harari, "New Developments in Soviet Literature", in The Listener, Vol. LV, No. 1412, issue of April 19, 1956, p. 461.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The discrepancies of the critical interpretation of Leonid Leonov's works are the result of the personal approach of the reviewers, and of the fact that the elements of orthodoxy and of breaking off of the official line can be found in them simultaneously.

The writer's idealistic world-outlook hampers his uncritical acceptance of the reality of life in the Soviet Union. Complying with the more enormous aims of the state which, aside from the various pressures imposed on him, Leonid Leonov considers to be the duty of the Soviet writer, he cannot pass unnoticed the shortcomings of the revolution as applied to life.

The poet, the humanist longing for the betterment of human nature, for the improvement of relations among people and for supreme justice, he remains in a sense a permanent fellow-traveller of the revolution.

For more than forty years he voices his 'yes...but'. This can be the reason for him not joining the communist party.

1.1 Leonov proves that he is not an opportunist, but a courageous man who is fighting for the realization of such a revolution as was expected by the idealistic men who were preparing it.

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1.2 Leonid Leonov is constant and stubborn as far as his literary opinions are concerned. They did not undergo any particular evolution from the start of his literary career, despite the fact that there was a time when such a stand was connected with a personal danger.

1.3 He believes in the writer's right to free expression and choice of subject, which is contrary to the prevailing policy of the state.

1.4 His talent and the 'yes' part of his creativity helped those watching his usefulness in the mass conviction to overlook his reservations, especially as they are by no means obvious in his works. They are dispersed in Leonid Leonov's novels and plays like 'the dandelions' seeds with the hope that at least one of them will grow'.

2.1 L. Leonov's heroes undergo sometimes strange and sudden evolutions. Such is Talagan in The Breakthrough of Petušixa, whom the revolution transformed from the thief into a commissar. But in another instance, namely in The Thief, a dashing commissar becomes a thief, while Miška Kopylev in The Return of Kopylev, also a commissar, may choose to abandon the peaks of glory for the traditional life in his native village.

However, apart from such spectacular metamorphosis, the evolution of Leonid Leonov's heroes is rather slow.

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2.2 As far as peasants are concerned their acceptance of the revolution is connected with their inborn passivity and long years of dependence from the landlords. It passes through five distinctive phases.

2.21 The lack of interest of The White Nights and The Breakthrough of Petušixa.

2.22 Some vague and unrealizable hope connected with freedom and more land as expressed in The Breakthrough of Petušixa and in The Badgers.

2.23 The rebellion of The Badgers against the city as such, always oppressive and hostile, no matter who there may be. The bolsheviks are seen as the city's people. They win by deceit. The revolution did not bring anything new.

2.231 Only a few, like Semjon Raxlejev, express the conscientious hope of the peasants' ruled state. The mass is not ready for it.

2.24 The peasants of Sot' are still opposed to the new, however, once pacified, they do not want any rebellion.

2.25 Yet the period of the Industrialization facilitates the breaking of the barrier between the village and the city. The economic factor, the work on the big projects as in Skutarevskij will attract the villagers, but then they will join the proletariat.

2.6 But at the time of the war in Ljonuška, in The Taking of Velikošumsk and in The Russian Forest the peasants

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lack of political education is revealed. There is no hostility any more but just a life apart.

3. The proletariat is distinctly divided into two groups: the city workers and the rural proletariat to be.

3.1 The ranks of the proletariat are replenished by the working peasants, and the members of intelligentsia sunk in the social scale.

3.11 In Sot' it is a uniform, anonymous mass of comparatively new comers. It has to be formed and politically re-educated.

3.12 In The Road to the Ocean the elders are still lacking the prescribed zeal. It is the youth, coming to replace the old generation, as was the case of the members of the komsomol in Sot', who are showing complete self-denial in the service of the revolution. The evolution of the elders is not shown.

3.2 The city proletariat does not need any re-education, with the exception of Vekšin. But he never had any doubts concerning the revolution itself, only he did not approve of the manner of its application. Butylkin also reveals some kind of misgivings, but their nature is undisclosed.

3.3 During the war the railroad workers are absolutely devoted to the state. As for their 'dictatorship', it is not revealed in any way, except on a very small sector, in their relations with the subordinates.

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4. The members of the intelligentsia had to pass through the painful period of renouncing the past. In order to be accepted by the revolution, it was not enough to join the revolutionary forces offering to the best of one's capacity good will and previously acquired knowledge. It was not enough to revise the previous world outlook. The intelligentsia had to reconcile itself with the revaluation of its position in life as the salt of the earth, and humbly yielding priority to the new raising man, had to accept whatever place it was offered.

4.1 Actually none of the studied characters accepted the revolution unconditionally. The most common complaint is the high cost of revolution in human lives and suffering.

5. The communists are divided into two groups: those who consider themselves to be the masters of life, like Anton, Itașez, Uvadiev and Cerimov, and the dreamers who relate the well-being of the state to the happiness of its population, as for example, Byxalov, Potemkin and Svekolkina. Thus two sides of the revolution are enhanced. Work seen only as service to the country is supplemented by concern for its people. What is particularly characteristic, humanism is obvious in the members of the old guard, which is dying out or, like Krajnov in The Russian Forest, deprived of influence on the country's policies.

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Indifference towards people and themselves is a trait of the younger generation.

The war brings some change in human relations. But the real hope of improving the existing conditions and finally of bringing to life the ideal is entrusted into those who like Polja and Timoša will take the future of the state in their hands.

6. In summing up the conclusions, it can be stated that Leonid Leonov, an intellectual and a peasant by birth, depicts with real understanding the problems of these two classes in adjusting to the revolutionary conditions. The heroes of peasant origin are treated with love and sympathy. This attitude influenced the lack of varnishing in representing all the hardship it took to overcome the old notions and to subscribe to the new.

Both the peasants and intelligentsia are awaiting the communism which they hope will fulfill the revolutionary goals and bring the happiness which is now lacking.

In the same way the urban proletariat can be connected with the communists. They have a common faith in the revolution and, with the exception of Mitka Vekšin, in the path the party chose to lead the country. But even among them are some who have misgivings as to the unnecessary cruelty in introducing the new order. And in this respect most of L. Leonov's characters are united.

