

# HUMANISM

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# HUMANISM

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# *HUMANISM ATHEISM*

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*Principles  
and  
Practice*


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M o s c o w

*Translated by N. Kittell*

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## INTRODUCTION

● For a long time the discussion of Marxist humanism and atheism, their meaning and character was in the West reduced to bare condemnation. The situation has changed, as it was bound to, and a new method, a dialogue between atheists and believers, has become part of life. The desire to perceive the meaning of Marxist atheism is now displayed even by theists—sociologists, politicians, religious leaders, who work in the midst of the masses. Above all, this refers to those who cherish social peace, justice and national equality as do the working people, those who fight for these principles regardless of their attitude to religion.

A book *Links Katholizismus. Eine Katholische Initiative in Moskau* was published in Vienna in September, 1965. It was written by Dr. Wilfrid Daim, a Left Catholic, one of the ideologists who not only study the possibility of dialogue between Christians, atheists and those indifferent to religion, but also work to implement it, realizing that it is a means of attaining objectives that are common to all people of good will—universal peace. Dr. Daim is quite right when he states that “contact between Communists and Catholics is essential, for it is much

easier to talk if you know the other side's pattern of thinking."

Dr. Daim tells about the impressions of his visit to the Soviet Union, and reflects on atheism in the USSR. He comes to a number of rash conclusions (which is quite natural for a person making such a short visit as he)—conclusions which are often unconfirmed and sometimes even biased. However, both the visit and the book are actually an initiative, an attempt to understand social relations in the Soviet Union, the ethical principles underlying people's relations and the relations between Church and State there.

Of late the problem of atheism in the Soviet Union has gained currency and is now much discussed by writers, papers and magazines. Among them are not only those who have contact with the Vatican Secretariat for relations with non-Christians, but also many people who, it would seem, should have no particular interest in the subject.

What does day-to-day atheistic educational work consist of? It is directed to helping man find his place in life, and also to instilling in people the desire to dedicate their work to society and to people, so that their full and spiritually rich life becomes earthly happiness and not a preparation for some reward in the next world. The work of the atheist requires active love for man and irreconcilability to the illusions, myths and ideas that prevent him from living a socially meaningful life.

To promote the good of society and man (or to love thy neighbour, as a believer would put it) in the name of man and the whole of society



and not for the sake of blessings in the world to come, to make this one's vital necessity, the meaning of one's being and of day-to-day relations, requires tremendous effort and considerable time on the part of society. It requires the emancipation of man's consciousness, its release from delusions and superstitions about society and man in general. The founders of scientific communism did not think that the process of making social relations "tranquil for all" could be momentary. It was vulgarizers of various categories who ascribed the automatic materialization of the tendency of social progress to Marx and Engels' doctrine, those who did not wish seriously to consider Engels' *Critique of Political Economy* or his last letters on the role of ideas in social development.

However, the matter is not limited to a mere affirmation of relations between people as being brotherly and comradely. Above all, it depends on the creation of material conditions in which such relations can develop. This is inconceivable without knowledge of material life, without science.

The building of a communist society is based on the knowledge of nature, society and man. Irreconcilability to religious ideology as a system of anti-scientific views is also based on the foundation of knowledge. Ideological conviction and firm principles, spiritual wealth and human kindness are the qualities that the true propagandists of atheism display in their everyday practical work.

It is gratifying to note that genuine atheistic work, and not its caricature, as spread in the West, is increasingly becoming a subject of

study for those who concern themselves with problems of atheistic work in the USSR, the nature and methods in which it is carried out.

This fact is the main reason for publishing this book. It is not a collection of documents or informational matter on the state of affairs in various religious organizations. If the reader is interested in such material he should turn to the church periodicals issued in the USSR, such as *The Moscow Patriarchy* published by the Orthodox Church, the *Echmiadzin*, published by the Armeno-Gregorian Church or the *Brotherly Herald*, organ of the Evangelical Christian Baptists. These and similar periodicals also contain information on theological literature published in the USSR, on the contacts religious organizations in the USSR maintain with believers abroad, on the functioning monasteries, churches, houses of worship and synagogues, as well as on ecclesiastical seminaries, academies, medreses and other centres where clergymen receive education.

This book acquaints the reader with atheists' ideas of their own work, and with their principles and methods.

The article "Humanism and Atheism—the Present-Day Dialogue" by Inga Kichanova, who is also the compiler of this book, outlines the atheists' views on the dialogue of the working people—believers, indifferent ones and atheists—in their struggle for peace, social progress and national equality. It contains the author's meditations and conclusions concerning the processes she observed at the Ecumenical

Council of the Catholic Church and during her trips to Western Europe.

The article "Atheism: Its Everyday Expression" was written by Boris Grigoryan, who was for a long time assistant editor-in-chief of the magazine *Science and Religion*. Today Boris Grigoryan is on the staff of the Institute of Philosophy, USSR Academy of Sciences.

Grigoryan's article concerns the principles of atheistic activities in the USSR. Proceeding from the experience of atheist propaganda and summing up his numerous interviews with believers, that is, examining "human documents," the author reveals the very "essence" of work with believers. He shows that the purpose of atheistic education is to seek positive solutions to problems exercising the minds of believers, to help believers restore their contacts with society, that for some reason or other have been destroyed or are incomplete.

"Through a Thousand Why's" is an autobiographical essay by Alexander Osipov, a scholar and formerly Professor at the Leningrad Ecclesiastical Academy, who renounced the priesthood in 1959.

The article contains philosophical reflections on the meaning of life and on man's place in society. From the positions of a highly educated intellectual, who for many years was a believer, the author compares Christian humanism with the humanism which has been realized in socialist society. He explains why he has made his choice in favour of the materialistic world outlook and the Marxist concept of practical humanism.

The documentary story "Meditation and the

Heart" by the well-known Soviet surgeon Nikolai Amosov is reprinted from the magazine *Science and Life*. It contains an intellectual's meditations on the ever-present problem of life and death. Nikolai Amosov's reflections are focused on the problem of goodness and justice.

The authors are grateful to the Novosti Press Agency Publishing House for the opportunity given them to share their views and thoughts with readers abroad.

*INGA KICHANOVA*

**HUMANISM  
AND ATHEISM—  
THE PRESENT-DAY  
DIALOGUE**



● No matter how many new terms, “isms” and conceptions appear in modern life, the concept of humanism is still as valuable for improvement of social relations. Humanist social ideals illuminate the life of millions of people. In our times, of the numerous, mutually enriching aspects of humanism it is those which directly accord with the interests of the broad sections of the population and are connected with their social experience that become prominent. These aspects are peace, social justice and racial equality. That this is so is increasingly confirmed in the course of the dialogue between believers and atheists.

The forces interested in the preservation of the social order based on private ownership, seek to halt the dialogue and instill in it the spirit of irreconcilability and cold war. Apparently these are the objects behind attempts to discredit humanism, both religious humanism and that which is based on the materialistic outlook.

Versions of the “deficiency” of humanism not based on supernatural sanction ignore the social and spiritual development of society, which is strongly influenced by the emancipation of society from religion.

## DETHEOLOGIZATION OF RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS

The emancipation of consciousness and the spiritual life of society from religion, is truly a universal process. This process, which was evident even in the epoch of bourgeois revolutions, is developing particularly intensively today, a fact which is vividly manifested in the field of culture.

... The Soviet magazine *Science and Religion* once had a picture on its cover showing a kneeling dervish, his hands outstretched in ecstasy to the Bibi Khanum, the world-known Moslem Mosque in Samarkand. The caption said: "Worship of the Holy." The picture of the same Mosque with the same caption was also on the back cover, only there the Mosque was worshipped by young artists who had come to depict the magnificence of this architectural monument on their easels.

The humanist of today is able to perceive the meaning, character and nature of the religious feeling depicted in works of art without sharing in the believer's ecstasy. Church paintings, ikons and canvases based on religious themes, bring him supreme aesthetic pleasure and impart to him the ability to reveal human nature by means of the language and images stemming from the influence of religion. Thousands of such "pilgrims" come to the north of Russia to admire the beautiful Russian wooden churches of the 14th century and worship the



masterpieces of Andrei Rublev; they crowd concert halls to listen to Bach and Hendel. Once at a concert at the Moscow Conservatoire when Bach's "St. Matthew Passion" was played I asked several people around me if the music evoked in them any thoughts of God or any feeling that there existed a divine supernatural being. All of them—an aged professor, a shorthand writer, a teacher and a writer—replied that it was human passions and human struggle they perceived in Bach's music. Later I heard an American prelate telling of a somewhat similar experience. During his tour of the Soviet Union he asked a young woman in the Leningrad Hermitage what she found attractive in a painting based on a Biblical theme. She gave him a detailed explanation from which it followed that this well-educated young woman was not moved by the plot of the painting but by the human content in the interpretation of that plot. It also followed that she was mainly attracted by the artist's individual manner, his personality.

Speaking at a press-conference during the Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church this prelate expressed surprise over the fact that the girl knew the Biblical plot and that this plot had not prevented her from seeing the human aspect and the artistic value of the painting.

The prelate's surprise can to some extent be explained by the general prejudiced opinion concerning Soviet people. But most likely it was due to the very popular interpretation of atheism as a denunciation of spiritual culture, the suppression of spiritual life and aesthetic

feelings. The American prelate could see for himself, however, that actually man's cultural development and spiritual life does not consist in ousting religious themes from his store of knowledge. Pictures by Kramskoy "Christ in the Desert" and Ivanov "Christ's Appearance Before the People," or the frescos decorating ancient Russian churches can be appreciated by all art lovers; there are finely illustrated monographs devoted to the image of Virgin Mary and to Rublev's "Trinity." In other words, the denunciation of religion is not a denunciation of culture.

During the 1965 debate between French intellectuals—Catholics and atheists—a Catholic speaker stated that themes of faith form part of the atheists's cultural background while the believer encounters disbelief even in his soul, because atheism is an inseparable part of modern civilization.

In one of its polls the English *Free Thinker* magazine sought to find out in what meaning people in the West used the word "god" today. The following was established: the word was mainly used to back a pledge or oath, sometimes as an argument in dispute, very often in swearing. Only very few used the word "god" in its theological, religious meaning. At about the same time a similar poll was held among Soviet schoolchildren by the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. It showed that there was practically no place for religion in their conceptions.

A Catholic theologian, Padre Spiazzi, has called this phenomenon the "detheologization" of religious conceptions. This is not just a philo-

sophical formula, but something very accurately reflecting reality. That this is so is vividly illustrated by the material accumulated at the Assisi centre of Christian studies, a propaganda and research institution. Along with 40 thousand books, documents and photographs there are 700 paintings and sculptures mostly based on Biblical themes, which have been brought there from all parts of the world. One will hardly be able to find a more eloquent illustration of the transformed conceptions of the Christian God. The Christ of African sculptures and paintings looks frightening and resembles the traditional Prince of Darkness in frescos decorating Catholic shrines. The Virgin Mary looks anything but orthodox and is often painted in a very free manner. There are numerous pictures showing Christ as a conglomeration of shapeless spots, crossed lines and cubiform structures: either the divine image is abstract to that degree in the mind of a realist artist or an abstractionist has made an effort "realistically" to depict an abstract idea. The waning of religious conceptions, the deformation they undergo under the impact of scientific knowledge and social experience was noted at one of the sessions of the Ecumenical Council as a manifestation of the waning influence of religion. In his speech, an Italian bishop lamented the diminishing feeling of the divine in people and the influence of scientific arguments denying God. He stressed that young people were particularly influenced by this process.

As a matter of fact, the conception of the divine in the minds of the masses has never been any too clear. It is something else that is

important in the analysis of the influence of religion on society.

The religious attitude to life is disappearing, the significance of the "supernatural" in man's life is fading, and the sphere of influence of religious conceptions and "values" is narrowing down. It is this process that characterizes the dynamics of the change in religion's real role in social life.

The contemporary humanist and atheist is deeply moved by *De Civitate Dei* and studies it as a great work of social thought whose author had seen the features of the coming feudal epoch and expressed them in terms and conceptions of Christianity. The features and principles of the epoch following feudalism were expressed in secular terms and concepts of those new times in Rousseau's *Social Contract* and Hobbes's *Leviathan*. The emancipation of social thought and ideology from religion reflected the emancipation of social life and consciousness. Ideologists acquired a realistic understanding of society and the individual. The further development of this process resulted in the growth of the secular consciousness of ethics so precisely observed in *Pacem in Terris*. A bishop speaking at the Third Session of the Ecumenical Council gave a very precise characterization of the process of secularization of social life: "Gone is the time when the terms 'church' and 'society' were synonymous and when the church swallowed up society." Another prelate admitted that it was the first time the Ecumenical Council was being held in an age of atheism.

Hardly anyone with a knowledge of West European culture doubts that the proliferation

of the atheistic forms of humanism is the result of profound social and spiritual tendencies at work.

The works of Albert Camus and Jean Paul Sartre are an ideological reflection of the tendencies of emancipation of the human from the religious in the spiritual aspect. Organizationally these tendencies are embodied in the World Free Thinkers Union and the International Humanist and Ethical Union.

It is but natural that the conception of humanism is now interpreted in a much broader sense than ever before. The discussion on humanism by French Christians, Marxists and rationalists published in the Paris magazine *La nouvelle critique*, strikingly revealed the manifold nature of this conception. The fact that the stress was laid on man's inalienable rights and basic spiritual needs proves that the very raising of this question is determined socially and ideologically.

Humanism as the law of life and the principle of activity—in the name of what? Man, alive and real, or a nebulous God?

West European writers are often attracted by a plot where man decides for himself the human value of religious and secular morals and the relation between them. Major Scobie, the leading character in Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter*, an intellectual and a true believer, exclaims: "This was what human love had done to him—it had robbed him of love for eternity." Major Scobie's moral tragedy stems from the dilemma: religion or humanism? The demands religion makes of him clash with the principles

of humaneness. The happiness of two people has to be sacrificed to the abstract principles of kindness and justice. Sympathy, charity, solicitude—these elementary norms of ethics and justice could be implemented, as the writer shows, only through denying the divine sanction and turning to the earthly, human values. Does man need religion as a means of consolation and God as an intermediary in relations with other people? Major Scobie's psychological drama is only a personal reflection of the processes working in society.

The biblical dictum "Faith without works is dead," reveals another aspect of the Christian conception of humanism—good "works" must be performed in the name of faith. Justice, kindness, aid to fellow-men are a virtue if addressed to God and done for his sake. And if not? If all the good "works" are intended directly for man, without an intermediary? Will it mean that the good "works" and goodness itself cease to be goodness? Aid ceases to be effective? Contemporary man realizes with ever greater clarity that it is groundless to deny the value of earthly humanism.

There is no getting away from the fact that today people prefer good "works" without faith to faith without good "works." When good "works" are performed with the realization that there is good and evil in the world, the admission that it is possible to perform good "works" without faith is at the same time acknowledgement of the possibility of doing good without believing in God.

It is remarkable that despite the truth of the ancient aphorism—"there are as many views as

there are people"—the features of absolute good and universal blessing, understood by people precisely as absolute and universal, find a vivid expression in life today. This is a fact allowing for a more concrete definition of humanism as a blessing and universal value.

The grim prospect of an atomic holocaust, revealing the acuteness of the alternative—war or peace—has enhanced the realization of peace as an absolute value, as good and blessing, and nuclear war—as absolute evil. It has promoted the integration of efforts of all people who cherish a stable peace on earth, irrespective of race, nationality and religious beliefs. The process of integration stems from the universal nature of the value of peace; it is indispensable for eliminating what the vast majority of mankind consider absolute evil.

And there is another striking process taking place in the world today. An increasing number of our contemporaries associate social justice and racial and national equality with the idea of humanism. Their realization has become the aim of millions; thus these goals are being interpreted by the masses as humanist ideals and universal values. The process of integration is impeded by a number of negative political and ideological factors—the cold war spirit, propaganda of racialism and fascism.

However diverse the means and forms of attaining peace, social justice, and national equality may be, they are commonly acknowledged as universal values.

These humanist ideals are being put into practice before our very eyes, in real life.