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So while the literary characters are changing, some of them growing to become the men of the new epoch, others reduced to non-existence, if they are oppressors and the oppressed; the cold and the warm-hearted; the pillars of the new society and the ones whose existence is merely tolerated, their creator is still appraising the revolution and his heroes not by the standard of the new morality but by the centuries old criteria of the Biblical and simple conception of good and evil.

And in this respect he is far from being a conformist.

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In this interview Leonov disclosed that: the revolution created for him the necessity of changing the world outlook; the war forced to descend from the ivory tower; he desires to write one good book; he did not change his allegiance to Dostojevskij; he likes Gogol, and Avvakum; his main interest is in the man; great art is not created on social command.

Lidin, V., Pisateli. Avtobiografii i Portrety Sovremennykh Russkikh Prozaikov, Moscow, Sovremennyye Problemy, Stoljar, 1926, p. 200.

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Diskussija v VSSP, Reč L. Leonova, Novyj Mir, No. 10, 1931, p. 123-125.

The speech of Leonid Leonov in All-Russian Union of Soviet Writers where he stresses the need of great literature; scoffs at exaggerated orthodoxy and low level of some Soviet books and defends Pasternak with the characteristic for early Leonov humor and frankness.

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After becoming the Chairman of the Writers' Union, Leonov abstains from accusing Pilniak, who was expelled. Instead he denounces the organization's lack of a clearly defined ideological position and suggests a stronger political and social approach.

"Moje Zycie i Ksiazki", Wiadomosci Literackie, No. 47 (518), October 29, 1933, p. 2.

Leonov speaks of his attitude towards literary creativity which he considers to be a form of memoirs; hence his reluctance for personal publicity. He reveals that the pathetic picture "The Hunters" by Bruegel was his inspiration for Skutarevskij. The interview gives a new insight into the writer's personality.

Naši Sovremennyye Pisateli o Klassikax, Na Literaturnom Postu, No. 5-6, March 1927, p. 57.

L. Leonov declares his admiration for Dostojevskij, for classical literature and for the concept of man not attached to the passing conditions of his era, place and nationality, that is the eternal man. His opinions sound daring.

Ot Romana K Pjesie, Sovremennyyj Teatr, No. 5, 1927, p. 70.

From the comments with regard to the circumstances surrounding the conception of the play The Badgers, it would appear that Leonov gave in under some pressure, that he did not approve of the underlying principle of the play and considered it more as collective effort than his own.

Pourquoi les Occidentaux vivent-ils à l'enseigne du 'tout est permis'?, Esprit, No. 7, Juillet 1964, p. 41-49.

In the speech presented to European writers Leonov touches the subject of the future of the novel. He criticises some Western literary trends and the decline of moral principles. He also expresses fear concerning the future of humanity.

Przysiegamy Bronic Do Konca Zdobyczy Kultury!, Literatura Radziecka, No. 5, November 1949, p. 196-198.

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Prizyv K Mužestvu, Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 47, 1934, p. 2.

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Romov, Sergej, Vstreča s Leonidom Leonovym, Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 43, September 24, 1930, p. 2.

Apparently sincere but diplomatic talk about many topics. Some of them: cultural problems, Soviet and Western writers, the hindrance of excessive knowledge, the position of literature in U.S.S.R., Leonov's self-education and prognosis for fellow-travellers.

Soviet Writers Answer Their Questions, The Anglo-Soviet Journal, Vol. 8, No. 2, Winter 1947, Leonov Leonid, p. 35.

Along with some explanations concerning the working conditions and easy life of young writers in the U.S.S.R., a statement which confirms that it is possible for an experienced professional writer to create without inspiration.

Teatr Naševo Vremeni, Teatr, No. 10, 1946, p. 3-6.

Evidently provoked by criticism, Leonov debates the tasks to be accomplished by authors and the topics of the future. But first of all he defends the right to create negative characters and to let them speak.

Vaša Novaja Pjesa? Interview. Teatr, No. 6, 1955, p. 166-167.

The explanation of the reasons behind the second version of the play The Golden Coach as well as the justification of the changes introduced into the characters, but the cause for all that somehow escapes the reader.

4. Books about L. Leonov

Boguslavskaja Z., Leonid Leonov, Ed. Sovetskij Pisatel, Moscow, 1960, 367 p.

In five chapters which blend fact with literary criticism the author traces the literary career of Leonov. She makes no effort to take the edge off the ideological shortcomings of the first works but nevertheless the book is written in the spirit of political apology.

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Fink, L., Dramaturgija Leonida Leonova, Sovetskij Pisatel, Moscow, 1962, 351 p.

One of the best Soviet publications about Leonov. The survey of Leonov's dramaturgy on the background of his general literary activity. The author seems to have a deep understanding of Leonov's creative problems.

Kovalev, V.A., Romany Leonida Leonova, Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, Moscow, Leningrad, 1954, 399 p.

The detailed analysis of Leonov's novels up to 1935. One of the merits of this book is its source material, but it is crippled by the ideological clichés.

-----, Leonid Leonov, Seminarij, Posobiye dlja Studentov, Ed. "Prosveščeniye", Moscow-Leningrad, 1964, 251 p.

One of the paramount books in study of Leonov. New biographical data and the impressive bibliography are included.

-----, Tvorčestvo Leonida Leonova, K Xarakteristike Tvorčeskoj Individualnosti Pisatelja, Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, Moscow-Leningrad, 1962, 319 p.

The analysis of the individual characteristics of the writer in respect to topics and artistic values, especially in The Russian Forest and The Thief. Chapter dealing with the foreign critique of Leonov's works furnishes valuable bibliographical information.

Lobanov, M., Roman L. Leonova "Russkij Les", Sovetskij Pisatel, Moscow, 1958, 215 p.

The book is seen as a complement to previous works, as far as philosophical, social, ethical, psychological etc. problems are concerned. Good analysis of style, construction and of characters. The reasonings are ideologically influenced.

Starikova, E., "Russkij Les" Leonida Leonova, Vixrov i Gracjanskij, Izdatelstvo Xudožestvennoj Literatury, Moscow, 1963, 118 p.

An incredible journey into The Russian Forest from which emerges the entirely new, in U.S.S.R., face of de-stalinized Leonov. Somehow delayed but direct result of Khrushchev's 1956 speech. Fresh and honest judgment.