United action has become a policy followed

by trade unions of diverse trends. More and more people, not only in Africa but also in the United States, are joining the struggle against segregation. Unity of action is also observed on the part of different groups of people, including both believers and atheists. In other words, the dialogue is developing and becoming one of the central issues of today. It is developing along with the growing realization that the concepts of "good" and "evil" have a universal content. In this process humanist aspirations of the masses often come into conflict with conceptions denying the possibility of establishing justice and happiness on earth.

"... Earthly life can never be a paradise," declared the General of the Order of Benedictines at the congregation of the Ecumenical Council, obviously arguing with atheistic humanism.

The contradiction between this traditional conception and the present-day spirit of humanism, the programme of earthly humanism and its essence are not limited to the personal tragedy of an intellectual, as depicted by Graham Greene, or to theoretical discussions.

Following the 18th century French materialists, modern historians and philosophers are striving to answer the question: Why does man need religion even now, in what way does it appeal to him? Sociologists and politicians—advocates of religion—are trying to elicit factors which can enable religion to retain its positions in modern society.

Trying to glimpse into the future, religious workers often arrive at bitter conclusions. A West German Catholic, Cardinal L. Jaeger,



wrote: "It seems the time is not far off when Christianity will cease to be what it used to be in the times of Constantine—the criterion of thought, dignity and action."

However, there are forces in the world today, working to create conditions in which man can be happy on earth, without suffering from frustration, spiritual burdens and want of an illusory world. They are working to destroy the vale of tears from which stems the need of heavenly consolation. These are the forces able to lead the masses in the struggle for implementation of humanist ideals.

## *EARTHLY HUMANISM IN PRACTICE*

Communism was born in the turbulent epoch of the growth of the masses' self-consciousness. The humanism of Communists embodies people's aspirations and is enriched by the experience of their struggle.

"Communism draws its strength from man's aspirations. It wants to give man a goal in life, it appeals to his reason, belief in progress and science, and fights his loneliness. Its tool is the Promethean will to create in the name of delivering mankind from suffering, in the name of its perfection by means of its own strength without Godly assistance."

This is not a quotation from a Marxist writer, nor from an editorial in an atheistic

magazine. This is how the purport of communist humanism is understood by the West German Social-Democrat, theoretician Waldemar von Knörringen, who seeks to combine the social-democratic and religious ideologies. He is aware of the fact, that realistic humanism, the humanism of Marxists considers all the aspects of man's life and being, and advances a concrete programme for satisfying every man's material and spiritual requirements, hence the requirements of society as a whole. It is significant that this statement should come from an ideologist such as von Knörringen.

Many people are closely following the implementation of the programme directed to meeting all the material and spiritual requirements of man. That this is a programme of humanism is now difficult to disprove even for experts in anti-communist propaganda. This is why of late there have been fresh attempts to discredit the very principles of Marxist humanism.

The Church proponents assert that atheism is incompatible with humanism. They also claim that the very practice of atheistic propaganda, the work of atheists in society is an infringement on democracy and the rights of the individual. Another favourite version is that atheistic propaganda is being forced on people in the socialist countries.

On the one hand, the authors of such inventions count on the illusion of the adequacy of civilization and religion (the notorious thesis of Christian civilization), which has long been spread by the Church. On the other hand, they speculate on the complexity of the problem of humanism and on people's ignorance of the real

state of affairs in the sphere of State-Church relations in the countries of socialism.

Is not the rapid spread of atheism in the world a real argument against the first assertion? As for the second, here the lack of information on real conditions often becomes a fertile soil for the propaganda of such tales, even among intellectuals.

It would be hard to deny that Soviet Communists are realistic. In the construction of a new society they employ ways completely according with concrete conditions. Communism is being built for the people, for their good and with full consideration of their interests and needs.

Church propaganda distorts the real state of affairs, often resorting to two arguments to prove its point. Firstly, that atheism is bound to end in immorality, and secondly, that it spreads because under communism it is forced on people. Atheism is presented as the supreme goal of the new society and the forced conversion to atheism as the principal method and essence of the entire work of Communists in the cultural and spiritual spheres.

One can find assertions in the *American National Catholic Almanac* to the effect that in accordance with atheistic morals there are common wives in the Soviet Union, the "state-barrack" upbringing of children, the absence of personal property and of freedom to profess religion. Reading this gibberish I find myself at a loss whether to laugh or protest or to send them information on the unique experiment the Soviet writer Pomerantsev recently conducted in Estonia, a Soviet Republic in the Baltic

area. Pomerantsev observed Estonian realities and made a thorough study of documents and statistics in order to establish whether or not ethical standards have changed for the worse since people stopped performing religious rites and abandoned religion. The data the writer has amassed (criminal and civil statistics, interviews and newspaper material) are objective proof of the correctness of his conclusion—the moral and ethical standards of these people have not declined.

The forced conversion of people to atheism... the absence of rights for the believers... I will not cite the number of churches in the Soviet Union, for you can find it in any reference book. But what I would like to tell about is an incident during one of my trips to the Moscow Region. I stopped for the night in a village, at the house of an old religious woman, member of the local church board. In one of the rooms I saw beside the iconostasis and the psalm-book, an official document which had been published in the national papers, sharply criticizing the tactless behaviour of some propagandists of atheism. The old lady and her colleagues in the church board knew perfectly well the clause in the Constitution pertaining to the rights of the believers—it would be quite impossible for anyone to trample on them nowadays.

The remarkable fact is that in the dispute between atheists and believers, trust and mutual interest come to prevail. Different as the views of the "sides" are, mutual good attitude is displayed by both.

This is a point proving that atheistic upbrin-

ging is part of the cultural and social activities, the mental enlightenment and purification of morals which humanists-atheists of the past dreamed of. To claim that the propaganda of atheism is the only goal of a new society and is implemented by forcible measures is senseless. Unfortunately the real picture of atheistic upbringing in the Soviet Union is not known well enough abroad. Even those who are familiar with the principles of this upbringing have a hazy notion about the methods of its realization.

The methods atheists employ in their struggle for the minds and souls of believers are in accord with the lofty goals of socialism and communism, and the ideals of humanism. The "mental enlightenment" is accompanied by searching scientific ways to settle the believer's individual problems and collisions, no matter whether they concern the sphere of his relations with society or his spiritual quest. It is essential that everything should be done so that the problems for the solution of which man addresses God are settled here on earth by earthly means. The Communist Party constantly cautions atheists against rash actions, against forcing the innermost processes in man's spiritual life, against tactlessness in dealing with the believer, against even involuntarily offending him.

Do good will and sincerity harm the cause of cooperation between believers and atheists and their work alongside each other? Do they impair this cooperation? The very construction of a communist society is the answer to this question. The successes achieved in this process are a result of fruitful cooperation between

working people of different outlooks—religious and materialistic. The whole of society and every individual are interested in the realization of the principles of communism, whose motto is “All for the good of man.” The Communist stand is consistently to work for the triumph of the scientific-materialistic outlook. At the same time this position does not dictate the necessity of forcing the process of outliving religious convictions.

Life itself, in its main spheres, carries out enlightening and educational missions.

Society helps people find their place in life, reveal their better qualities, talents and gifts and it helps them find happiness and meaning in life here, in this world. From the point of view of Marxist humanism it is not the chosen ones who are destined to comprehend the essence of things and phenomena; the “unfettering of consciousness” from its chains and superstitions goes hand in hand with every individual’s realization of his own social significance.

The significance of the individual in a communist society is constantly increasing in the sphere of labour, the most important sphere of human life. Labour offers tremendous possibilities of bringing out the best in man, thus refuting the dogma of the “curse of labour” (no matter how subtly elaborated). If man realizes the social significance of his labour it gives him the feeling that his life is full, that he himself is also of value. No wonder then that the man who realizes the meaning of social activity, the significance of his own efforts in it, does not feel any need of a divine intermediary in his relations with society or with individuals.

This is a process, a tendency. There is hardly any need to explain the complexity of this process of development of the individual as one realizing that he is the arbiter of social life and the master of his own destiny. This process has its own ways and landmarks.

Millions of people are being drawn into governing the state in the USSR. The atmosphere of social activity, of the significance of man is an effective remedy for loneliness and bewilderment. It is small wonder, therefore, that fullness of social relations destroys the motifs which induced people to turn to religion for consolation and salvation from the tragedy of loneliness. Is there any sense in condemning atheists who only seek to help people find an answer to their problems in earthly conditions, on the basis of social endeavour?

On the other hand, it would be wrong to declare that every man already feels himself a master of society, that for him his relations with society are absolutely clear. These relations themselves are far from simple and not always clear to all. Man's alienation from society is not something to be mended by a decree or by force. It is still a matter of the future for society to work out proper ways of settling all problems arising before man in his relations with the social system. Another important thing is to make these relations clear to every individual. The whole complex of social sciences is aimed in the USSR at seeking ways to attain harmony in the interests of the individual and society. A remarkable experiment in this field is the work being done by an institute specially set up at Leningrad University to study the rela-

tions between man and society. The institute has six laboratories conducting research in sociology, economy, engineering psychology, social psychology, anthropology and experimental psychology, and juridical matters. Directly associated with the institute is also the laboratory of the physiology of labour.

The laboratory of engineering psychology, for one, works on the problem of helping man to feel free, like "a human being," in conditions of modern technology, so that technology will not suppress him and destroy his individuality. Is this not an aspect of humanism?

The laboratory of sociological studies at the Department of philosophy is very young, as are most of the people working in it. It studies the sociological aspects of labour, above all that of young people. One of its most interesting lines of work is to determine the prestige of different occupations among young people. Another interesting problem is the character of leisure of students and young workers.

The youth are also the main object of research in the laboratory of economic studies and the laboratory of social psychology. Among other things, the economists are studying ways of overcoming socio-economic differences between mental and physical labour and the psychologists—relations at primary production units, the meaning and role of the unofficial structure there, and inter-collective relations. These studies are conducted in conjunction with research in anthropology and experimental psychology, the chief objective of which is the study of man's internal potentialities that can enhance his harmonious development. The juridical as-



pect of the work in another laboratory is directed to finding ways for the concrete employment of science in perfecting the democratic institutions of Soviet society.

All this work is intended to help each man become an active member of society, able to guide social life.

Without a scientific approach even the most thorough study of only the details (even the most important ones) of man's relations with society cannot promote understanding of the tendencies in social development.

The same view is expressed by a number of West European sociologists who ridicule the meaningless and petty "scientific subjects" like the so-called sociology of bars or the dynamics of prices of bulldogs.

The experience of Soviet sociologists exemplifies a manifold study of man's relations with society, cyberneticians and biologists contributing to sociological studies.

As for the philosophical subjects, prominence is given to ethics, aesthetics, pedagogy and the study of the formation of spiritual values of the individual since the universal blessings—peace, labour, happiness, freedom, equality, fraternity—directly depend on invalidation of the law of former epochs *homo homini lupus est* and on the annihilation of the economic conditions engendering egoism. The masses will be able to realize their ideas only when they stop looking for a way out in religious consolation and get down to practically reshaping the world, when they abandon divine guidance and turn to earthly powers.

Marxism bases the solution of human prob-

lems on the achievements of world culture. Soviet historians of philosophy study the development of the materialistic elements in the works of medieval scholars and prominent representatives of scholastics. Expressed in the traditional form of those times the development of materialistic thought was observed in the works of Duns Scotus, Erigena and Abelard. Marxists consider Campanella, the monk imprisoned for writing *The City of the Sun*, one of their most outstanding predecessors, though they are perfectly aware of the contradiction between the objectivity of his ideas and the religious form of their interpretation.

More than once in the course of its development Marxism had to overcome tendencies of vulgarization and simplification in the assessment of concepts which had a religious tinge or were devoted to religious problems.

It is the object of the Institute of Scientific Atheism founded in 1964, to study religion in all its aspects as a phenomenon of social life. The Institute's attention is focussed on the concrete motifs inducing some sections of society to turn to religion. Guided by modern knowledge and the scientific understanding of the mechanism of relations between the individual and society, as well as by sociological data, atheists will be able to help believers engage fully in social activity, to find here on earth what they seek in their illusory world. This is the supreme objective of Soviet atheists.

The traditional opponents of Marxist ideology and those who specialize in militant attacks on atheism in the Soviet Union cannot, however, but recognize the fact (though in their own

peculiar way) that humane tendencies prevail in the work of Soviet atheists. Today religious organizations of all trends have to admit the fact that the forces which have set themselves the goal of realizing man's spiritual, material and social aspirations on earth are a basic component of the present-day world.

Man does not find himself in a vacuum when the religious influence weakens, when the principles of religious ethics and morals are displaced from his consciousness. Gradually this process makes him seek within the framework of real life a positive answer to the question of the meaning of being. He finds himself asserting a social ideal which has emerged from the conditions of reality, an ideal answering his striving to social justice.

## *HOW THE DIALOGUE IS DEVELOPING*

The development of the dialogue is daily written up in newspapers, discussed at congresses of the Christian-Democratic Parties, philosophical symposiums, religious colloquiums, congregations of the Ecumenical Council and at Catholic universities. The dialogue between believers, rationalists and followers of the materialistic outlook is part of life, expressed in day-to-day cooperation, common concerns, interests, disputes and joys of people who live side by side. It is an intercourse of Socialists and Communists, believers and doubters, unbelievers and convinced atheists.

The experience of the working people's daily struggle for their vital social demands convinces them that unity is a basic condition for success in this struggle—unity of Communists, Social-Democrats, Christian trade unionists, believers and atheists. In European countries, for instance, this unity of action emerged during the Resistance and is now developing further.

It is for good reason that so many lances are broken over the problem of unity. The reactionary churchmen do their best to distort the communist stand on questions of cooperation and unity of the different sections of the working population. Elements of the cold war policy are employed along with crude or sometimes subtle demagogy. Attempts are made to replace real cooperation by a campaign intended to frustrate it and discredit the principles which guide Communists in their work.

Of late some churchmen have intensified their efforts to halt the establishment of cooperation between working people—believers and Communists. Their main and far from new instrument is the division of working people according to their attitude to religion. As a matter of fact, it is such attempts that make it possible to see the religious leaders' true position in social questions, and realize that their hopes are pinned on the reactionary forces in society and on the bourgeois institutions.

Reactionary churchmen seek to involve the working people who favour radical changes in social conditions on earth in arguments on heavenly paradise, the problems of body and soul, earth and heaven.

Present-day religious theoreticians and so-

ciologists ascribe the principles of sectarianism to Communists. They deliberately falsify the Marxist principle of unity in the political and social struggle, replacing it by the conception of an alliance in outlooks and ideologies. Thus an indisputable question is turned into a controversial problem in the eyes of the believers.

Of what significance in the class struggle is the fact that groups of the working people may adhere to different and irreconcilable philosophies—the materialistic and religious? What is the Marxists' attitude to united action with believers in the struggle for common ends? This is not a new question to Marxists. During the period of the Russian proletariat struggle for power Lenin wrote: "Unity in this really revolutionary struggle of the oppressed class for the creation of paradise on earth is more important to us than the unity of proletarian opinion on paradise in heaven."<sup>1</sup> In his works *Socialism and Religion, Classes and Parties in their Attitude to Religion and the Church* and others Lenin outlined the principles of this cooperation.

Marxists consistently work for the establishment of the principles of the materialistic world outlook, for the purity of Marxism.

The fact that socialism has been built in the Soviet Union and other countries has a tremendous impact on the working people in capitalist countries. It makes them ponder on the role of religion and the Church in capitalist society and has a revolutionary influence on the masses. They begin to compare Marxist humanism with so-called Christian humanism.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 10, p. 87.

Practical experience and the real struggle themselves throw on the scales the two opposing programmes and the two social practices.

Mario Einaudi, one of the authors of the book *Christian Democracy in Italy and France*, writes: "Many of those who proclaim themselves anti-Communists advance without realizing it, the very elements of the practice and programme put forward by Communists."

Pope John XXIII's speech on May 1, 1960, was permeated with concern over the working masses' realization that it is the Communist Parties that express their aspirations and fight to put them into practice. He dwelt on the dangers of the "situation in which in order to establish justice it is necessary to join the godless or even to come under their influence." The same apprehension was expressed by the American Catholic, Ramay, when he said that Christians of the United States and the Western world were far behind Marxists in implementing Christian principles, such as justice and the equality of people irrespective of the colour of their skin...