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Vlasov, F., Poezeja žizni, Ed. Sovetskaja Rossiya, Moscow, 1961, 343 p.

The attention is centered on The Russian Forest and The Taking of Velikošumsk. The traditional Leonov's philosophical approach is stressed. The book is not devoid of valuable details concerning Leonov's biography, but certain clarification of his long standing orthodoxy is exaggerated.

5. Articles and Reviews

Aleksandrova, Vera, Leonid Leonov (1899-) in A History of Soviet Literature, 1917-1962 from Gorky to Yevtu-shenko, Doubleday & Co., 1963, p. 175-190.

The Thief, Sot', The Invasion and The Taking of Velikošumsk are discussed. The author emphasizes the change which the war brought to Leonov's world outlook. Quite hastily she jumps to the conclusion that Leonov is alien to moral, religious and philosophical preoccupations.

Anučin V, Orestov, N., "Narodnoje Bogactvo", Čitate-li o Romanie L. Leonova Russkij les, Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 35, March 23, 1954, p. 3.

Two readers state that a number of Gracjanskijs still flourish in the USSR not necessarily being spies and having no apparent reason to commit suicide. It took literary critics some years to come to similar conclusions.

Artjuxin, N., "Sot' L. Leonova, Na Literaturnom Postu, Nos. 15-16, August 1930, p. 82-88.

The emphasis is on the exceptional value of Sot' as far as the new ideology, the problems and the heroes are concerned. Its difference from Leonov's other novels is sketchily shown. Little that is new is brought to light.

Astaxov, L., Kinodramaturgija Vojennovo Vremeni, Novyj Mir, Nos. 11-12, 1944, p. 140-146.

Among other wartime films The Invasion is discussed. The leading characters, particularly Fjodor, his father and Fajunin are convincingly defined.

Baksakov, Vl., "Zolotaja Kareta", Literaturnaia Gazeta, No. 118 (3463), October 4, 1955, p. 2.

The confrontation of the two versions of the play proves that the main characters of the 1946 version have been almost entirely changed. The author emphasizes the fact that some of his heroes as well as their respective activities do not correspond to the present way of life. Very convincing.

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Baljasnikov, N. Leonid Leonov, Statji Vojennyx Let, Zvezda, No. 11, November 1946, p. 197-198.

The sincerity of Leonov's work is noted with satisfaction, even if not all of his articles bear the propagandist character. The information about Leonov's presence at Nuremberg and Lunenburg during the trials is interesting.

Bitner, G., Leonid Leonov, Vziatije Velikošumska, Zvezda, No. 88, 1945, p. 169-170.

The defence of Leonov's highly patriotic work against the charges of hyperbolisation. The conversion of the heroes into folkloric warriors is approved, but the psychological approach is found faulty and not without a reason.

Bolotnikov, A., Doroga na Okean, Literaturnaia Gazeta, No. 23, April 20, 1936, p. 5.

The allegation of Leonov's unquestionable ideological sincerity does not prevent the critic from comparing Kurilov to the lonely St. Anthony, to doubt the existence of so many superfluous men in Moscow of the 30's or to dissociate himself from Leonov's idea of utopia. The criticism is justified.

Brian-Chaninov, Nicolas, Lettres Russes, Mercure de France, Vol. 250, 15 février 1934, p. 207-211.

The task of the Soviet writer is presented under the light of freedom of choice and the inner enthusiasm. Skutarevskij is discussed and in its best characters the influence of Dostojevskij is seen. Too optimistic.

Brown, Edward J., Russian Literature Since the Revolution, New York, Collier Books, 1963, Leonov, p. 131-132.

A perfunctory evaluation of Leonov's career as a writer of The Badgers, Sot', Skutarevskij, Road to the Ocean and Russian Forest.

Budrecki, Lech, Od "Borsukow" do "Rosyjskiego Lasu" (O prozie Leonida Leonowa), Przegląd Kulturalny, No. 33, Sept. 23-29, 1954, p. 4.

Leonov's main themes and heroes are seen as a manifestation of his individualistic approach. The lack of varnishing and the realistic way of describing the negative heroes are compared with Poland's present day literary trends. Very good.

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Burg, David, "Popytka Leonida Leonova", Mosty, No. 7, 1961, p. 159-179.

The author sets as a goal to analyse the ideological evolution of Leonov, as reflected in his works. The gradual acceptance of communism was so sincere, that even after Stalin's death he rewrote The Thief to meet his line. In spite of several justified observations Burg's evidence with regard to Leonov's downfall is not too convincing.

Breiter, Emil, "Borsuki Leonova", Wiadomosci Literackie, No. 46 (463), 1932.

Polish literary critic who sees Leonov first of all as a poet, does not perceive any philosophical or psychological interests in him. But he disapproves of the propagandist and pessimistic solution of the conflict in The Badgers. Some views are noteworthy.

Cimbal, S., "S Veroj V Dramaturga, 'Polovčanskije Sady' V. Leningradskom Bolšom Dramatičeskom Teatre Imeni M. Gorkovo", Teatr, No. 6, 1955, p. 86-90.

Seventeen years after the first opening night the play is seen in a different light, but none the better. Some reminiscences, explanation of the idea and of the actors' interpretation of their parts.

Danilin, Ju., Leonid Leonov: Rasskazy, Knigonoša, No. 34, 1926, p. 31.

A very short review of Tuatamur and The Breakthrough of Petušixa! Leonov's mysticism and the uncertain world outlook are noted as well as the frequent use of the Slavonic church phraseology.

Doroga na Okean. Obsuždenje Romana L. Leonova na Presidiume S.S.P., Literaturnaya Gazeta, No. 27, May 10, 1936, p. 1.

A. Lezhnev's praise not only of the book's value but also of the overcoming of Dostoevsky's influence, even if its traces still remain. Levidov's moderate satisfaction is lessened by suspicion that utopia is a form of escapism from reality. Shklovski's comment is malevolent.

Elsberg, Ja., Problema Novovo Čeloveka v Literature, in Literatura i Novyj Čelovek, Ed. Akademia Nauk SSSR, Moscow, 1963, p. 5-32.

The resolutions and materials with regard to the image of the new man as discussed on the XXII Congress of the KPSS. Valuable.

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Elsberg, Ja., Povest' o Narodnom Gnieve "Vziate Velikošumska" L. Leonova, Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 43 (147), October 21, 1944, p. 2.

The praise of solidarity and of social consciousness of the masses, of patriotism, even of the style but simultaneously the old sins are recalled, including wrong aestheticism, Dostoevskij and religious phraseology. Out of the ordinary and instructive.

Futrell, M., A Central Soviet Novel: Leonov's Sot', Renaissance and Modern Studies, University of Nottingham, Vol. 3, 1959, p. 111-130.

Assuming that Sot' is in all respects the best of Leonov's works, the author undertakes the explanation of its merits. The novel's construction, its humour and the leading characters are well analyzed.

Gei, N., Idei, Obrazy i Konflikty Romana L. Leonova "Russkij Les", Kritika i Bibliografija, Oktiabr', Vol. 6, July 1954, p. 151-160.

In comparison with The Badgers, Sot' and Skutarevskij, the patriotic message of the book is recognized. Nevertheless unnecessary pathos is condemned as well as the fact that Vixrov is a solitary fighter. Nothing out of the ordinary.

Gorbov, D., Itogi Literaturnovo Goda, Novyj Mir, No. 12, 1925, p. 129-140.

The author has a few unpleasant words for Ehrenburg, but on the whole he sees the improvement in the fellow-travellers' camp. Leonov and his Badgers are accepted as being on the right ideological path.

-----, "Leonid Leonov", Novyj Mir, No. 10, October 1928, p. 212-224.

A negative assessment of Leonov's creativity including The Thief. Gorbov objects to his ideology, his individualistic wilfulness, his wrong interpretation of reality and the overdose of sympathy towards the people of the past. The Badgers is the only step in the right direction.

Gorkij, M., Pisma o Literature, Sovetskij Pisatel, Moscow, 1957, Letters addressed to Leonov, p. 309, 358, 410-411, 490-493.

In his letters to Leonov, Gorkij discusses and usually praises his new books. The Road to the Ocean is criticized, so it is revealing that suggestions concerning that book were disregarded by Leonov.

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Gorodnickij, V., Varšavskij Ja., Černaja Magia, O Pjesie Leonova Ljonuška, Komsomolskaja Pravda, October 15, 1946, p. 3.

A bitter attack against Leonov's play Ljonuška based mainly upon the writer's picture of the Soviet village, officialdom and the Soviet youth. The title ridicules the strong mystic connotation of the play. From the Soviet point of view the criticism is justified.

Gromov, P., Gieroi i Vremia, Stat'i o Literature i Teatre, Sovetskij Pisatel, Leningrad, 1961, Leonov, p. 93-96.

The author holds that in The Invasion the ethical problem is reduced to sacrifice, but that there is in it a new psychological twist. In Ljonuška and in The Taking of Velikošumsk the exploit, as usual, is comprehended as a duty. Foggy symbolism is criticized. A certain freshness of approach.

-----, Pavel, Svojeobrazije Soderžanija, Svezda, No. 8, 1955, p. 132-148.

Leonov's Russian Forest and Granin's Seekers are discussed. In Leonov's book the moral problem is engaging a good deal of the critic's attention. Polja is seen as an ideal of the new Soviet morality. Some fault finding concerns Vixrov. Nothing new.

Haimson, Leopold H., The Solitary Hero and the Philistines, A Note on the Heritage of the Stalin Era, Daedalus, Summer 1960, p. 541-550.

The recent trend towards the condemnation of Stalin's bureaucracy is compared with the old war on Philistinism. The New Man is traced back to the 19th century. The new solitary hero can be found in Leonov's much earlier works.

Harari, Manya, New Developments in Soviet Literature, The Listener, Vol. 55, No. 1412, April 19, 1956, p. 456-457 and 461.

The publisher's impressions of her visit to USSR. The new trend in Russian literature is discussed. The Golden Coach is included in the anti-Stalinist category. Interesting.

Hayward, Max, Labedz, Leopold, Ed., Literature and Revolution in Soviet Russia 1917-1962, A Symposium, London, Oxford University Press, New York, Toronto, 1963, 235 p.

Eleven authors, among them Struve, Simmons, Muchnic, Hayward, Gibian and Mathewson present the newest views on Soviet literature with understandable emphasis on the post-

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war developments until 1962. Very valuable, even if some articles may sound faintly overoptimistic.

Hayward, Max, The Thaw and the Writers, Daedalus, Summer 1960, p. 551-561.

The author is interested in changes brought to Soviet literature by the post-Stalin era. Some of his findings may be applied to Leonov's works.

Hingley, Ronald, "Leonid Leonov", Soviet Survey, No. 25, July-September, 1958, p. 69-74.

An effort is being made to solve the controversial literary activity of Leonov. The author presumes that Leonov is a believer and he compares the sometimes exaggerated political orthodoxy of his works with the mimetism of Gracjanskij of The Russian Forest. The ideas are not so unusual as they seem to be.

Inglot, Mieczyslaw, "Borsuki" Leonova, Wies, Dec. 21-28, 1952, p. 4.

This review of The Badgers has an ideological approach. Leonov's shortcomings in the presentation of the revolutionary village are put forward. The author is not satisfied with Anton, and expresses the opinion that the communist should be dealt with in more detail.

Ja, Z., Doroga na Okean L. Leonova, "Disputy", Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 61, November 5, 1935.

The enthusiastic praise of Leonov's ideological growth. Kurilov is called the best hero of Soviet literature, but The Badgers and The Thief are condemned.

Jasienskiy Bruno, Idejnyj Rost Xudožnika, Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 27, 1936, p. 2.

The sympathy for the sufferers wronged by the revolution did not elude this intelligent commentator of The Road to the Ocean. Nevertheless the comparison of its protagonists with those of Skutarevskij shows a definite improvement on behalf of the new man. Kurilov is defended against critics, but the utopia leaves Jasienskiy cold.

Jefremin, A., Leonid Leonov. Na Literaturnom Postu, No. 3, January 1932, p. 27-33.

In vicious attack, involving even Trockiij, the author condemns Leonov's treatment of the proletariat, peasants, party workers and NEP. He partly reverses his previous acceptance of Sot' but is more lenient in relation to Locusts. Most interesting.