It would really be unnecessary to quote such statements but for the conclusion of the Rev. Ramay. His analysis ended in the call: "All Christians must unite in the war against communism." As for M. Einaudi, his conclusions are highly significant. It must be stated, as a matter of fact, that Einaudi is one of the most serious historians and sociologists in Europe today. Son of a former Italian president, he now heads one of the biggest publishing houses. He states that students of Catholicism, who do not find satisfaction in the Church, turn to "secular teachings

and doctrines" and to the concrete programmes which really serve the interests of the masses. Does this mean that they digress from religion and from their own religious existence? Sometimes they do, sometimes not. The purely theological virtues—humbleness, blind faith, complete submission to the will of God—cease to be standards of behaviour in people's life.

Their striving to perform good deeds and the very understanding of these deeds as universal humanist ideals benefit the practical social struggle. It is the good deeds that become a platform for real cooperation of the working people—believers, atheists and those indifferent to religion.

Pope John XXIII who considered the fight against materialism and atheism his supreme objective, suggested that it should be conducted as a struggle of conceptions in which he hoped the one he represented would triumph.

Today the tactics of involving politics in ideological disputes has become quite obvious. Does this not mean that the Church has no hope to win in a purely ideological dispute?

The integrists (there are quite a number of them)—advocates of Church traditionalism, notwithstanding the spirit of the time, the demands of the believers and sober-minded Church leaders—oppose the dialogue with the masses of unbelievers and even call for a new crusade against atheism, materialism and communism.

Bishop Paul U-pin of Taiwan demanded that atheistic communism be condemned once again as an accumulation of all heresy. Another bishop declared that it was insufficient to fight atheistic communism only along ideological lines, that he

supported political interference. This, obviously, was an argument against Pope John's stand advocating struggle against ideological opponents on an ideological plane, without allowing the Church to be discredited by participation in crude political actions.

A large number of sober-minded politicians and propagandists among Christian trade union leaders and some sections of the Christian Democrats adhere to the position of Pope John XXIII. A prominent Catholic journalist Flaminio Piccoli expressed this position in the following way: "...the battle between Catholicism and Communism will develop into that between two diametrically different conceptions of life, peace and man—between the concepts of theology and atheism. We consider it our duty to be what we are in this contest and we say to Communists: 'be yourselves, too!'"

For Communists to "be themselves" means to be honest in following the principles of cooperation. The "competitive capacity" of the two ideologies and social programmes will be revealed in this cooperation. In the course of their struggle the working people often find it necessary to establish the sources and causes of exploitation in society and they become interested in the Marxist theory of the class struggle. Social practice reveals the significance of the institutions on which the existing order is based, including religious organizations and religious ideology. All this accelerates the process of falling away from religion and the Church, and helps to do away with religious alienation. To a considerable extent this is to be explained by the fact that in the countries where religion is



still strong, Communists employ concrete ways of cooperation and forms of dialogue dictated to them by the concrete social conditions.

It is not infrequent, however, that the desire to distort the views of Communists and ascribe to them readiness to change their ideological stand towards a compromise between the Marxist and religious outlooks is revealed in the dialogue. Sometimes statements by communist speakers in the debate are quoted as proof. Etymological inaccuracies and nuances in such cases are presented as a theory.

Marxism is interpreted as a theory which needs to be supplemented by a conception of compromise. These interpreters of the communist stand must learn once and for all that Marxism will accept no compromise on world outlook, that there can be no compromise between the scientific outlook and belief in a supernatural, divine force.

The irreconcilability of the scientific and religious world outlooks is something other than fisticuffs or an abuse-hurling contest or a propaganda hullabaloo. For Marxists their position is something that stems from their understanding of historic development and progress as the impossibility of turning back to a stage the human race has already passed or will inevitably pass. Going back to the former antagonistic class society would be regression; a return to the forms of its ideology would impoverish those who need true humanism.

The Marxist conception outlined and developed by Lenin in his works *Socialism and Religion* and *Classes and Parties in their Attitude to Religion and the Church* is as valid today as ever.

Whether or not people are religious cannot form a basis on which working people's unity in the struggle against reactionary social forces comes into being or is destroyed. Alliance, contact and union—such is the motto Communists address to believers and unbelievers alike. What is of utmost importance is the desire, readiness and ability to participate in the struggle for peace and social progress.

Unfortunately the Marxist stand and its development as depicted in works of Soviet scholars is not actually known in the West. Intellectuals in Austria, France, Italy and Britain know only a few works on humanism, the position of the individual under communism and on other philosophical subjects by young Soviet scholars.

The very development of the dialogue proves that the policy of "outstretched hand" and united action on the part of Communists and believers is not a deviation due to circumstances or a tactical device. It is an honest union based on firm principles, a union which also supposes ideological differences.

This is the stand Marxism takes today in discussing the problems of dialogue between Communists and believers. The principles are clear, the stand is consistent and the decisions are such as to benefit the masses.

The ideals of socialism, reflecting the humanist aspirations of the peoples attract millions of believers. The universal content of the programme of socialism and communism, the fact of Marxism's absorbing the achievements of preceding humanist thought prevents it from becoming sectarian, guarantees it from assuming

the pose of monopolist fanatics, so dangerous to the cause of the mass democratic movement.

In their understanding of socialism the believing masses introduce conventional forms of the perception of the world and their own ways of thinking. They approach the struggle, the means of its waging and its goals from categories of everyday thinking rather than scientific theory. They introduce into the struggle for their ideals, into the interpretation of their ideals and into the dialogue itself, the conceptions and superstitions nourished by religious ideology, the habits and practices instilled by the Church. The fight for socialism, its social ideal and programme are often understood in the categories and conceptions of religion. But as Marx noted, religion had for ages served the masses as a form of expressing their despair and a protest against it. Marxists realize that it could not have been any other way. However, today it is the expression of protest rather than despair that has become the essence of the masses' spiritual life and practical activities. In substance these activities are associated with the positive goals of realizing the humanist ideals.

## *THOSE WHO HEARKEN TO THE PEOPLE*

The positive character of the principles to which advocates of the materialistic trend adhere, is expressed in the constructive nature of the programme of establishing peace on earth and in the consistent and effective struggle for

racial and social justice. Communist ideals are increasingly considered by broad sections of the population (including worker-believers) to be universal ideals and objectives.

A recent venture by worker-priests, who were sent by the French Episcopate after the war to work at plants and factories, is a striking illustration. After becoming workers themselves, the priests were to divert their comrades from the class struggle which is condemned by the Church. They were to advance the religious preaching of conciliation against the proletarian class morals, thus prevailing over these morals.

The worker-priests have been living side by side with workers for many years. The results of their entry into life, their sincere desire to understand the worker and the comparison of the religious dogmas with the realities of life were expressed in their well-known message to the Ecumenical Council in 1964 (the message was published by many newspapers and magazines).

“The undersigned, fifteen of us of from 40 to 56 years of age, have worked for 10 to 17 years at manual trades, such as milling machine hands, lathe hands, cutters, electricians, tool-setters, brick-layers and labourers. Here we have made contacts with millions of workers of whom Pius XI and his successors have often complained that they were far from the Holy Church. We share their lives, their sufferings, their struggles, their hopes and delusions, and feel ourselves part of them...

“We want to express certain aspects of our daily experiences which we feel are not understood by the Church.”

What are the conditions in which a person lives under capitalism in the opinion of the authors? What are the "aspects of daily experiences" which determine his life and views?

"The worker...now sees that this so-called 'love for one's neighbour' has become a cruel joke, nothing more than a warm cloth applied to a festering sore. Even worse, it constitutes a hypocritical alibi to justify poverty, maintaining poverty to prevent discussion of injustice."

And what about the religion preaching charity, non-violence and submission?

Previously the Church had presented charity as gentleness, forgiveness for injustice and love for all. The first rule was not to harm others and abandon violence. The second was charity: one must give alms, visit and help the poor and aid one's neighbour. In short, people had been taught the word of God applies to individual relationships, without questioning the economic and political regime in which men, whom they consider exploiters, may go to church, may be on good terms with their pastor or bishop and pass for exemplary Catholics without being denounced by the Church.

The worker-priests deeply regret the decline of the Church's authority. They are devoted Catholics and opponents of materialism. That is why their conclusions, to some extent bitter and dramatic, are so remarkable.

"The people see that in fact the Church has always preached submission and condemned rebellion, thus contributing to further exploitation of one class by another.

"In fact the worker judges the Church more on the basis of its actions than its words. Now

the Church can no longer appear to him as another world, insensitive to his fundamental aspirations.”

How can liberation from this evil be achieved? The priests, followers of the Church, whose social doctrine rejects the class struggle, having themselves become workers, realize that freedom cannot be gained through submission, nor through the paternal programme of conciliating employer and worker. Themselves preaching the Church doctrine, they see all the ineffectiveness of humility. Themselves workers they have come to realize that it is through the class struggle that workers can attain their ends.

“The class struggle is not a theory: life itself creates the struggle.

“In our world money is the principal source of rights and authority. When a man is compelled to ‘look for work’ in order to live, when he must beg for a job from the owners of the means of production who can either give work or refuse it, that man, his life, his conscience, his very personality become victims of the economic system.

“The life of the worker, that of his children, their right to education and culture and all that is really human—even his right to live and eat—is to the profit of others. He feels that he has become an object to be used by those who have money. This is really exploitation of man by man, of one class by another.”

This is a statement disclosing the real state of affairs. This is what workers themselves say at their meetings, what is written in progressive workers’ newspapers and in the Marxist theoretical weekly. It is remarkable that the given

analysis has been made by people who are in agreement with the Church doctrine, whose mission is to prove that inequality in social and property status is just and eternal, that poverty is blessed.

“The Christian worker knows . . . poverty intimately and without romanticism. He sees it imposed on his entire class.

“He knows that it is the result of profound injustice, knows what physical and moral suffering it brings, to what degradation it sometimes leads. It becomes evident for him that poverty is evil. To extol it and present it as a blessing is to insult those who are really poor.”

In this way the workers' fate and experience bring the preacher of the Church's social and moral doctrine to the conclusion that social injustice, inequality in social and property status and the exploitation of one class by another is the evil of the present time.

Can this evil be eradicated by means of the remedy offered by the Church—love for one's neighbour, charity, non-violence and humility?

The message further reads:

“The people have learned long ago that exploiters and benefactors work hand in hand.”

The elimination of social evil can be attained in the class struggle. “When the worker enters political, cultural or trade union organizations, he can raise his eyes to new horizons . . . He becomes clearer in his ideas and revolts in the name of human dignity. At that moment when he discovers the meaning of solidarity with the workers of the world, those oppressed and those

already liberated, he takes his position in the common cause."

But perhaps the struggle against the universal social evil (political struggle included) is contrary to the ideas of goodness and justice and the principles of brotherhood among nations?

The experience of the worker-priests lays a realistic foundation to their understanding of goodness and justice. In the course of practical struggle they see the social ideals and moral values which the working men proclaim and fight for.

They find themselves confronted with the question of the universal content of these social ideals and moral standards.

"For a casual observer, even on the basis of ecclesiastic documents, this struggle seems to be based on hate and contrary to Christian charity, and Christian workers are asked to avoid contact with this movement, or at least to enter it with reserve and with the intention of 'purifying' it".

The religious worker of today instills a new meaning in the biblical formula "love thy neighbour as thee love thyself" and makes his corrections in the classical meaning. He does not justify social evil by means of this love but fights it in the name of comradeship, brotherhood and justice, thus displaying a true love for man.

Class ethics contain universal moral values and instill genuine virtues.

"A life spent in serving the interests of the working class is extremely hard. A militant's daily tasks require renunciation, courage and



perseverance and often bring little satisfaction. A working class militant suffers intimidation, and if he is fired, he has difficulty in finding another job. Not only he alone but his family too are involved. Police terror seeks him out. This, we feel, is an authentic example of charity—not to give away something one does not need, but to compromise one's own life and that of his dear ones. This gift to others expresses a reality we have rarely found in the Christian world."

Thus, the authors conclude that self-sacrifice, real brotherhood and solidarity are tempered in the struggle against social injustice.

"When we see a worker isolated, oppressed because he does not understand the reasons for his situation or because he is resigned to it we can only hope that he will above all develop a class consciousness, that he will revolt and participate in the "collective struggle in order to become a man."

Those opponents of materialism, who seek possibilities of establishing religion in the consciousness of the worker, cannot help showing reality the way it is, the way the worker sees it.

"In reality there are two worlds—one Christian and another non-Christian, two distinct social systems, two societies, practically two countries—one of the faith, the other of atheism. It would seem that in order to be considered Christian one must leave one world to enter the other. For the workers this means leaving that new world which they have built and which is moving, to enter another—an old world where all has been decided, where all human problems have already been solved."

This is not what every worker thinks, but the fact that all these questions are raised by reality itself, disturbs the worker-priests—the world for which the workers fight is based on the principles of goodness and justice.

The authors appeal to those who see in the class struggle destructive, demonic forces, a feast of low passions and universal denial. It is the task of the class struggle to do away with the class struggle itself by way of eliminating its causes.

“The working class movement has as its purpose the abolition of the class struggle in the only possible way, through the socialization of the means of production, the elimination of wage workers as a class and of employers as a class.”

The socialization of the means of production is the only effective and reliable way. The establishment of social justice, that is, the realization of the social ideal of humanists of all times is based on the socialization of the means of production.

... Various organizations claiming to be “shepherds of the masses” have worked out a fair number of programmes directed to easing the position of the working people. A reformation of capitalism on the basis of preserving private ownership of the means of production, this sacred institution sanctioned by God, is able to combine the Catholic social doctrine, the traditional bourgeois apology of capitalism and the newest remedies recommended by the top leaders and ideologists of reformism for the treatment of capitalist vices.

The authors of the message have come to

realize that it is political forms of struggle that are the most effective ones.

“He (the worker—I. K.) takes part in the political struggle to the extent that he realizes that economic struggles are limited while the real solution to his problems will be found at another level of organization and action.”

The group of priests has first studied the theory of the Church's social doctrine and then the school of life where this doctrine was checked in its practical, moral and human aspects.

“Through his daily experience in organized struggle, the man who until yesterday was isolated and oppressed as a worker, discovers new relations among men, finds his ideal of a new man, the hope of a better future, all of which give new meaning to his life.”

A century ago Marx assessed these new relations among people as elementary standards of morals and justice. *The Communist Manifesto*—“the song of songs” of Marxism—defined the social evil of a class society and sketched the outlines of social welfare and ways of fighting for it.

Different sections of the working people and the ideologists who sympathize with the exploited comprehend today the universal content of the ideals defended by Marxists and consider war, social exploitation and national oppression the absolute moral evil of our times. In a constructive struggle for the prevention of wars and the establishment of social ideals based on equality and justice the masses see universal human ideals and values, and the true meaning of progress.

The concrete programme of ensuring peace has inspired the masses, worker-believers among them, to fight for the realization of this ideal. It is the universal character of this ideal and the realistic form of its implementation that makes cooperation of all groups and sections of the population fruitful. That it is universal is proved by the fact that it is being supported by far-sighted leaders of the Church. Pope John XXIII proclaimed an active defence of peace, and during the Caribbean crisis called for a peaceful settlement.

Differences and disputes on world outlook should not be an obstacle in the struggle for social and racial justice, and against the threat of war. Since Communists work to realize universal values, they do not in the least object to holding discussions and disputes. They defend the materialistic outlook, while emphasizing that the attitude to religion cannot be a decisive factor in social struggle. Yet the very course of this struggle helps people to realize the universal value of the goals ahead, thus uniting all forces in the striving for their implementation. The experience of the worker-priests is not a chance incident but a striking manifestation of this process.

Cooperation in social struggle of all sections of the working people, including believers and atheists, is a reality, vividly illustrated by today's discussions, disputes and meetings, as well as the hard facts of life.

*BORIS GRIGORYAN*

**ATHEISM:  
ITS EVERYDAY  
EXPRESSION**



● A journalist writing on atheistic subjects must be especially sensitive to the reader's view and opinion, and timely respond both to criticism and approval. This is all the more important when dealing with the believer, who is prejudiced against any criticism of religion.

I constantly try to make clear to myself what is most essential to the believer, what is the actual subject of argument between religion and atheism.

At the same time, the question of the content of atheistic work itself inevitably comes up. In the name of what do we propagate the atheistic world outlook and the atheistic approach to life?

I once specially began to count up letters sent in to our magazine (*Science and Religion*) by believers in answer to some of its articles. The results were noteworthy. There were only a few letters on articles dealing with the pivotal conceptions of religion, with the Holy Scriptures, the scientific and logical denial of the existence of God, etc. Many more letters concerned more general problems, the significance of which exceeded pure religion—the common problems of life.

## THE SUBJECT OF ARGUMENT

Hundreds of letters came in from believers and unbelievers in answer to the reflections on

the meaning of life published by the magazine.

People of different ages, different walks of life and different level of knowledge expressed their views on this problem of importance to all, and made a number of apt and interesting observations.

I shall quote two letters from believers and two, from atheists. It is interesting to compare them, because comparison reveals a number of essential points that draw closer together the views of people of different ideologies. If you skip the few words testifying to the correspondents' belief in God, or to the contrary, you will see that all of them are united in asserting the idea of serving people and helping them, serving the ideals bringing happiness.

"I am a believer. I finished secondary school and I devote most of my free time to reading. I read atheistic and religious books, works by Russian and foreign classics, but do not avoid Soviet authors, either. I love to read Dickens, above all.

"I see the meaning of my life in serving God. This does not mean that I alienate myself from life and mortify my flesh by fasts and prayers. No. Fasting and praying is good in itself if you understand it correctly, but this is not the main thing. The main thing is to serve people through the love of God, that is, to serve their conscience. I want people always to act the way their conscience dictates them. I want to be a priest and help people materially and spiritually.

"If I act the way I believe is correct, if I serve the just cause and if I see the fruits of my labour—I have my happiness. Happiness means to realize one's dream, to follow the path



of a great dream. I am happy. I read a lot and many things become clear to me, because I try to give myself to people, because I have a good friend, a woman eager to share my hard services.

A. B O R I S O V, M O S C O W"

"I consider self-perfection the meaning of my life. The meaning of man's life is not merely in the usefulness of his existence but also in his predestination for the future. Happiness is everything which brings him joy.

"I find much satisfaction in learning. Knowledge broadens my views, deepens my conceptions and gives me a feeling of a time spent pleasantly and with use. I am glad if in the end my work turns out a success as a result of my own creative effort. I experience spiritual elation if I do something pleasant for others or if I manage to help or relieve somebody.

A. M I K H A I L O V, C H E L Y A B I N S K"

Now here are two letters from atheists; the first one is from a young girl:

"To my mind, if you live a day so that you feel you've helped people in some way, brought them some use, some joy, that will be the day of your life.

"I am happy because I have a true friend in my personal life and, what is most important, because my profession is the best in the world. I am a teacher. Is it not happiness to see those dozens of children looking up at you, fully expecting discoveries or help from you? Is it not happiness to give them this help?

"It is to people, individually, and together,

that I must give my work or even life. Everyone's happiness lies in serving man.

R. P o d g o r n y k h, A r c h a n g e l"

The second letter reads:

"I believe it is the purpose of my life and the life of other people constantly to improve the material conditions and also to strive for self-perfection. Building a life, permeated with love for people, and strengthening this feeling in every individual gives our life a special meaning. To love mankind in every individual and in the destiny of mankind to see the destiny and aspirations of individual people is one of the basic principles guiding the life of the human community.

"Life is full of meaning only if it is devoted to the service of lofty ideals and goals, when it helps to attain the maximum goodness and justice in all possible magnitude for a given time. This purpose, however, does not require departure either in thoughts or in feelings somewhere beyond the boundaries of the real world, of human life.

P. S o k o l o v, B r y a n s k"

The letters from believers like direct dealings with them show that the majority of them are as concerned with earthly, human problems as atheists.

Some want to "serve people through their love of God." Others selflessly serve people denying God's existence or without knowing God. In other words, believers do the same things with "God's help" as atheists do without it.

This does not mean, however, that believers

are indifferent to questions relating to the basic principles of religious faith. For them these principles are indisputable, not requiring proof, though sometimes they have to look for proof in order to clear up either their own doubts or defend the truth of these principles in argument with an ideological adversary.

The peculiarity of the believer's way of thinking is that as far as his belief in God, his religious feeling is concerned there exists an unshakable certainty, excluding any doubts, any wavering. As for his thoughts and actions in everyday life, they are little different from those of the unbeliever. He too, has doubts and uncertainty and even quests for more practical ways of achieving his ends.

The believer draws his ideas of genuine good from life. That is why he says that he is good who loves his neighbour, aids him, promotes general happiness and welfare, who does not kill, steal, etc. God has nothing to do with it. But then he explains that these principles are good not because their justice and value are proved by experience, but rather because they are pleasing to the heart of God. The believer considers that everything good, reasonable and really valuable comes from his faith, from the principles of divine truth which he follows in his life.

It is true that religious belief is in many cases one of the main factors (sometimes the main factor) of a person's uprightness. But the facts show that the connection between a belief in God and ethical behaviour is only relative, that firm religious conviction does not necessarily ensure a person's high moral standard, and on the contrary, that many people of high morality do not

believe in God and, moreover, categorically deny the need of such belief.

Very often believers justify their faith by the uprightness, they claim it instils in people. But the believer's uprightness is no proof of necessity of an inner relation between belief in the existence of a supernatural being and moral behaviour. It is not for the sake of human morality that faith exists.

I have drawn attention to this point because many present-day defenders of religion try to prove the necessity and justice of its existence by stressing the moral and cultural values which to their mind religion establishes and defends, and by stressing its importance for man's inner life.

"Let us agree," they say, "that religion is only a creation of fantasy, let us even assume that God is merely a hypothesis. Even so, religion is still strong as ever, still has its right to exist and still has its spiritual significance because it unites people, inculcates high moral standards in them and meets the requirements of our innermost spiritual life."

Such assertions are blasphemous both from the standpoint of the believer and official theology. For the believer and for the Church religion is justified by the mere fact that it supports belief in God, because it is belief in itself.

The real subject of argument between believers and atheists is the extent to which the existence of religion is justified at the present time, the question of how strong is man's need in it for the solution of his earthly problems.

The proponents of religion claim that it is better to spread ethical and cultural values common

to all ideologies by means of religious belief than in some other way. They consider other ideologies and philosophical doctrines to be nothing but "pseudoreligions" which establish their principles in the greatly inferior form of philosophical and sociological theories. But they are unable to argue to the end only on the basis of these theories without renouncing the basic principle of faith—the recognition of the unconditional and absolutely independent value of faith itself and the subject of faith. For that reason modern theologians affirm that religion is **the best and only true** means of man's moral and all other perfection. Thus they justify the existence of religion and at the same time draw the reverse conclusion that the values born of religion are the only moral and cultural values, that without God and faith there can be neither a moral nor a just social system. In this way they again declare religion's absolute value and its independence of anything temporal and earthly, while a minute before they cited earthly and quite practical arguments in order to prove the necessity and justifiability of religion.

Religion in its narrow meaning, that is, belief in God, in a supernatural existence with all its ideological argumentation and elements of cult is not only a means but also an end in itself. Faith needs no justification or proof but the preaching and defence of religion cannot dispense with it. It is here that the ineradicable contradiction lies, which the apology of religion has always encountered. How can the divine nature of faith and the religious feeling be combined with the concrete, human ways by which it is impressed on people, the absolute value and

independence of religion with the attempt at logically and practically proving its necessity and usefulness?

Often the believer says that he feels the presence of God, that he converses with him, that faith supports him spiritually and helps him attain moral perfection, that he sees the proof of a supernatural being in the most diverse natural phenomena. We are all familiar with these and many other arguments designed to prove indirectly God's existence. There is no other proof, for direct proof needs *the appearance of the Almighty himself, in his own image*. And this kind of proof has never been in the possession of any believer in a dispute with an atheist.

It seems that if this indirect proof is adequate to prove the existence of God then, obviously, to disprove his existence one need only cite the great many people who do not feel the presence of God and do not converse with him, but employ other means to achieve moral and spiritual perfection and succeed in this to an equal if not greater degree. Nor do these people see any indication of a divine being in natural phenomena, but explain them on the basis of science. In those cases where science is still unable to explain a phenomenon they use scientifically and logically probable suppositions and hypotheses, stimulating further research in the given problem.

In most cases the inevitable, but actually scholastic argument as to whether or not God exists can have no practical result. Both the believer and the atheist will continue to adhere to his own views. Sooner or later they will abandon their purely nominal argument and turn to the real subject of argument.

It is not a question of God but of ourselves, of our social, spiritual and moral nature, of the real problems of life that exercise our minds and require solution. It is a question of our world outlook and our attitude which directs our practical activities. The atheism—religion argument is actually an argument on means of solving common problems, on the extent to which the existence of religion and the existence of atheistic criticism of religion can be justified.

## *FOR THE SAKE OF WHAT?*

The new way of life which has developed in the Soviet Union has resulted in the emergence within a comparatively short space of time of a new world outlook which has delivered the bulk of the population from the influence of religion. It will suffice to mention one generally known fact to back this point. The number of unreligious families was extremely small in pre-revolutionary Russia. Today they constitute an overwhelming majority. It is true there are quite a large number of families in which those of the older generation are religious, but it is very seldom that wholly religious families are found.

The abandonment of religion is not a specific socialist phenomenon. Religion is also becoming noticeably weaker in capitalist countries. During the last ten years several thousand priests have renounced the cloth in Italy and France. Today it is no secret to anyone, even to many churchmen and theologians, that the "Golden Age" of the domination of religion over the

minds and hearts of humanity has gone never to return. But not everyone who has abandoned his belief in God can be considered a convinced atheist and a conscious advocate of a world outlook which excludes religious faith. Likewise, not every man who goes to church and officially belongs to a religion is truly a believer.

In the USSR, probably more than anywhere else, atheism stems from a positive system of views and a materialistic outlook. Many Soviet people from all walks of life feel it is not enough simply to reject religion personally, but engage in propagating the materialistic philosophy and scientific atheism.

Atheistic propaganda in the USSR has always been and remains an object of criticism both on the part of internal and foreign clerical and secular defenders of religion. On the one hand, they try their best to represent communist atheism as a "narrow idea which destroys all values," as a "manifestation of egoism and lack of principle" and a "primitive attempt to deny the existence of God", and atheistic propaganda, as a crusade against the believers and the Church. On the other hand, they attempt calmly to prove and argumentate the scientific bankruptcy and anti-humanist nature of atheistic convictions.

Criticism of atheism is conducted on a broad front. In it atheism is regarded narrowly as only a scientifically and logically substantiated criticism of religion and a system of arguments denying the existence of God and any belief in the supernatural.

For the believer, God is an unquestionable



reality. He worships God because God in himself is worthy of worship, and also because he believes in God's power and everyday help. Belief in God is a means and an end in itself. Faith for the believer is everything—both the purpose and meaning of his existence. Everything the believer cherishes and values most in his life is connected with God—everything comes from God and returns to God.

What about the atheist? For what sake does he deny the existence of God and reject the need of faith?

Atheism as a rejection of the belief in God is not an end in itself. The atheist does not consider denying the existence of God the meaning of his life and it is not this denial that determines the principles of his life. His world outlook, his attitude to life exclude belief in God, and the need of it.

Atheism in its narrow meaning is not a self-contained value and does not exist independently. It has always been an aspect of a given philosophical doctrine, a positive system of attitudes to the world and life. Atheism is in its way a conclusion stemming from this system with greater or lesser necessity and logic.

We classify atheism as ancient atheism, the atheism and free-thinking of the French materialists and enlighteners, the atheism of Feuerbach and Marxist atheism. Atheism first emerged and is now developing mostly in materialistic philosophical theories. At the same time atheistic principles are also based on the argumentation and criticism of religion which is contained in religious free-thinking, deism, scepticism and pantheism, as well as in the

philosophical doctrines of a number of outstanding representatives of idealism, such as Hume, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Freud.

Atheism is not an invention of Marxists or an "ideological whim" of Communists, who wish to get rid of religion and the Church at any cost, as some of its opponents believe. Minimum objectivity in considering the history of scientific and philosophical thought among different peoples and during different epochs should suffice to convince one that atheism is a logical result of world social and cultural progress. Communists are only the most consistent successors to this universal heritage.

## *PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS*

What scientific and philosophical principles have Marxist philosophy and its atheism derived from this heritage? In order to understand and correctly appraise atheistic propaganda in the Soviet Union, and the methods and means that Soviet atheists use in their work, it is necessary first of all to form right idea of the philosophical basis of Marxist atheism and its positive programme. It is also necessary to see clearly why, in the name of what social and spiritual values, way of life or way of thinking atheists come out against religion.

Like any attitude to a different pattern of thinking atheistic denial is always to a great extent determined by the essence of the ideals

and values being defended, as well as by the means employed for the realization of these ideals.

Historically, criticism of religion usually became especially powerful and timely when the revolutionary classes attempted to carry out new social transformations, promising people a bearable existence and a greater hope of happiness.

The revolutionary proletariat who had set themselves the purpose of eliminating all oppression and bringing about conditions of life that a really free individual deserved came out against religion as a symbol of illusory happiness. Confident of the tremendous transformative might of a socialist revolution, Communists consistently rejected all forms of ideological deception, religion included. Calling on the masses to rise, they also roused the believer, seeking to make him feel and realize the tangible possibility of changing his life for the better once he was delivered from habitual illusions. It were these aspirations of the revolutionary proletariat that were embodied in its philosophy—Marxism.

Marx's philosophical doctrine is permeated with the unconditional recognition of the authority of truth. It contraposes the scientific-materialistic concept of the world and the unquestionable truth of life to religious illusion, for it is only the truth of life that can form the basis of genuine morality and humaneness. Both Marx and Lenin considered it humiliating for human dignity to ignore reality and seek consolation in illusions. Man should have enough courage to realize his actual position

in life, to enter the battle with reality and conquer it.

A widespread view has it that Marx underestimated the importance of man's spiritual and moral perfection.

The truth is, however, that in revealing the laws of development of external reality, Marxist philosophy turns above all to man's inner life. This philosophy is based on humane and just principles of moral, cultural and spiritual development. "If man draws all his knowledge, sensations, etc., from the world of the senses and the experience gained in it," wrote Marx and Engels, "the empirical world must be arranged so that in it man experiences and gets used to what is really human and that he becomes aware of himself as man."<sup>1</sup> Marxist philosophy establishes the genuinely human, earthly nature of social and moral ideals. Engels wrote: "Man must know himself, make himself the measure of all relationships in life; he must appraise them according to his essence, arrange the world in a truly humane manner, meeting the needs of his nature... The truth must not be sought in the nebulous areas of the world beyond... but somewhere much closer, in man's own breast.

"The essence of man is much grander and loftier, than the imaginary essence of all possible 'gods'."

By interpreting historical necessity and the laws and ideals reflecting it as something external in relation to man and all humanity and

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<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism*.

as some absolute principle independent of people, religious philosophy and some metaphysical and dogmatic philosophies leave man at the mercy of external forces and circumstances that are totally alien to him. A man becomes a blind instrument, a means in the hands of other people who have appropriated the monopoly right to be the only infallible interpreters of the world beyond.

It is natural, therefore, that Marxist philosophy, centred as it is round man, his happiness, his spiritual being and freedom, has rejected the principle of the divine and natural predestination of history and the fatalistic understanding of historical necessity as a form of man's enslavement. All materialists of the past—from Epicurus down to the French materialists and Ludwig Feuerbach—came out against religion. Dialectical materialism, however, went further in its concept and criticism of religion. By explaining social phenomena in a materialistic way Marxists revealed the basic social circumstances of religiousness, demonstrated the extreme inadequacy of enlightenment and of purely ideological preaching in the struggle against religion. This struggle is justified and can be effective only if it is based on radical social transformations and on creative activity.