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Jefremin, A., Tvorcheskij Put' Leonida Leonova, Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 63, November 22, 1931, p. 2-3.

The remoteness from social interests, the mysticism, passivism, pessimism, fatalism, the wrong image of the peasants and similar sins are condemned in Leonov's early works. But after the next period of a fellow-traveller type of partial acceptance of reality there comes an alliance with Soviet literature, as proved by Sot'. Penetrating.

Jemeljanov, B., Černyje Maski, Literaturnyj Kritik, Vol. 2, February 1939, p. 112-131.

An adroit and witty appreciation of the dramatic creativity devoted to the cloak and dagger genre in which Leonov's Wolf and Orchards of Polovčansk are included. The author with his tongue in cheek assumes that the characters eluded the intentions of their creator.

Jermilov, V., O Putiakh Žizni, "Zolotaja Kareta" Leonida Leonova na Sčenie MXAT, Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 136, November 1957, p. 1 and 3.

The play is seen as a reflection of Leonov's attitude towards life. Its realism and poetry, its moral problems, conflicts and characters are ably examined.

-----, Problema Živovo Človeka v Sovremennoj Literature i "Vor" L. Leonova, Na Literaturnom Postu, Nos. 5-6, 1927, p. 65-81.

On the background of the shortcomings of Babel, Pilniak, Fiedin and Al. Tolstoj. Jermilov's attention is fixed on the first three chapters of The Thief. He finds Mitka's outlook on the revolution faulty. He emphasizes Leonov's preoccupation with the man and the influence of Dostoevskij, all of which was repeated by most of his successors.

Kedrina, Z., Leonid Maksimovich Leonov, in Russkije Sovetskiye Pisateli, Očerki Žizni i Tvorčestva, Gosudarstvennoje izdatelstvo Detskoj Literatury Ministerstva Prosveščenija RSFSR, Moscow, 1957, p. 305-328.

The book contains a detailed study of Leonov's creative works which does not shy from tackling even The Blizzard and keeps track of the ideological difficulties and transformation of Leonov as reflected in his heroes. The general line of the essay may be a subject for discussion but on the whole this work is serious and informative.

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Kirpotin, V., O Soëialističeskom Realizme, Zakat Buržučnovo Isskustva (Lož v Iskušve), Literaturnyj Kritik, No. 1, June 1933, p. 32-49.

The praise of the communist contribution to the growth of culture and science as represented in Skutarevskij but also a severe criticism of Leonov's conception of contemporary man and his everyday life. The objections are justified, but they have an aggressive edge.

-----, Romany Leonida Leonova, in Proza Dramaturgija i Teatr, Stat'i, Goslitizdat, Moscow, 1935.

In this collection of articles Kirpotin analyses The Badgers, The Thief and Sot'. In the critic's opinion the first two distort the reality. Sot' is seen as the proof of the acceptance of the new ideology. Too severe but good.

Knipovič, E., "V Zaščitu Žizni, O Romane L. Leonova Russkij Les", Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 24, February 25, 1954, p. 3.

Some unexplained questions are brought up, such as Vixrov's passivism and Dolja's Dostoevskian sick conscience. The opinion is expressed that the book is centered around the relationship of fathers and children, the struggle of the old with the new and philosophical aspects of good and evil. A reasonable approach.

Kolesnikova, G., "Barsuki", Roman Leonida Leonova, Oktiabr, No. 9, September 1925, p. 185-187.

The Badgers seen as a proof of Leonov's misunderstanding of the revolution. His approach, the loving care in depicting the rebels and coldness towards Anton provokes the critic's ire.

Kovalev, V.A., L.M. Leonov, Istorija Russkoj Sovetskij Literatury 1941-1957 Godov, Ed. Akademia Nauk SSSR, Moscow, 1961, Vol. III, p. 235-264.

The author sketches briefly but clearly the different stages through which Leonov has passed. He does lean toward some explication of philosophical undertones, of moral problems and of Leonov's characters, which are skillfully segregated. Still there are many questions which may be seen under a different light.

-----, "L.M. Leonov, in Istoria Russkoj Sovetskij Literatury, 12d. Moskovskovo universiteta, 1963, Vol. 2ud, p. 526-597.

In this appraisal of Leonov's creativity the previous views are repeated.

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Kovalev, V.A., Poet-Surikovec M.L. Leonov, (Maksim goremyka), Russkaja Literatura, tru dy otдела novej Russkoj Literatury, izd. Akademii Nauk SSSR, Moscow-Leningrad, 1957, p. 251-264.

A study of Leonov's father career and life, which straightens some erroneous notions. A serious and good work.

-----, Ranniye Pjesy Leonida Leonova, (k istorii ix sozdamja), iz istorii russkix literaturnyx otnošenij 18-19 vekov, izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, Moscow-Leningrad, 1959, p. 324-331.

The information concerning the conception, transformation and staging of Untilovska and The Badgers. The details are valuable and bibliography, as usual, extensive.

-----, "Vor" L. Leonova (Ot Piervoj ko vtororoj Redakčiji Romana), in Voprosy Sovetskoj Literatury, lx, Sovetskij Pisatel Izd. Akademii Nauk SSSR, Moscow-Leningrad, 1961, p. 136-191.

Considering the two editions of The Thief as two altogether different books, the author compares in detail their philosophical, cultural and ethical problems, the characters, as well as stylistic aspects. In some very cautiously pronounced remarks the feeble influence of "the thaw" may be suspected.

Kwiecinska, Teresa, Antytezy i idee, Tworczosc, No. 7, July, 1955, p. 173-177.

An interesting article in which Vixrov, Gracjanski and Polja are examined. Vixrov in the author's opinion is new in Soviet literature, as he is permitted to criticize the socialist management of the forestry questions. Very good.

Lednicki, Wacław, Z Beletystryki Sowieckiej: "Borsuki", odbitka z "Przeglądu Współczesnego", No. 72, April, 1928, p. 78-102.

Idealistic spiritualism of Leonov is contrasted with Marxist writers. In the defeated village he sees the might and spontaneous vigor while in the novel he detects optimism and trust in mankind. The religious interests of Leonov are deservedly emphasized and the characters of the novel are penetratingly analysed.

Ležnev, A., Bibliografija. Leonid Leonov: Rasskazy, Pravda, 1926, September 12, No. 210, p. 5.

A very favourable review. It discloses and refutes the claim of the introduction to the book, that The Badgers develop all the elements included in earlier stories. The similarity is found only with The Breakthrough of Petušixa.

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Levidov, Mix., Dom i Sady, Literaturnyj Kritik, No. 6, 1938, p. 203-217.

The reviewer of Romašev and Leonov's The Orchards of Polovchansk does not seem to find much to his liking. He criticizes the excessive symbolism, the display of seemingly forgotten Dostoevskij's influence and the lack of humour. However he dutifully explains the patriotic meaning of the play.

Lunacharskij, A.V., Naši Zadači v Oblasti Xudožestvennoj Literaturnoj, Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 28, October 28, 1929, p. 2.

The attitude of the party with regard to the fellow travellers and their usefulness is explained. The conclusion is reached that fear might be a very helpful way leading to their complete conversion.

Macleod, Joseph, "Le théâtre en U.R.S.S. pendant la guerre", La Revue Internationale de Théâtre, Vol. 1, Bruxelles, Octobre-novembre-décembre 1947, p. 73-80.

The review of the plays The Invasion and An Ordinary Fellow. One of the interesting statements pertains to Leonov's concern with the rehabilitation of a man who is in revolt against the society.

Maljugin, L., "Teatr i Dramaturg, "Vožk" v Malom Teatre, Teatr, No. 7, 1939, p. 124-130.

The play is considered a failure. The theme, in Maljugin's opinion, is banal, and stereotyped, the communist youth-lifeless. There are some words of appreciation for psychological grasp of Elena and Lavrentii, though without too much enthusiasm. His remarks are interesting.

Mašbits-Verov, I., Otzyvy o Knigax, Leonid Leonov, Novyj Mir, No. 10, 1925, p. 150-151.

The book review deals with two volumes of Leonov, Rasskazy and The Badgers. The analysis of the literary influences as well as of the novel's characters is sound and favourable.

Mejerovič, Ef., Čelovek i Sobytiye, K Itogam Teatralno Sezona, Teatr, No. 7, 1939, p. 76-90.

With a fine sense of humour Leonov is confronted with his critics and then ably defended. The Wolf is compared with The Orchards of Polovčansk, explained and declared the best play of the season.

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Melnikova-Papuškova, N., "Leonid Leonov", Volja Rossii, 1925, No. 1, p. 241-245.

She sees in Leonov a chronicler of the experiences of all social classes. Discussing The End of a Petty Man and Koviakin's Journal, she speaks well of the writer's sincerity. She is also one of the first who detected the influences of Zamiatin, Hoffman and Gogol.

Mirsky, D.S., Contemporary Russian Literature 1881-1925, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1926, 372 p.

The material pertaining to Leonov is not strikingly new, but the chapter dealing with the mystical trends of the first years of the revolution, particularly with the Scythians and Eurasians is very valuable.

Muchnic, Helen, "Leonid Leonov", The Russian Review, (U.S.A.), Vol. 18, No. 1, January, 1959, p. 35-52.

The Badgers, The Thief, Sot', Locusts, Skutarevsky and some other works briefly noted serve as stepping stones to Leonov's transition of allegiance from art to honest conformity. Well written.

-----, Leonid Leonov, in From Gorky to Pasternak, Six Modern Russian Writers, London, Methuen, p. 276-303.

Fairly good analysis of Leonov as a writer but unjust as for a man. Mostly the repetition of the article.

Nikolajev, S., "Našestvie", Oktiabr', Nos. 4-5, 1943, p. 119-123.

The reviewer of the play finds certain likenesses of conflicts and of heroes in Leonov's previous plays but concludes by stating the differences. Good.

N.N., Bibliografija po Žurnalam, Na Literaturnom Postu, No. 7, 1927, p. 61-62.

Very sympathetic remarks about The Thief. Zavarjxin made the strongest impression and is analyzed with a deep understanding. Certain similarity with Fedin's Svaaker is noted.

Nusinov, I., "Ot Untilovska k Soti", Krasnaja Nov', No. 4, April, 1932, p. 156-167.

The definition of a fellow-traveller. The conviction is expressed that Leonov overestimated the strength of the "moral underground", which resulted in the peculiarity and continuity of his problems and heroes. For him Sot' and Locusts mean the turning point in understanding the class struggle and the victory of the collective effort. Good analysis of characters.

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"Opyt Odnnoj Diskussii", Literaturnaja Gazeta, No. 61, May 22, 1954, p. 2.

Both Leonov and Paustovskij, who took part in the discussion, stress as the main theme of The Russian Forest a meditation about the forest and the fate of the country.

Pilskij, Pjotr, "O Leonide Leonove", Introduction to Vor, Ed. Literatura, Riga, 1928, p. 7-14.

Leonov is singled out from his Soviet contemporaries for his independence of thought. His characters, ideas, situations and preoccupation with the little man are compared with those of Dostoevskij.

Pollak, Seweryn, "Obsesje Moralisty", in Wyprawy za Trzy Morza, Czytelnik, 1962, p. 197-217.

In obsession with treason, apostasy and redemption the psychical relationship with Dostoevskij is seen. Regardless of the detection of unequivocal relics of Leonov's world vision, the final conclusion seems to be the same as the Soviet allegations. Leonov's literary creativity is subjected to a rather objective analysis.

Poljakova, E., Teatr i Dramaturg, iz Opyta Raboty Moskovskovo Xudožestvennovo Teatra nad Pjesami Sovetskix Dramaturgov 1917-1941 Godov, Vserossijskoie Teatralnoje Obščestvo, Moscow, 1959, p. 236-248.

The review of the different versions of The Orchards of Polovčansk. Very valuable information in connection with the metamorphosis of the play. Pyljajev's character in the first version had none of a saboteur's features.

Postnikov, S., "Sredi Knig i Žurnalov, Krasnaya Nov (volumes 4-8)", Volja Rossii, Prague, 1925, No. 3, p. 164-170.

In this review of Soviet books and publications, there is a rather critical assessment of the new type of hero. In Leonov's Badgers the detection of the signs of the unchanging stability of village life.