Only a vulgar materialist or idealist will explain religiousness by the priests' deception or by popular ignorance. The idealistic understanding of the essence of religion and its social role results in attempts to settle this issue by means of directives and administrative measures. This conception of religion and ways of

fighting it, which the Blanquists and Dühring preached in their time, were ridiculed and strongly criticized by Engels and later by Lenin. They justly stressed that to declare war on religion was the best way of reviving the interest in religion and halt the process of its outliving itself.

While coming out against idealistic Leftism in fighting religion Lenin maintained that the enlightenment and education of masses required patient and tactful work, such as would permit no offending of religious feelings. The humanist principles of atheistic activities ensuing from Marxist philosophy are often interpreted by its ideological opponents as an incidental, temporal and not characteristic of Marxist policy conducted by Communists.

## HUMANISM AND CREATION

The study of concrete atheistic activities in the Soviet Union, of everything making up the actual day-to-day work in the atheistic education of the population makes it possible to judge to what extent this work is in line with the philosophical and political principles of Marxism in its attitude to religion and the Church.

People often ask what the impelling motive of atheists is. It seems to me that the best way of answering this question is to quote a few passages from a diary received by the *Science and Religion* magazine. It was written by Zina-

ida Vasilyevna Stefanskaya, who lives in the old Siberian town of Yeniseisk. She is a philosophy teacher at the Pedagogical Institute. In her free time Zinaida Stefanskaya often goes on trips to other towns to deliver anti-religious lectures. Once on such a trip she heard about a twenty-year-old girl, Valya Koryakina, who was brought to hospital in a state of complete exhaustion. A fanatic believer and a "truly Orthodox Christian," she had mortified her flesh by fasting to "save her soul" and now medicine alone could not save her. Zinaida Stefanskaya decided to take the girl home with her and restore her to life. The diary tells about Valya Koryakina's life afterwards.

"M a r c h 23. Valya came home by herself. She wept and then began to sing religious songs. She ate her usual lump of bread with an onion... Only later, in the evening, she had something else. Valya told me that she became a firm believer when she was seventeen. At that time she tore up her diploma from a secondary medical school. She saw her salvation in serving God. Before that she had lived in Tambov."

"M a r c h 24. My younger sister, Nina, came... She took Valya's kerchief off and said:

"'Why do you dress like an old, old woman? You're pretty!'

"Valya beamed, but suddenly her expression changed and she said:

"'I'll have to leave you or you'll make an unbeliever of me!'

"When the children began to look at some magic lantern films, Valya left the room...

“In the evening my son Andrei complained of a pain in his foot. I rubbed it, but he still complained.

“Suddenly Valya came in... She poured some water from the carafe and said in a most casual way:

“‘Do you have any citramon?’

“‘No, I have only aspirin.’

“‘Then give him pyramidon and rub his leg with salicylate.’

“She turned and left the room...”

“M a r c h 25. She sang very few religious songs. Came to my room herself for a talk...

“Her kerchief is no longer pulled down low on her forehead. She doesn’t look at the floor any more, but directly in front of herself. Doesn’t pray so much and broods most of the time.

“Went into Valya’s room unexpectedly—she was looking at herself in the mirror.”

“M a r c h 27. While we were away Valya took a bath, washed her clothes, changed into a new dress, put on a polka-dot kerchief and had dinner. She picks up our things now—pillow, teapot, knife... without thinking to cross them.

“I feel she wants to talk to me very much. ‘I’m ashamed before other believers: I laugh all the time.’”

“M a r c h 30. When I was leaving for the Institute, Valya was sitting with her Bible and knitting in front of her. I came back about two hours later—the Bible was still open at the same page but there was noticeable progress in the knitting.



I kissed Valya. . . She was awfully embarrassed, I can feel how she craves for kindness.

“Today she admitted to me that for five years since she had become a believer she had not gone out except to attend the medical school.

“A p r i l 8. For two days Valya went to Nina, who was ill, stayed for the night there, made injections: the first time she had had a medical instrument in her hands for many years.”

“A p r i l 11. Valya is ‘thawing’ before our eyes. Began to talk about work—where could she find a job?...”

“M a y 3. Valya spent the entire holiday reading atheistic literature, mostly books about the Bible.

“Suddenly asked me yesterday:

“‘How will I begin my life?’...”

“Wrote a letter to Uncle Leonid, her mother’s brother, an atheist.

“I went with Valya to see the Head Physician at the city hospital today. She was appointed to the surgical department, as she had asked. Valya has written to the Director of the Tambov secondary medical school, asking him to send her a copy of her diploma...”

These abrupt entries speak of much and first of all of the tremendous efforts of an open-hearted person who gave her help to another in time. It is not a very important fact that the “truly Orthodox Christians” lost another one of their flock. What is important is that a human life was saved.

Valya’s story is unusual and at the same time

there is nothing extraordinary in it. A young girl, she gave herself up to religion utterly, with fervour. She was different from many other believers only in that she was more consistent and strove completely to cut herself off from all that was earthly. Someone once noted very aptly that inconsistency was the happiness of believers.

It may be argued that the diary tells of an extraordinary feeling of religiousness, not typical of most believers or of the main religious trends. It is true that most often such examples can be found in wildly fanatical religious sects, such as Pentecostals, true-Orthodox Christians, Jehovahists. But these sects should not be considered isolated phenomena.

The sects emerged from the main religious trends and are their offshoots. What seems so striking, so glaring in the Pentecostal, the true-Orthodox Christian or Jehovahist is manifested moderately and less noticeably in other believers.

The work of an atheist requires great love for man, great selflessness, skill and infinite tact. It can be effective only if the believer and the atheist meet voluntarily and openly. Atheistic education is absolutely devoid of annoying importunity, insincerity. Unlike religious belief, atheistic conviction is calm, if I may say so; it has no frenzied quality about it and is justified as long as it serves the good of man. Profoundly convinced of the truth of their views, their pattern of thinking and way of life, Marxists do not force their convictions on other people.

Atheism frees a person, helps him acquire another world outlook, the principles of which are unquestionably valuable. Yet our efforts in atheistic upbringing are justified only if they make

a person's life easier, if they change his lot for the better. This is a principle Soviet atheists strictly observe in their work with individual believers.

In our opinion only that philosophy is humane which reveals the truth, which tells man of his actual position in the world and shows him practical ways of building his personal and, also, common happiness. In one's work with the believer one should consider what the believer's breaking away from religion means for him. If the real truth of life comes to him in due time, it not only delivers him from delusions, but also brings him happiness, for it enables him to take a correct path in life. On the contrary this truth and freedom may aggrieve a person if it comes to him too late, when nothing can be put right.

Individual work with the believer is undoubtedly very rewarding, and in many cases is simply indispensable. But the masses are educated and re-educated first of all in the process of their own, conscious participation in productive labour.

Religious preachers warn believers against any worldly temptations, instill in them alertness and distrust in relations with people of a different frame of mind, frighten them with the "Antichrist" and urge them constantly to purify themselves and strengthen their belief. Religion disunites people, alienates believers in the name of eternity and heavenly salvation. Meanwhile, atheists direct all their efforts to uniting people—both believers and unbelievers—for the sake of settling vital problems and in the name of earthly human happiness.

The effectiveness of atheistic education depends to a great extent on whether the believers take

an active part in this common creative work, whether they feel themselves equal members of the socialist community.

The creation of new economic and political forms of management, the appearance of new forms in culture and day-to-day life, in the field of spiritual intercourse and human relationships (all sorts of clubs and societies)—all promote the displacement of religion. An important part in this process belongs to atheists.

The struggle against religion, as well as educational work with believers, require vast scientific and philosophical knowledge, and thorough familiarity with religious doctrines, with the believer's psychology and way of thinking.

Atheistic propaganda is based on facts and the latest advances in all the fields of scientific knowledge. There are a number of sciences which are of particular importance for atheism, forming as they do a basis for atheistic argumentation and the scientific and philosophical criticism of religion. A generalized and theoretical comprehension of scientific discoveries, of the history and theory of atheism, of the history and philosophy of religion and the basic religious doctrines, as well as a study of the contemporary religious activities in the country—such is the minimum scientific and theoretical basis of atheistic activities.

A large number of scholars and propagandists are constantly engaged in these studies. Research conducted by atheists, as well as their polemics with religious opponents are noticeable for one feature, which is characteristic of materialism and atheism. Due to its dogmatism religious philosophy predetermines beforehand the ideological significance of any scientific fact or discovery, mo-

dern or future. The entire scientific and practical experience of humanity, no matter of how long a period, is only bound to prove "divine wisdom," which has already been taught to people in all kinds of holy scriptures. Fresh scientific data only change the argumentation and interpretation of the fixed principles of the religious outlook. Blind faith in the absolute infallibility of the religious dogmas allows for any degree of arbitrariness—scientific facts will be falsified in such a way as to back the primordial principles. Very often the defenders of religion speculate in the unsolved problems of science and life.

In contraposing the materialistic concept of the world to dogmatic religious principles, atheists strictly adhere to scientific data and experience. They make no secret of unsolved problems and check their ideological principles against scientific information.

Atheists consider it a task of paramount importance to develop in people an independent and critical pattern of thinking. In their work—in propaganda, lectures, debates and discussions—they often take up the more controversial issues of science and life thus revealing vast areas for quests. These discussions and arguments make people think, doubt, take independent decisions and develop correct views. Creative and critical thought—it is this that represents a mortal peril to religion as to any other dogma.

The founders of Marxism stated repeatedly that materialistic dialectics should not be regarded as a dogma, but as guidance in creative, independent activity. Marxism, the philosophy of the revolutionary proletariat, has advanced its scientific and practical criteria, and above all, the

demand of absolute truthfulness, imperative testing and checking of all conceptions by critical thought and experience.

Following the best traditions of atheism and free thinking, Soviet atheists come out against religious dogmatism and an authoritarian way of thinking. They regard the propaganda of knowledge and enlightenment as a path along which the believer will be able to emerge from his condition of childhood, characterized, as Kant said, by "inability to use his brain without external guidance."

*ALEXANDER OSIPOV*

**THROUGH  
A THOUSAND WHY'S**





● “Is it humane that you atheists deprive us believers of the consolation of religion? We Christians possess beauty, goodness and humaneness. You atheists, enemies of religion, do you not arise against beauty, goodness and humaneness?”

“The 1964 Patriarchal Easter Message states correctly: ‘Did we not believe in Christ’s resurrection, why should we speak of life, truth, goodness, joy and happiness? Why, if Death reigns supreme, if it is the great leveller and knows no difference between good and evil!’

“By renouncing belief in the supernatural mission and the resurrection of Christ, atheists work for the sake of Death, hence they have no right to humaneness and even to good and evil themselves.”

Often profoundly believing people address such questions to me, one who entered the path of faith and then deserted it fully, as painfully as consciously. Questions like those above make me turn again and again to the philosophical appraisal and practical comparison of the values of religion and of earthly goodness. But now I make this comparison on the basis of my knowledge of life and in the sphere of life, not in the sphere of spiritual quest alone.

All my life since I can remember I have dreamed of a feat, of doing good and being useful to humanity. It seems that the “Russian boys’ mettle,” extolled by Dostoyevsky, is really very strong in Russian intellectuals.

## ROAD TO FAITH

How did I become a believer and a priest of the Church? How did I believe, live and work when I was a shepherd and theologian?

I was born in Tallin (then called Revel) in 1911 in the family of an official at the local State Bank department. My mother was the daughter of a naval officer. My grandfather came from the Veliki Ustyug peasantry. He had been a sailor for many years when he was promoted to the rank of officer and consequently worked at the Revel port. This was why my early childhood was connected with the Baltic Sea. Later my father was transferred to Sukhumi and then to Orenburg.

During the Civil War almost all my relatives died from hunger, typhus, and other misfortunes. In 1922 the remaining members of our family came to Ivanovo, my father's birth-place. There the family broke up and my mother returned with my grandmother and me to her native Tallin, which by that time had become the capital of bourgeois Estonia. I was eleven then.

I feel I must mention one peculiarity in my background: I do not come from a clergy caste. My meetings with people of this caste and my observations showed me more than once how strong the complex of caste upbringing is, how difficult it is to break through and away from its environment. I do not want to pretend I am a hero and I will state outright: I am not sure that I would have been able to step beyond the boundaries of the caste, had I been restricted by the age-old traditions and peculiarities of that environment.

Ours was not an easy life. At first the three of us earned our living by pasting cigarette boxes at home for the "Laferm" factory. Later my mother got a job as a proof-reader at a newspaper office, and did sewing on the side to eke out a living. She earned very little and we could hardly make both ends meet. I went to school in winter and in summer did my best to earn some money for a pair of boots and some clothes. I did electrical repairs, painted, handed out advertisements in the streets, helped about tennis courts, was an errand boy at a newspaper office, took papers to news stands and was a tourist guide.

I had my dreams as any other boy. I always loved natural sciences. Collected beetles and fossils; wanted to be a geologist.

I also loved history. I read a great deal and collected books. I was still very young when I felt the urge to write poetry.

Anxious to be among youngsters of my own age I joined a Boy-Scouts Organization, which was sponsored by the Young Men's Christian Association. It was there that I first tried to assert myself. At first I felt happy, though compared with the Young Pioneers, there was more than enough roughness and elements of drilling in the Scouts' troop. There for the first time I encountered two seemingly incompatible things. Firstly, we were literally dragged into the church. Our musters were appointed in the following way: you will attend Sunday Mass at the Alexandro-Nevsky Cathedral, then the scoutmaster will take you to the place of the rally. In this way I began to attend church regularly, though I mischievously tried not to appear before the time for "Our

Father"—I was not particularly religious at that time. Although we had Bible lessons in school and I got good marks in it, I regarded it merely as one of the subjects. And at home we spoke very little of religion.

My mother and grandmother were what you could call practical believers. They attended church but were never fanatical. My grandmother was a Kronstadt seamstress. She had attended school for only two years when she married an officer, thus finding herself in the society of the petty nobility. But even there she had managed to command general respect. She read much; was very kind and just. As for religion, she would always repeat grandfather's words: "If you want to keep your faith, keep away from the clergy." That artificial drawing people into religion practised by the Scouts was something new for me.

The second remarkable thing was that there I encountered juvenile and teenage cynicism. Pornographic pictures were circulated among the children of the more well-to-do parents. Round the campfire beautiful youth songs were followed by scabrous hushed talk about women. This tendency became especially strongfelt when from under the sponsorship of the YMCA the Scouts were turned over to the "high command" of General Baikov, leader of the local military emigrants. Jingoism and a "barrack spirit" enhanced by monarchism became more pronounced with every rally. My mother soon sensed the changes and categorically demanded that I leave the troop.

Thus the combination of obligatory religion and amateur cynicism touched upon my consciousness without having had time to take root.

Longing for company I invented social activities for myself: I began to put out a magazine on a hectograph, myself writing a satirical-fantastic serial on school life. I was an actor in an amateur youth theatre, organized by a teacher and enthusiast, Ye. F. Villamova, and even tried to write plays for it. Then I attended the elocution and drama course of K. N. Zeudelberg-Novitskaya. I also began to publish poetry in local papers and magazines. Nevertheless, I was dissatisfied. My soul craved for something bigger and besides I was tormented by a nostalgic feeling for my Russia. The spirit of political discrimination of Soviet Russia prevailed in my environment, and childishly believing what was said about her I often found myself in company with her enemies, I still realized there was a great split in my consciousness. I avidly read everything about Russia, silently and proudly applauding her progress, and then inspired by others, I disparaged her in anguish.

This lasted till 1928 when, two years before finishing secondary school, unexpected events entirely changed my life. Then the religious period started—an end to my carefree youth and a beginning of my life in ideology, a sphere where a person absolutely has to be with somebody and against somebody, a sphere where the question “Who are you?” is invariably accompanied by the question “With whom are you?” and “To whom and to what will you devote whatever you have, whatever you have become, whatever you are capable of doing?”

What actually happened? Circles of the so-called Russian Christian Students Movement (RCSM) were organized in Tallin. Though called

student, they were open to intellectuals of practically any age—from ancient grannies to senior schoolchildren (later peasant youth circles were affiliated, along with boys' and girls' guards, and Sunday schools for younger children). Thus Christian propaganda reached to people of all ages in all social groups.

Influenced by girls in my form who had entered one of these circles earlier, I finally found myself in it too. At that period I had been suffering from lack of companions of my own age and the absence of fruitful, spiritually full life.

The circle bustled with the spirit of youthful fervour and a keen interest in Russia. The atmosphere was gay and friendly. Immediately I felt my own enthusiasm awakened. I was happy at having finally obtained an opportunity to work and to learn something about my motherland. It seemed to me that both my nostalgia and my longing for company had been quenched. Soon I became a leader of a youth circle which began to be called "wonderful" for the strong spirit of comradeship that reigned in it.

At first we met at private apartments and later the RCSM was given quarters in the vast basement of the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral.

One must not think that these circles occupied themselves merely with religion as such. Problems of history, literature, natural sciences, ethics—everything attracted us. But our supervisors closely watched over our activities and directed them into the channels of religion. Finally we all became convinced that religion, God and belief in Him was the alpha and omega of all our being, penetrating life in all its expressions. Our Paris centre supplied us with literature

which along with purely religious discussions contained criticism of opposing religions and opposing ideologies, and books permeated with the idea of the baseness and "bestiality" of materialism. Much was written about Russia, but a Russia tormented, defiled, spat and trampled upon by the "sinners in the flesh," who were ruthlessly destroying everything good, forcing the country onto the brink of poverty and destruction; a Russia the Communists had pushed off the path of progress and knowledge back to the epoch of primitive savagery. That was what was fed to us day in and day out.

When I was old enough to appreciate Dostoyevsky, I was shaken by that "onion" which was in possession of the heroine of *The Brothers Karamazov*—a symbol of unforgettable good, which alone was capable of pulling one out of any hell. I began to wish that people could have more of those "onions" to which they could cling while ascending the ladder of humaneness higher and further... And the field where these "onions" were grown to save humanity was Christianity and the Church of Jesus Christ.

At that time life conducted an experiment on me—cast me "to burn in the fiery furnace," showed me the reverse side of social and human existence. It was then that the first "why" emerged before me.

The salvation of man, truth, love and goodness lay in Christian morality and Orthodox culture. That was the source of consolation, mercy and almsgiving, strengthened by the courage of patience and placid endurance of afflictions in hope of entering into the kingdom of heaven and partaking of its everlasting blessings. This was all

true, but on the other hand, why had one to help beggars and consider poverty natural? Why had one to comfort the persecuted and oneself endure persecution? Why had one to weep with the grievors and placidly endure grief? Why was it that the surrounding world was the source of all misfortunes which I, a Christian, had to cure? For in healing the sick one must not heal the symptoms, even such unpleasant ones as fever, inflammation and pain, but the source of these symptoms. My why's were at that time settled by my belief: there is providence and the provider, whose truth is not our human truth, but a supernatural, superhuman truth.

On the other hand, how is it possible to create a reasonable being, Man, and then let him break his mind's will and curiosity against the impenetrability of mystery? Is one who can see born to stumble about in the darkness? Is one taught music to be deprived later of the faculty of hearing? Our spiritual guides realized that doubts were tormenting us, young ones.

Day after day we were taught that "a path without the Lord leads nowhere," that in our Lord alone consists life, real progress, the future and happiness of Russia and the entire human race, that morality itself is inconceivable without religion. We were told of the Berdyaev conception of the "worthiness of Christianity and unworthiness of Christians" by Berdyaev himself and by his followers.

They spoke convincingly. They were unanimously extolled as the most progressive, most intelligent and most profound. They were professors, (Vysheslavitsev, Zander, Zenkovsky et al.), philosophers (Arsenyev, Ilyin), "shepherds"



(Fathers S. Chetverikov, I. Bogoyavlensky, L. Liperovsky), writers and artists. Those same ideas were dragged into books, newspapers and radio programmes, preached from rostrums and pulpits, yet they failed to make an anti-Soviet warrior of me. Taken away from the Soviet Union at the age of eleven, I could not forget my motherland.

Religion shaped my ideology for many years to come. I became a convinced Orthodox believer not because of a vague striving, but on the basis of what I then thought was the only correct and irrefutable knowledge.

At that time I read much and greedily. My reading was directed by the mentor of the "wonderful" circle, Dean of the Alexandro-Nevisky Cathedral in Tallin and pupil of John of Kronstadt, Master of Theology, Archpriest I. Bogoyavlensky. I met him again in 1946, when Metropolitan Grigory (Chukov) of Leningrad invited Father John to take the post of First Rector of the ecclesiastical schools that were being revived in Leningrad, and I myself was invited to take the post of Prorector of the Old Testament Department. Father John died in the office of Bishop and was called the Most Eminent Isidor of Tallin and Estonia.

He introduced me to the books of the Fathers, Church-apologist literature and Christian ethical literature. Soon I became his "right hand" and colleague in publishing the *Orthodox Counsellor* magazine, remaining so throughout the ten years of its existence. For me it was something like the laboratory of a theological journalist.

My reading was also directed by our Paris leaders—V. V. Zenkovsky (later an archpriest), L. A. Zander and Father S. Chetverikov. It was

to them that I owed my discovery of the world of Christian philosophy, ascetism and mystical nationalism in the "Holy Russia" spirit. This latter field was actually an outlet for my nostalgia, which had tormented me all my youth and which had always been kept alive by my grandmother's patriotic stories (the almost illiterate daughter of a Kronstadt seamstress, taught to read by her husband, she had instilled in me a passion for memoirs and historical novels which has remained all my life). Even my love for natural sciences which makes me read a great deal of popular science magazines and books even today, at that time came to me through the prism of a Church-apologist estimation of scientific information.

A peculiar combination of a wide range of active interests developed: the writing of poetry and plays, love for natural sciences (botany, geology, zoology and geography), love for history (memoirs, historical novels and serious historical studies mainly of Russia and the Middle Ages), theology (history, ethics, dogmatics, the Bible, asceticism, apologetics, Christian art and archeology). I studied all that for the single goal—serving people in Christ and serving the motherland for the sake of restoring God to her.

The combination of monomania and omniscience, which developed in me then, is still alive. It was the first component of this combination that had kept me so long within the boundaries of religion, whereas the second did not permit me to stay within it later. With the same feeling I perceive my new Truth today—atheism. Just as before, I still cannot read papers, magazines, novels, any reading matter in general, or see films,

plays and listen to the radio without this same "mono" telling me: "You may find this useful! Take notice of this! This is the way it can be done!" At that time my burning with one idea in the study of a multitude of subjects combined with my natural gift of oratory, further polished in the studio, plus some ability of writing—all that brought me early fame as a speaker and writer. It was still more enhanced by my book (though published anonymously) *At Our Sanctuaries* (1930) reporting on the second congress of the RCMS. I believe that a passage from it will characterize better than any words or commentary my spiritual make-up of that time, my aspirations and my credo of those years.

First, a few words of explanation. On the fourth day of the congress we were taken from the Pskov-Pechora Monastery where the congress was meeting to the ancient town of Izborsk, some twenty kilometres from the then Soviet-Estonian border. There we worshipped the holy places and studied monuments of ancient Russia and the remains of the ancient Russian-Slav settlement, called Gorodishche.

"After visiting the churches we went to Gorodishche. A plateau, flat like a table, rises between two merging river valleys. A small triangle at the end of it is shut off by an earthen rampart. This is Gorodishche. In ancient times there was another wall of vertical logs, enclosing a primeval fortress built of wood and earth—the townsite of a Slav tribe. A large cemetery and a church built in the typical old Pskov style occupy what in times of yore was the town of Izborsk where, as legend has it, the Varyag knight Truvor came to reign.

“There is much that is interesting in Gorodishche but what attracted us most was the unpretentious stone fence bending over the summit of the rampart and descending on both sides of it. This ridge is the highest point at Gorodishche, and from there Pskov Cathedral of the Holy Trinity can be seen in good weather.

“We waited on the fence for a long time. Two field-glasses and a telescope were passed from hand to hand. But we had no luck. A barely discernible whitish haze obliterated the view of the horizon and we could see nothing, though many said they could. The majority left disappointed. Only a small group remained, stubborn and hopeful. And God hearkened to their silent prayer. It seemed nothing had changed only in one place a tiny cloud appeared, white and ethereal. Dozens of eyes bored into it. Soon the cloud became clearer. ‘Holy Trinity! I can see Pskov!’ escaped somebody’s mouth. Many began to cross themselves. Indeed it was the Cathedral of the town of Pskov—the Holy Trinity. In the hazy vision of the white temple we saw Russia, harassed, oppressed. ‘Build thy temple in thy soul,’ the verse came to my mind for some reason. We saw the shining cross through the field-glasses. Was not that temple a symbol of Russia crying out to all Russians abroad: ‘Holy Russia lives! Not all has perished!’

“And beside the Holy Trinity we saw a white spire—the bell-tower of the Svyatogorsk Monastery, former residence of the archbishops of Pskov. P. F. Anderson,<sup>1</sup> an American repre-

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<sup>1</sup> P. F. Anderson—the unfailing “eye” of Protestant America in all attempts to penetrate into the East by

sentative of the YMCA Press, was also among the stubborn. He fixed his field-glasses on the white cloud-temple and stared at it for a long time. Then lowering them, he crossed himself in the Orthodox manner and said: 'God has shown us his grace!' Father Lev told me later that a fellow-champion rushed to him, pale and excited, shouting 'Father Lev! I will go to Pskov now!' He said aloud what others did not, but what was burning in their souls."

Little wonder that seeing my mood Father Bogoyavlensky asked me after our circle's meeting one day to stay for a "heart-to-heart" talk. He said:

"You see, my son, we are getting old and the cause of the Church must live. We need a good replacement. The Aid to the Poor Charitable Society has decided to establish a stipend for one Russian student at the Orthodox Department of the Theology Faculty at Tartu University. What if I recommend you? You haven't finished secondary school yet, so there is ample time to think. Don't answer me now, but think hard."

He talked to me for a long time about the lofty tasks of the pastoral services. Comfort them. Wipe their tears. Help them find ways out of the dead-alleys of life. Heal the heart-broken. Erect a pivot in their souls so that they will want to

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means of the Orthodox religion. After meeting him at the congress of the RCSM in Estonia I again met him in Hotel "Sovetskaya" in Moscow, in July 1956, at the Anglo-Russian theological conference. At that conference I had a battle of wits with the present Archbishop of Canterbury (then of York), Dr. Ramsey. P. F. Anderson attended as an observer from the American Christians.

live and work for the better, for the truth. Proclaim lofty ideals. Be the clarion of the supreme power on the sinful earth, torn by viciousness and the wiles of Satan...

My mind was in turmoil as I walked home—the proposition was too unexpected. Never before had such a thought entered my mind. My religious outlook had become strong and clear. But in my mind I saw myself only as a righteous person and good Christian, capable of realizing lofty ideals and performing good works only in the secular field. My only doubt was about what path to take: naturalist, geologist, or a literary worker. And now still another path lay open before me, a path about which I had never thought.

When I told my mother about it, she left the matter for me to decide: "It's your life ahead of you and you must make the choice yourself." I am thankful to her for that. At least now I cannot reproach anybody for that decision and for my twisted life. I chose it myself, myself walked down it, myself stumbled, fell, rose and extricated myself.

I began to analyze what had been offered to me. What were the pros?

From my early youth, when I was only beginning to think, I had always wanted to lead a fruitful, bright life, to be useful to society. And now in the Church I saw an opportunity of helping people, of consoling and supporting them and teaching them goodness. I accepted religion and everything associated with it with an open heart, without any considerations. It seemed to me that a golden fund of goodness was crammed into the pages of religious books. I saw a great deal of good words and wisdom in them. Actually

there was no need to convince me of all that.

By that time life had shown me enough of its dark sides. I saw families driven out of their homes for overdue rent. I saw beggars and prostitutes. I saw the "slave market"—the illegal labour exchange where underage shepherds and farm hands were hired for the "grey barons"—the kulaks. In search of a job I myself had once almost become such a "slave". I knew the fight for a piece of bread, for soles to my boots, for patches to my trousers. I knew that people came to the Church with their grief and their needs, their sorrow, anxiety and suffering. I was convinced that the Church supported charity, urged people to help each other and itself helped them. Behind the preaching of conciliation with everyday life and its striking inequality and exploitation I could not distinguish the role of the Church as the opium for the people blunting their striving for the right to a genuinely happy life, free of oppression and inequality. The Church seemed a real shelter for "those weary and heavy-laden," "a mother wiping away the tears of all the earth." It seemed very honourable to be among those "wiping away the tears."

What were the *contras* ?

First of all, the cassock, the long hair and the beard. After all, I was so young and a son of the *bubikopf* age. I immediately told my confessor about it. He answered with a preaching on respect for tradition, that these were the "indispensable attributes" distinguishing one who belongs to the Church in the eyes of the common people, attributes reflecting "the eternity of the Church" against the background of the rapidly changing "fashions of this world." He also said that the

simpletons who only lived by the traditional rites and did not perceive the essence of religion should not be driven away from the Church by breaking these customs, even though ridiculous, such as the cassock, the long hair, the kissing of hands.

I expressed agreement with everything, only vaguely sensing the contempt for those simpletons behind the explanation of the priest-intellectual, and reconciled myself, though with a sad feeling, to the inevitable evil.

Another thing that added to my indecision was the deliberate pompousness of the Church services and the wordiness of Orthodox prayers, which were in such discord with the evangelic laconism of "Our Father," the model prayer left by Christ. The explanations I received on this point were in the same vein as those I mentioned above. When my confessor spoke about the archbishop's services, during which it is sometimes hard to say to whom they burn incense and bow more—God or the priest—he remarked that he himself did not like all that very much; that this and many other things were unnecessary tinsel, a bad legacy of Byzantium with her palaces and mediaeval etiquette, a result of limited copying. That this was probably good in the time of Ivan III and Sofia Palaeologus in the 15th century. Young Russia, then on her way of unification, inherited the legacy of Byzantium—"the second Rome"—in order to consolidate her state sovereignty as the "third Rome." He added that during these services one had to think of the priest and not God. "But," he noted, "people are used to it. It's rooted deep in their soul and body, it's a custom. The believers do not think about the essence



of the rites. They simply think that it is pleasing to God, that 'this is how our fathers and grandfathers saved themselves,' and you should not undermine their unassuming faith. We live on the earth, we are 'material-spiritual' beings so it is only natural that because of our imperfection wordly rites envelope the spiritual truths of the Church.

"Look here," he went on, "see those ikons? Great masters instilled in them lofty ideas that were burning in their hearts. But not all could rise to the heights and they understood methods of glorifying in their own way. They replaced loftiness by wealth and noble rank, enchained grandeur in the gold and silver of ikon frames and trimmings, studded them with precious stones, hung up all kinds of embroidered towels as in a tastelessly decorated apartment, ribbons, paper flowers—everything that caught their childish imagination. But to disclose the truth to them means that we who understand much will cut the ground from under the feet of those who understand little. One must educate them gradually. And then they will learn how to distinguish between the real and the outer glitter."

In my youthful fervour it seemed to me that my doubts were being replaced by yet another lofty aspect of pastoral services—that of educating. I failed to realize how much that was humiliating for those "little ones" who fed the Church and its "shepherds" with their pennies, was concealed behind those words.

Only decades later did I come to realize the horrible duality of that view—lofty truths for some, and tawdry services and torrents of words—for the others. The priests—carriers of the lofty

truth—make a spectacle of themselves. The ceremony of their robing resembles the morning toilette of the Byzantine Emperors and turns into a rite of toadyism and humiliation. And the higher the office of the “shepherd” the greater the humiliation. If it is a priest, his robes are brought in by servers, readers and deacons and another deacon is incensing. All of them are bowing and bowing endlessly, kissing his hands, bending their heads low, buttoning the numerous little buttons, pulling the strings on the belly of the “holy servant” who is standing before them as a live idol. In case of a patriarch, the robes are brought in by archpriests and priests, who demonstrate the hierarchy of humiliation. Moreover the Patriarch is not addressed as “Your Eminence,” but “Your Beautitude,” a title, which, perhaps, can properly be used only in addressing the Virgin Mary.