Pozner, Vladimir, Répertoire des prosateurs russes contemporains, La Revue Européenne, No. 4, Avril 1929, p. 1711-1725, Leonov, p. 1717.

A short biography of the young writer considered unexperienced but promising.

Rudnitskij, K., "Dramy Leonida Leonova", Teatr, No. 7, 1958, p. 73-91.

The analysis of Leonov's plays with the exception of The Blizzard contains the definition of his most common

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themes and characters. The condemnation of the "collective persecution mania" in The Wolf reveals the new trend, connected with the Thaw.

Saxnovskij, V.G., "Nieobxodimyj Kontakt", Teatr i Dramaturgija, No. 3, 1934, p. 35-36.

The revealing article gives the details of adopting for the stage the unpublished novel Untilovsk. Before the acceptance of the play by the theatre, Leonov wrote five versions of it.

Sazonova, Ju., "Leonid Leonov", Kultura i Žizn, Sovremennye Zapiski, (Paris), Nos. 38-39, 1929, p. 471-488.

The peasants are the main theme of this review of The Badgers, The Thief and The Unusual Stories About the Peasants. The heroes of peasant origin, the concealed goodness of the masses, Leonov's compassion and his hopes connected with them are expertly discussed.

Selivanovskij, A., "Prizrak Svaakera (K voprosu o novoburžuažnoj literature)", Na Literaturnom Postu, No. 14, July, 1927, p. 35-39.

The critical remarks are directed to Fiedin, but can be easily applied to Leonov, whose Thief is mentioned. The fellow-travellers are summoned to elucidate their ideological position. Informative.

-----, "Tysiaâ Deviat'sot Tridcat' Vtoroj" and "Doroga na Okean" in V Literaturnyx Bojax, Sovetskij Pisatel, Moscow, 1964, p. 136-139 and 285-304.

In the first chapter Skutarevskij is appraised, in the second The Road to the Ocean is strongly criticized. The opinions are interesting but approach is exaggerately ideological.

Serebrianskij, M., "Doroga na Okean", Literaturnaya Gazeta, No. 24, 1936, p. 3-4.

The author defends Leonov's utopia, which he prefers to the Christian paradise, but is taken aback by the sacrificial, tragic reflection of life in the book.

-----, Novye Pjesy Leonida Leonova, Teatr, No. 5, 1939, p. 73-83.

The article describes the conflicts of The Orchards of Polovčansk and The Wolf, and contains a sharp rebuke of Emelianov (The Black Masks) understanding of The Wolf. Some good points may be found but the interpretation of the heroes is mostly banal.

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Severin, E., "V Preodolenii Poputničestva", Literatura i Isskusstvo, Nos. 3-4, 1930, p. 178-190.

According to Severin the fate of the little men and connected with it the early pessimistic outlook is replaced in The Badgers and in Sot' by new subjects and a different approach, proving the ideological maturity of the author.

Ŝæglov, Mark, "Russkij Les" Leonida Leonova, Novyj Mir, No. 5, 1954, p. 220-241.

The problem of the forest in the novel, its realistic and symbolic meaning; its connection with the characters is studied. The critical appraisal of Polja and Gracjanskij is connected with their social role in the real life. One of the best critical review.

Ŝërbina, V., "O Xudožestvenooj Publiċistike", Izvestia, No. 81, April 5, 1947, p. 3.

The reviewer of Leonov's Collected Articles (ed. Pravda 1946) discloses that the war was instrumental in pushing him along with other well known authors, into that new form of creative activity, in which Leonov demonstrated an ardent ;faith in victory.

Smirnov, Nik., Literatura i Źizn, Izvestia, No. 186, August 17, 1924, p. (4)-5.

Just a few sentences concern the young writer. His talent is noticed, but the prediction is made that Leonov's creative growth will be painful, all because of his undecided ideology. The same meaning but often expressed in less poetical words would haunt Leonov for a long time to come.

Slonim, Marc, Modern Russian Literature From Chekhov to the Present, Oxford, University Press, New York, 1953, 467 p. Leonov, p. 329-329.

A comprehensive analysis of Leonov's works helps to understand and evaluate the inner motivations guiding the activities of his heroes as well as the undertones of his literary creativity. Some points are elucidated with remarkable skill.

Smirnov, Nik., "Leonid Leonov", Sovremennye Russkie Pisateli, Krasnaja Niva, No. 6, 1927, p. 15.

The penetrating comments reflect dissatisfaction with the communist heroes, presumably alien to Leonov, who bestows his love upon the underdog. In spite of his talent this situation brings about fear for the future.

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Sojuz Pisatelej Smenil Swojo Rukovodstvo, Literaturnaja Gazeta, September 16, 1929, p. 1.

Information about changes which took place after the expulsion of Pilniak. L. Leonov became the Chairman of the Writers' Union.

Starikova, E., O Romanie L. Leonova 'Vor', in Poezija Prozy, Sovetskij Pisatel, Moscow, 1962, p. 29-67.

The objective comparison of the two versions of The Thief serves as evidence of the artistic and ideological evolution of Leonov. The author considers these books as the documentaries of the two different periods of the country's development. The drawback of the review is, however, the argumentation which is unsuccessfully intended to defend Leonov against the criticism.

Struve, Gleb, Histoire de la Littérature Soviétique, Paris, Editions du Chêne, 1946, Leonov, p. 64-70; 137-141; 318-329.

Struve traces the continuation of the main themes, problems, ideas and characters. Most space and attention is given to The Invasion which is discussed at length. Very good evaluation of Leonov and of his heroes.

Sudakov, I. Ja., Popov, I.F., "O Pjesie Leonida Leonova 'Volk'", Novyj Mir, Moscow, May 1939, p. 225-231.

The Theatre's literary and artistic directors influenced by the new concept of morality comment on the play's characters and plot.

Thorgevsky, Ivan, De Gorki à nos jours. La nouvelle nouvelle Littérature russe, Paris, La Renaissance, 1945, Leonov, p. 142-148.

In a short appraisal of Leonov's early works, the particular attitude of peasants toward the revolution, the author's deep feelings for the wronged and the pessimism ending with The Road to the Ocean is stressed.