Indeed, it was practically impossible for me to find my way in that age-old casuistry. I had not attended a Soviet school. We had not read Herzen, Dobrolyubov or Chernyshevsky, to say nothing of Lenin, Marx and Engels. In literature we did not go further than Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and Chekhov. As I realized only much later, all that had been made available to us, was an authoritative call backwards, an appeal to serve people along the path of services to God. I submitted and said my Yes.

Did my doubts die in me? Not at all. I said to myself: “Strange... doubtful... but it is either Satan’s temptation, or the pettiness of my thinking and inability to perceive the great mysterious and truths. I must study much harder in order to appreciate. I must perfect myself in order to know. I have to grow in order to grow up to it

I saw my salvation in submission.

And I said my Yes.

From then on events gained momentum. The RCSM was educating me as a future pastor. I was being promoted. I attended the third RCSM congress in Puchtitsa (the Baltic), conducted a religious-poetical seminar at it, attended the fourth congress in Latgalia, Latvia: began to work more on the *Orthodox Counsellor* magazine and even polemized successfully with Catholics in it, who by then had begun their work with children and were intensifying their activities through the propaganda of the Uniate. I also delivered public lectures on religious and philosophical subjects, held regular disputes in Nymma, in the outskirts of Tallin.

By that time Bogoyavlensky had begun to instruct me systematically and guide my theological reading. He also advised me to read novels and science fiction. "A pastor should be well-educated. Only then will he be able to satisfy both a simple person and an intellectual. You must be armed with theology and a good knowledge of the sciences, literature and all the public movements, demands and aspirations of the day."

I am grateful to him for this advice. It saved me from becoming a narrow-minded dogmatist. It helped me to keep in touch with reality and amass knowledge which later, though through tortuous quests and doubts, enabled me honestly to reconsider all the foundations of my religious outlook.

I finished secondary school with honours and in January 1931, entered the Orthodox Department of the Theological Faculty at Tartu University.

Tuition cost was rather high, but the Synod of the Estonian Orthodox Church undertook to pay it in consideration of my religious services (lectures, articles, work with young people), and the Aid to the Poor Society at the Tallin Alexandro-Nevsky Cathedral established a stipend, as Bogoyavlensky had promised, which provided for a modest existence.

## ROAD TO THEOLOGY. MY LIFE AS A DEACON

When I was leaving for Tartu, Father Bogoyavlensky gave me a letter of recommendation to the Dean of the local Russian Cathedral of the Assumption, Anatoly Ostroumov, formerly a delegate to the 1913 All-Russia Council from the town of Luga. He was a tall old man, with intelligent grey eyes and a big paunch. Yet he did not look fat. He met me warmly and advised that I should rent a room from the local deaconess, in a church house within the Cathedral enclosure. "You should get used," he said, "to living among priests. Learn to lead a spiritual life, be humble."

Thus Providence showed me into the world of priesthood from the back door on the very first day of my life as a University student and theologian. For four and a half years I lived in an atmosphere of intrigue and squabbles among the priests' families, observed the work of the parish board, headed by Bulgarin, a usurer and cynic, and descendant of Pushkin's enemy of ill fame.

How was it my faith survived? In this the famous Berdyaev formula concerning the worthiness of Christianity and the unworthiness of Christians

played an important part. You may perhaps remember the legend he used to quote from Boccaccio's *Decameron*— about two friends, a Jewish and a Christian merchant. The latter kept pestering his friend to be baptized and when he saw that the Jew had decided to go to Rome, which had just lived through the epoc of papal pornography, he was desperate. "He will see into what a cesspool I'm dragging him and it will be the end of our friendship." But on returning from Rome the Jew was still willing to be baptized. When his friend asked him how he could be after what he had seen in Rome, he answered: "You see, my friend, if your faith is still alive after what the spiritual fathers have been doing to it, God must be with it!"

Guided by the doctrine of the constant struggle between the forces of God and of Satan in this sinful world, theologians came to the conclusion that the purpose and meaning of Satan's existence is in fighting against his enemy and rival— God. It is clear, therefore, that the more of God's grace the devil sees bestowed on a creature, the greater the forces of his Kingdom of Darkness he concentrates to attack the citadel of light he has discovered. The main principle of the devil's "job" is: "I'll slay the shepherd and the flock will scatter." In other words, since, as people say, "the fish begins to smell from the head," the devil concentrates all his efforts, blows and temptations on the leaders and shepherds of the Church. Dostoyevsky also expresses this idea in his novel *The Brothers Karamazov*. In his conversation with the devil, Ivan Karamazov asks him if the demons tempt the righteous and the devil remarks that he would not regret spending

ten years on such a pearl. Dostoyevsky adds: for the crowd loves to see the downfall of the righteous.

In this way a peculiar foundation is laid for the teaching that the more genuine and sacred a given Christian Church, the more temptations, downfalls, dirt one is liable to encounter round and in its leadership; that this, according to Dostoyevsky, "is the devil fighting against God on the battlefield of human hearts." According to the same theory, this fact should not repulse the true believers, but on the contrary, unite them round the doctrine of the Church for the sake of defending its holy truth.

I remember my confessor would say to me: "Don't become discouraged by the fact that you see so much unseemliness round the Orthodox religion, whereas things seem smooth and tranquil with the Protestants. They sit in the swamp of heresy and have lost the true understanding of God. So why should Satan bother with them? As for us, we know all the truth. He senses it and walks up and down among us seeking his prey."

In those bygone days I was completely carried away by that theory. I was too young, too ardent and trustworthy, and I myself put on the blinkers of humility and submission to the ready formulas for years to come. My critical thought remained frozen. The ugliness and bigotry of priesthood and other loathsome facts I encountered only aroused a feeling of disgust in me, but had no impact whatever on my belief. It was only years later when I seriously and independently took up research in the history of religion that I learned to judge faith itself more soberly, thus overcoming the barrier of presuggestion and mysticism.

The Orthodox Department of the Theological Faculty was very small and there were only three Russian students: R. Lozninsky, now head of a parish in Kostroma, V. Karinsky, who has never entered the sphere of spiritual services and today works somewhere in Estonia, and myself. In general, the number of Russian students in the University was very small. We all tried to be closer to each other and felt as part of one fellowship. But the class nature of bourgeois society was felt even there: the sons of wealthy parents grouped in three Russian corporations of a German type, and the poorer students belonged to the Russian Students Society and the RCSM. The first category lived a riotous life, as for the second, their life was fuller ideologically, culturally richer and diverse. The fact that the Russians were so few destroyed the inter-faculty barriers: theologians were friendly with medical students, chemists, lawyers, philologists, physicists and mathematicians. We attended lectures of popular professors in each other's faculties. That was a blessed school for me: it prevented me from shutting myself up within the narrow world of scholastics and helped to maintain contacts with the whole outside world. This fact even explained some peculiarities in my ideological make-up, which later greatly promoted my changing from a "servant of God" into a Man.

My contacts with the medical students, my going to the lectures of their idols—Professors Poussen (later killed during the German occupation) and Brezovsky (neuropathologist and psychiatrist) helped me to realize, even when I was still a student, that the so-called demonical possession, mentioned in religious writings was

just a naive explanation of real diseases of the brain and the nervous system, natural for the times when the Gospels were written, and for the Middle Ages. At the same time I realized the significance of suggestion and auto-suggestion in the state of vigil, the meaning of exaltation, hallucination, hypnosis, as well as the mechanism of the so-called miraculous healings.

But even this knowledge did not undermine my belief. Not in the least! I only worshipped the Creator, who had expended on his creatures so much strength and wisdom that to reveal it required of humanity thousands of years of history, social progress and scientific knowledge (and how much more time it will require, I thought).

It is remarkable that this "medical amendment" to my religious convictions played a very significant part and even resulted in large numbers of believers beginning to consider me a healer and a performer of miracles (between 1936 and 1940 I managed to "heal" three persons "possessed with demons").

The first time this happened was in the Tallin Cathedral of the Transfiguration where I had been serving temporarily. During the liturgy, not long before the song of the cherubim, I stood in the altar when I suddenly heard a hysterical scream in Estonian: "I shall kill God!" followed by several other screams. I had to come out, for the service had stopped. Three or four strong men were holding an unfortunate insane woman, who was struggling to free herself. The next second I knew what to do.

It was clear to me that it was only a seizure, that the woman was a faithful believer since she had come to church. I was sure that she thought



herself "bewitched and possessed with devils" and for that reason, feared chastisement from heaven in answer to her seizure. I decided to try to overcome her disease by reaching her through her own fear and belief. In a loud and imperious voice I ordered "holy water" to be brought in and having said a prayer I improvised on the spot I ordered her to drink it. Trembling she fell to my feet and kissing them pleaded: "No! No! Please don't! It burns. I'm afraid." But again I almost shouted: "I command that you drink it!"

The struggle between my will and her diseased mentality went on for about three minutes. Then she got up shaking violently and I poured some water through her parted lips. She screamed and fainted. Not knowing if she could hear me, I commanded: "Lay her down. Let somebody sit with her. She will be cured when she comes to."

And it really was so. After the service the woman came calm and quiet to thank me. I knew her for years afterwards and she had never had another seizure, whereas before they occurred twice a month at the least.

I tried my best to analyze that incident. It was on my mind for a long time. I was absolutely convinced that there had been no evil spirit in that woman. For otherwise (according to the numerous lives of the Saints, books of the Fathers and ascetic writings) the devil should either have refused to obey me and laugh at my attempts, or "saddle" me himself as a wrongdoer and a heretic. My experiment based on pure psychology and inspired by the feeling of compassion for the mentally sick wretch, came out so brilliantly: the "demon submitted" without having guessed the trick.

That incident produced a strong impression on many people. Soon after, another sick woman from Saaremaa Island was brought for me "to cast out the devils" possessing her. Later I had to "heal" still another one. I encountered similar cases again in Perm during the war.

After the war, when I read a brochure *City of Miracles* by a Polish journalist, Z. Stolyarev, describing Lourdes, annually visited by millions of pilgrims, where a special medical commission made up of the tops of medicine, registers one or two healings and not even every year—pain and grief for humanity stabbed me. I thought about Soviet doctors. When examining a patient, they prescribe treatment depending on the disease: medicines, physiotherapy or surgery. As for the nervous diseases not yet aggravated by organic changes (such diseases may include cases of blindness, paralysis or eczema, to say nothing of such diseases as hysteria, neurasthenia, etc.) they are treated by the method of suggestion at special hypnotariums. And religion playing on the few "miracles" of hypnosis and autohypnosis as those I had myself performed, summons absolutely all sufferers to their "curative" sanctuaries. And they go, people with cancers, who lose precious months in their journey, while their cancer reaches the stage of metastasis; others go and their neglected illnesses turn into chronic diseases; millions of people—enchanted by the healing of the few, whose diseases had nothing in common with their own ailments.

Another peculiarity in my theological education, a fact which influenced the shaping of my ideology, was the study of the Scriptures together with the Lutherans.

Lectures on the Old and the New Testaments were read to us by the German Professors—Alexander von Bulmerink (Old Testament) and Otto von Seeseman, both profoundly believing people, whose faith, I would even say, was of crystal purity. Whereas the Orthodox religion even today adheres to the view of the absolutely divine inspiration of the Bible, Protestantism (and of late even Catholicism) has long since adopted a more sober approach. Archpriest Malinovsky, a theologian-dogmatist, expressed the Orthodox idea of the “divine inspiration” of the Bible in the following way: “The divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures consists in that absolutely all their authors wrote them under the excitation and guidance of the Holy Ghost, hence they were not only protected from delusions but were positively given revelation of the divine truth, yet without any overriding of their natural abilities. On the contrary, they acted as recipients of God’s revelation, fully preserving all their strength and actively manifesting it, as for instance expressed in their perception of things shown in the writings, in the choice of words and expressions to explain a thought, etc.” But knowing of a more sober approach to the divinity of the Holy Scriptures on the part of other religions I was not at all surprised to hear the following view expressed by His Eminence Archbishop of York (today of Canterbury and Primate of England) Ramsey at the 1956 Anglo-Russian theological conference in Moscow: “They believed that the Holy Scriptures, like the person of Christ, had two natures. The Holy Scriptures had a divine nature and a human nature. The divine nature was the

Holy Spirit inspiring the writers; the human nature was the real humanity of the writers in their variety. The humanity of the writers was not overridden by the Holy Ghost. All the books of the Bible revealed divine truth but there were many forms, including history, law, moral teaching; they also included drama, poetry and myth."

Professor Bulmerink loved his subject and I began to feel the same about it. Though on the insistence of the Synod of the Estonian Orthodox Church I (its beneficiary) had to write my Candidate's and Master's theses (for the good of the Church) on the pastoral services according to the teaching of St. John the Golden Mouthed in the light of today, I decided to write my Doctor's thesis on the Old Testament, namely on the pre-patriarchal period of Genesis (chapters I-XI), considering it an accumulation of all problems—natural-historical, moral-ethical, anthropological-historical, in which science intermingles with religion, law and ethics borders on religious views as the source of everything, without which religion loses its foundation (questions of being: cosmo-, geo- and anthropogenesis, the antitheses of life and death, good and evil, philosophy of history, etc.).

I wanted to answer these questions from the point of view of Orthodox theology and the teachings of the Fathers, and examine the possibility of combining them with scientific views on the same subjects. As you doubtlessly see, my old love for the natural sciences had again influenced me in choosing my theme. Beginning to work I was absolutely sure that the combination of science and religion was not only possible but even natural.

It was that independent study that started my mind working in a direction which later led to a revision of my whole world outlook.

From the very beginning I was confronted with the necessity of deciding how and to what degree I understood and accepted the concept of "divine inspiration."

The very first analyses of the historical contents of the biblical books made it clear for me that they were based on purely human material only revalued and worked over by religious writers in the light of the doctrine of God's Providence on earth and among humanity. I also began to understand the meaning of the numerous editings and changes in those books that had been made over the ages.

The poetic and didactic books (mainly of aphoristic nature) of the Bible emerged before me as a reflection of the conceptions and views of those epochs, as something like an ancient civil code with all its human qualities. But seeing everything through the prism of Orthodox traditions I regarded them also as revalued by the divinely inspired authors who had instilled in the human wisdom of those books the superhuman revelations of heavenly mysteries.

I could not fail to see the reflection of ancient Eastern myths in "God's word." Influenced by the teachings of the Fathers and also by some knowledge of the school of Catholic interpretation, I learned to see allegories in them and the indispensable voice of the heaven which accorded the mysteries it revealed with the vocabulary and volume of knowledge of the ages when the biblical writings were first recorded.

Thanks to my knowledge of the Protestant

and Catholic apologetic methods of the interpretation of the Bible, Orthodox stagnation became in my mind a flexible synthesis in which the role of myths, history and literature as expressed in the Bible was moderated by the teaching on their divine arrangement, the impartment to them of the lofty truths of revelation, the allegoric interpretation and magnitude of the Bible where the same texts allow for elements of the human and historical, moral and ethical, prophetic and allegoric, and a downright dogmatic perception and interpretation.

The books of the prophets were the citadel of my belief in the Scriptures. It seemed to me that in them the Spirit gave life to history and the divine permeated the worldly. But there too I could not fail to see the difficulties and contradictions, could not but stop in doubt and meditation.

Did that repulse me from the Bible? Not in the least. On the contrary, my belief in the existence of God was firm, though the deeper I penetrated into theology the more abstract became my understanding of Him, the more He turned into an Idea far away and high above the world becoming some imperceptible moral stimulant. Completely unaware of the fact myself, I was gradually progressing along the path of removing the Creator from his creation and transplanting him from the physical world into the world lying beyond mental perception, from an area seemingly real into that definitely unreal, making him a fiction, about which I was amazed to read in Engels' *Dialectics of Nature*, some two decades later.

Yet, it seemed to me that I only became fir-

mer in my faith. The more difficulties, I thought, the more honourable it is for the scholar to overcome them. The more complicated the issue, the more exciting the prospect of working on it.

Analyzing the path I had traversed and trying to trace when the crisis of my religious consciousness began, I came to realize what I had failed to in my post-graduate years. I realized that even then the genuine truth of scientific knowledge had deeply cut into the dark forest of religious prejudice and superstition.