Volkov. N., Untilovsk v MXAT 'ie, Novyj Mir, No. 4, 1928, p. 231-233.

The influence of Cexov, Dostojevskij and Blok is found. The pessimism of the play does not exclude faith in the future, which the spectator is supposed to feel. Not bad.

Voronov, Vl., Svjaz' Vremeni "(Russkij Les" L. Leonova) in Pravda Veka, Izd. "Znaniye" Moscow, 1963.

The ideological aspects of The Russian Forest are discussed. The patriotism and the communist enthusiasm are

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singled out as the most characteristic features of this book about the war. Gracjanskij is the remnant of the old world. Now old-fashioned.

Voronskij, A. Literaturnyje Siluety, Leonid Leonov, Krasnaja Nov', No. 3, April-May, 1924, p. 295-305.

Emphasizing Leonov's great ability the author has some reservations with regard to his preoccupation with the little man's fate, and his coolness towards the revolution. Factual criticism and a very good analysis of the early Leonov.

9 Wilson, Edmund, "Leonid Leonov: The Sophistication of a Formula", in A Literary Chronicle 1920-1950, New York, Doubleday, 1956, c.1950, 1952, p. 333-338.

The difference between the project and its fulfilment is detected in The Road to the Ocean. The difficulty of writing in a propagandist manner and Leonov's desire to remain noncommittal towards described events is stressed. Very good.

Zaleskij, V., "Ešče o Leonove, Polovčanskix Sadax i Kritike", Teatr, No. 7, 1939, p. 131-138.

The author quotes and strives to refute the most irreconcilable critics of the play, objecting to: loneliness of Makkaviev, the lack of heroic deeds, the exaggerated pathos, the plot itself and dramatic conflict. Unsuccessful.

Xaniutin, J., Cernyj Xleb Scastja, Zolotaja Kareta v MXAT, Teatr, No. 1, 1958, p. 63-72.

In the new version of the play some old attributes are discovered, such as: Leonov's war on Philistinism, usual moral conflicts, symbolism and the double of Manjuxin. The information pertaining to actors' interpretation of their roles is valuable.

6. Miscellaneous

Rosen, Nathan, The Fiction of Leonid Leonov, Type-script, Doctoral Dissertation, Columbia University, New York 1961, 265 p.

The dissertation is concerned chiefly with the problem of the demands made upon art in Soviet society as reflected in Leonov's novels. The thesis contains a number of successful conjunctions and the extensive bibliography.

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Rosen, Nathan, Leonid Leonov: The Reforging of a Fellow-Traveller (1922-1935), Typescript, Thesis, Russian Institute, Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University, New York, 1956, 215 p.

The title itself explains the problem under review. Some opinions are arbitrary, some quotations distorted.

Van Der Eng-Liedmeier, Soviet Literary Characters, An Investigation into the Portrayal of Sovien Men in Russian Prose, Mouton and Co., Gravenhage, 1959, 174 p.

An objective survey of the evolution of literary characters in Soviet prose according to the demands of the specific periods of the development of the Soviet state. Serious and well documented work.

APPENDIX

ABSTRACT OF

The Revolution as Seen
by L. Leonov's Literary Characters¹

The opinion of critics is controversial as far as Leonid Leonov is concerned. One of L. Leonov's novel, The Russian Forest, is now considered to have anti-Stalinist elements even by the Soviet critics. In connection with the new trend in Soviet literary criticism an attempt is being made to analyse Leonid Leonov's creativity independently from political and ideological factors.

The purpose of this thesis is to appraise the revolution as seen by L. Leonov's heroes, to find out how it was received and understood by different strata of the Soviet population.

To comprehend the literary characters, it was judged necessary to study the life and the literary opinions of their creator.

In the first chapter the analysis of Leonid Leonov as a man and a writer showed some discrepancies in details of his life as well as in the critics' appraisal of his

¹ Irena Slowikowski, M.A. thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts, Department of Slavic Studies, University of Ottawa, Ontario, September 1964, ix-282 p.

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views. It was pointed out that the writer is constant and even stubborn as far as his literary beliefs are concerned. The four next chapters are concerned with Leonov's heroes divided according to their social status. Thus the second chapter deals with the peasants. The Russian peasant is passive. He believes in the philosophy of non-resistance, as the result of the long tears of the landowners' yoke. As he was not interested in the affairs of the city, he was not fully aware of the advent of the revolution which would affect his traditional way of life. (The Breakthrough of Petușixa, The White Nights). But after some hopes of betterment of his situation, he revolts against the injustice of the city, brought by the bolshevik newcomers to the village. When the peasants' revolt is crushed they accept the new master (The Badgers, Sot').

Only the period of the Industrialization creates the possibility of rapprochement of the peasants and the new rulers, by the hope of the economic improvement of their lives. However these peasants who join the proletarian ranks change their social status and the social structure of society accordingly.

More than twenty years later, during the war, peasants are still not politically educated. They do not feel the previous hostility towards the new order and reveal their readiness to defend the country as such. However they

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are absorbed mostly in their own affairs (Ljonuška, The Russian Forest).

In the third chapter the proletariat is studied. In Leonov's works the real, that is the urban proletariat has some misgivings concerning the methods of revolutionary changes (The Thief, Skutarevskij), but they believe in the revolution as such. Their inner conflicts are eventually resolved. As for the previously rural population, who joined the workers, they will be re-educated under the new conditions (Sot', Skutarevskij).

In the fourth chapter the intelligentsia is studied in the examples of the eight heroes starting from Lixarev (Konec Melkovo Celoveka) ending with Vixrov from The Russian Forest. All the heroes are not opposed to the idea of revolution but the acceptance of the reality is made difficult by the suffering and degradation.

In the fifth chapter the analysis of communists shows that among them existed two concepts of the role of the revolution in human life. Some of them had only the state's interest in mind while others connected the country's well-being with the satisfactory conditions of its people. The war brings some understanding of the human element as far as the relation with the population is concerned. But it is The Russian Forest, the first novel of the Thaw period, which demonstrates that in human relations coldness

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is harmful. Polja passes through the transformation from the prevailing conception of human perfection into the acceptance of forgotten simple laws of the human heart. With the new generation, which will take the ruling of the country into their hands, humanism will prevail. At least such is the hope of Polja's creator.