And later, not for a single day did I drop my work and my meditations on the Bible no matter how life twisted and turned me; during the next twenty years my studies took me slowly but definitely to the complete comprehension of the truth. The mist of religious distortion in my perception of the biblical text was slowly lifting.

It was thus I realized that the book *Song of Songs* was a poem of human love and the Palestine scene, the lofty but by no means religious writing of an unknown ancient poet; that most likely it had been used as a cycle of wedding songs; that if the Jews had sung it on the Passover it only signified the religious ceremony of betrothal with God, then customary among all the peoples of the East. This ceremony was included in the cycle of agricultural holidays and was usually performed in spring when nature awakened. In Mesopotamia and Egypt it was timed for the flooding of the rivers which brought moisture and fertile mud to the fields. The Jews combined it with the Feast of Unleavened Bread—the first bread made from flour of the first spring harvest—and it was timed for the barley harvest at the end of March and the beginning of April.

Most likely that holiday was at first accompanied by the ceremony of human sacrifice. The famous story of Abraham's sacrifice of his son Isaac is undoubtedly based on that ancient ritual. In the *Song of Songs* it is expressed in the description of the bleeding wounds the watchmen inflicted on the bride. Indeed in some places in Palestine they actually used to seize casual passers-by for that purpose. Subsequently the rite of human sacrifice was replaced by the offering of a lamb which first had to become "human" by having lived among people three days.

At another time I clearly saw that the book of *Esther* was actually a clever political pamphlet, not God's revelation, but a reflection of politics in Jewish literature.

Amos "who was among the herdsmen," a rebel against the rich "which oppress the poor" and "which crush the needy"; the prophet Isaiah, coming from the King's family, a subtle critic in the King's court and a supporter of decrees from the top and through religion (while there is still time)—all of them rose before me as human beings, representatives of their epochs with all the peculiarities, superstitions and shortcomings of those times, human despite the religious form of their speech and the thick mist of their visions and prophecies.

The books of the Kings exposed the myth of the Jews' monotheism and the antiquity of the books of Moses.

But I realized all that much later; in my student and post-graduate years the ideas of scientific atheism, if there were any, were developing entirely without my being aware of the fact.

My graduation from the University was



drawing close. Father Vasili (Martinson), Professor and Dean of the Orthodox Department, recommended me for the post-graduate course (without any stipend) to write my Doctor's thesis (a Russian student could not even hope for more!). I was left at the University. But a year later political events (the establishment of the fascist dictatorship) forced me to abandon my cherished dream of theological studies for many years to come.

I was already married (to Nina Nikolayevna Pavsky, the daughter of Deacon N. Pavsky) when I was ordained and appointed a missionary priest for prisons, hospitals, orphanages and houses of worship in the Tallin district. It was difficult and wearisome work: I had to visit people whose lives had been broken, to talk to them, listen to them and console them. But I liked it more than anything else. While in theology my path was that of doubts and torments, here I felt in my place. My political ignorance prevented me from asking these people any crucial questions on the sources of their misfortunes, the consequences of which I had to heal, and the good which I thought I was bringing people, every tear that I managed to dry, every smile I managed to evoke on the sufferers' lips gave me tremendous satisfaction of serving my brethren. I believed I was the carrier of humanism.

However as time went past, I began to feel, despite all the complacency evoked by my work as a comforter, that my new sphere of activity was a second university to me—a university of life.

In this way I was destined to see the reverse side of the capitalist world. Criminals, declassed

elements, people from the lower depths, prostitutes, thieves, murderers, thugs, rapers, debauchers and hooligans passed before me alongside those who had been convicted on suspicion of being "Reds." Unfortunate old men, abandoned by all, died in my arms; insane invalids for hours evolved their theories before me; consumptive, typhoid, diphtheria patients clutched onto me in agony. I had to visit people in the slums and afterwards to beg humbly for a few pennies from the "generous" merchants or for a couple of kilograms of half-rotten products from their factories for those wretched people and their children. After several years of such work I began to adhere to extremely Left views.

At the same time another truth dawned upon me: how insignificant was religion's "refining influence" on society, which was torn by contradictions! How miserable the "shepherd's" consolation in a situation requiring drastic measures, when hot iron was needed to burn out the ugliness of exploitation and oppression.

Moreover, being absolutely unable to give anything but vague promises of "heavenly bliss," which it cannot even describe properly, and calling for humility, the Church disarms man in his just struggle for a better life on earth. It disguises class inequality in human relationships and does it in favour of those "on top." It sings its "God, rest his soul in peace" equally over the usurer and his victim, the violator and his prey over a scoundrel and his toy in human image, trodden upon, humiliated and wretched.

During that period I became cured once and for all of the cheap kindness and the Tolstovian "resist-no-evil" approach. The "kindly" Christians

make a collection of good works and store them up like currency to buy a ticket to the kingdom of heaven. They like to repeat at the same time that all good works are equally significant—to feed a hungry one, to aid a fellow-brother in misfortune or give an alm to the professional who has comfortably and for good settled on the church porch in the role of a beggar or a mad fanatic, enabling the “fat ones” to admire their own kindness. But for me it became clear that there are different forms of good.

During my particularly religious period of life this understanding was slowly increasing in my soul, accumulating in the store-houses of my memory, making it impossible for me to find peace of mind.

There was another “revelation” made in that period. My dealings with mentally sick people showed me how many of them went out of their minds or developed nervous diseases on the basis of religion. And there was another striking peculiarity. Very often religious obsession was accompanied by all kinds of sexual aberrations. I tried to analyze it and talked with doctors and psychologists. As a result I began to see the real background of that hysterical adoration of the “shepherds”, particularly young or popular preachers, on the part of fanatical women. Most often the basis of this adoration is far from religious (religion here plays only a secondary role), but the seething of unsatisfied passions, often distorted and suppressed by religion itself.

For me it was truly a great period of acquiring experience.

In the second half of that period I was finally given a parish—the Tallin Church of the Virgin.

At the same time I began to teach the Bible and became the tutor of a class at the private Russian secondary school in Tallin which I myself had attended.

I liked working with children, and I tried to evoke in them the love for knowledge which Father Bogoyavlensky had once inspired in me. I took them to plants and factories, went with them on expeditions to the Kunda mines, to the ancient Baltic port of Peter. When years later a former pupil of mine, captain of the motor ship *Lena* brought me a splinter of pink granite from the place in the Antarctic where Mirny had been founded (before that he brought me a polar bear's tooth from Novaya Zemlya), I was happy to see that it was not an ascetic alienation from the world that I had instilled in him, but a lofty thirst for knowledge of this world.

During the same period Father Bogoyavlensky and I organized private evening theological courses for Russians in Tallin. For the first time there I lectured on the Old Testament. Simultaneously I preached a great deal in my own church, in the Nymma and Kopli churches—both in the outskirts of Tallin—and in the Estonian Cathedral of the Transfiguration. I continued to write much and to publish my articles. I also tried to do something in the field of secular literature.

In spite of all this, the feeling of profound dissatisfaction did not leave me. I could not trace the source of my anguish myself. The only thing I was sure of was the fact that my life was not developing the way it should. No more satisfaction came from my pastoral services. All the time it seemed to me that the greater part of my energy was not expended on what I had aspired to,

and the good I was doing, if any, was miserably small. Very often the "shepherd" finds himself in the position of a man who is forced to serve superstitious fears, or a psychiatrist who does not cure human souls but only "charms away the tooth-ache," assuaging the pain, while the disease causing it continues to destroy the organism. Is there a good doctor who would get satisfaction from this sort of treatment?

But do not conclude from this that my belief had begun to wane. I still prayed, as I did for years afterwards (but not in so many words), and performed the services with zeal, though I hated the pompousness that so many other "shepherds" love. And I firmly believed in the truth of religion, though I doubted the spiritual value of many books in the Bible and considered a number of them to be simply works of ancient Jewish history and literature.

But somewhere deep in my subconscious a wave of protest was mounting against the world of conventions and fantasy, to serve which I had been doomed after leaving the University.

## *IN THE WHIRLWIND OF WAR. FACED WITH A NEW WORLD*

The "foreign" period of my life ended in the summer of 1940. Estonia became a Soviet Republic. I was completely confused. As a Russian, I rejoiced. I ceased to be a man "outside his home on earth." As a priest I heard from other church-

men (even from my confessor and teacher): "Prepare yourself for persecutions and ordeal: the Government is godless and you will not be considered a human being!"

At the same time, apart from religious feelings it was my great desire immediately to express my social and political credo, which had formed during the years of missionary work. And I plunged with all my heart into writing a play, in which I tried to express my feelings. I even took it to the art director of a theatre company which had just arrived in Tallin. Alas! The director turned out to be one of those overly cautious persons and did not even want to read my play. Who knows, had it been my luck to approach some other person, the whole process of my spiritual transformation and revival might have taken an entirely different course. How much tact and understanding may mean! Even today sensitive or psychologically predisposed people turn sometimes to the priests because the latter know how to deal with them taking into consideration the needs of the moment and showing consideration for their feelings. As far as the public and their representatives are concerned, they often go no further than one official conversation or a few meetings with the person. On the other hand, how much goodness concern, sympathy and individual work can bring if displayed with open heart and warm frankness. I believe that now atheists who work directly with people have come to realize that this attitude should be the foundation of the struggle for human beings, for their deliverance from the fetters of superstitions. . .

The Patriotic War of 1941-1945 began. I was

also mobilized. In Tallin I left my wife, who was expecting a baby, and my three-year old daughter.

I served in the army for a year, then worked three years as a priest in Perm in the Urals. At that time I knew my place in life. There was so much grief round me. I tried to console people, support them, help them to recover and withstand their trials, and called on them to strengthen the country's defence. Those days of sorrow showed me that misfortune and suffering, uncertainty and fear of the forces outside man's control strengthen religion and nourish it. I comforted them, wishing with all my heart for a time when there would be no widows' grief and orphans' tears. Together with my parish I received three messages of gratitude from the Soviet Army Supreme Command for raising money for the needs of the defence. I felt as one with the believers in our common struggle against the enemy and in our desire for victory. I was one with them in their grief and fear—in all that the war had brought about. Later, too, working on my confession I thought about them—good Soviet people—who still suffer from that old grief, and who often turn to God for consolation. I wished with all my heart that they should not walk the path of tears but a path leading to light and wisdom, that they should feel strong and not weak and obedient. I decided to devote all the energy I still had to helping them in it.

At the end of the war I went to liberated Tallin but did not find my family there. Frightened by fascist propaganda, harassed by threats and the false news of my death (as I heard later they had even performed a funeral service for

my soul), my wife, two daughters and her parents had gone to Germany from where they had been taken to the United States. There my wife was persuaded to divorce me as a "Red priest" and remarry.

In 1946, the Ecclesiastical Academy and Seminary were opened in Leningrad. The Church "Minister of Education," Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod Grigory (Chukov) offered me the post of Inspector (Prorector) and Head of the Old Testament Department.

During the years of my work in the Church I had begun to hate routine, narrowmindedness and stupidity of the priestly caste. It was my dream that Christianity, in the worthiness of which I still believed, should be represented on earth by Christians fully as worthy. It was with this feeling, this ideal, that I entered the ecclesiastical schools. I wanted to see future church workers well-educated, with lofty ideals, and far from superstitious fanaticism. Not realizing the naivety and utter hopelessness of my dream I tried to create conditions for the versatile development of the future priests. I made it possible for them to go to theatres; motion pictures were regularly shown at the Academy; genuinely artistic paintings were purchased; the reading of fiction was encouraged; lectures on political and general subjects and evenings of questions and answers were arranged.

When trying to evoke in my students the thirst for knowledge I hoped it would stimulate their own thinking and broaden their outlook, that they would search (as I was still doing myself) for ways of scientifically proving the lofty truths of religion, in which I continued to believe.



But soon I came to see that all my efforts were in vain, that my ideals could not be realized.

The first consequence of my activities was serious trouble which forced me to abandon the post of Inspector of the Seminary and the Academy. I was reproached for following too secular a line and giving little time to vespers and fasts.

The Patriarch himself said in his speech in the church of the Leningrad Ecclesiastical Academy on December 6, 1949: "Woe to the shepherd who not only seeks worldly recreation himself but also drags his family onto the path of worldly temptations. The feat of the shepherd should consist in alienating himself from the delights of the world, and if he is not free from worldly temptations, it shows there is actually no pastoral spirit in him.

"Here in the ecclesiastical school, too, everything should be directed to bringing up a real, God-loving and reverent shepherd. For that reason when we hear that attempts to introduce worldly customs are sometimes made in the ecclesiastical schools, we do not approve of it because all this gradually distracts those preparing themselves for pastoral services from the path and the objective to which they must strive..."

Such was the Church's answer to my efforts to bring up people with a broad outlook and education.

It was clear from this speech and other instructions which I began to receive that the Church leadership actually wanted its pupils to stay within the limits of the books of the Fathers and together with the "Fathers of the Church" remain on the cultural and scientific level of the first eight centuries of our era. Not wishing to

betray the ideals of the "shepherd" that were still alive in me and in which I still believed, I resigned from the post of Inspector.

Much later, continuing to watch the life of ecclesiastical students and pupils, I realized how difficult for them was to follow my call. It is for good reason that the teachers in the academies and seminaries and almost all the priests are so afraid of an interest in science, of a striving for light, and of a broad outlook among ecclesiastical students. It is for good reason that they become so incensed if their students read secular books, science fiction and atheistic periodicals, that they are opposed to them going to the cinemas and theatres.<sup>1</sup>

To draw the blinkers over a person's eyes, and shut him off from life with the catechism and ikonostasis, dim his consciousness with the incense smoke of scholastics, kill in his soul the most human instinct—"I want to know everything!"—such is their ideal of the spiritual "shepherd" and worthy "servant of God."

What kept me going under that emotional strain and the burden of apprehensions, was the possibility of working in the Old Testament Department. The break of ten years (1936-1946) in my systematic study of the Bible, caused by

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<sup>1</sup> As far as secular literature is concerned, today there is a special list of recommended literature at the Leningrad ecclesiastical schools, and this literature is very specific. Students are allowed to go to the theatre only two or three times a year, mainly to see such performances as "Ivan Susanin," "Boris Godunov," "Tsar Fyodor Ioannovich," "The Queen of Spades" and "The Insulted and Injured." Modern plays are not even mentioned. For clergymen history stopped long ago.

fascism and the war, urged me to make good the loss of time and catch up with the day. I lost myself completely in the libraries, and for the first time in my life found myself face to face with Marxist-Leninist historical science, with the world of books from which I had been separated in Estonia by a real and ideological boundary. Besides that I was soon stunned by the blast of the Kumran finds—a whole world of discoveries which shook men's minds and ushered in a new epoch in bibliological studies and in the history of the Ancient East.

Before my very eyes the thesis of Our Lord, the son of God, Jesus Christ himself, collapsed: "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law. . ." It turned out that the Law (Torah) had not existed in those times (at the break of the new era) in a single, once divinely revealed text, but in a number of fluid versions.

The very image of the historical Christ ceased to be exclusive and divine but turned out to be a summary of myths round historical memoirs about a Kumran sectarian, a "teacher of justice" (who taught at least one century before the "Christ of the Gospels"). The concrete historical part of that person and the significance of the legend for history had been estimated before and were still being estimated.

The laws of historical materialism made it possible to comprehend many details in the Bible which before seemed incomprehensible and mysterious. In short, I began to see everything in an entirely new light.

Do not think that this cascade of discoveries dawning on me and my faith brought me much

joy. On the contrary, I was frightened. I was stupefied for there still lived in my consciousness the firm belief that "a path without Our Lord leads nowhere." I began to feel like a living being from whom the skeleton was being extracted. It seemed to me that I would "change" and collapse in a heap of ashes within myself.

How I fought for my old and dear world! How I broke into more knowledge! And should I find an article or a report on new excavations whose finds proved one or another point in the Bible I told my students about it with joy and pride for my subject. But then a more profound analysis would turn whole books of the Bible into ashes with all their "divine inspiration." More and more often, torn in anguish, I would say to my students: "This is what theology says on this text, but science cites the following information and views. You are intelligent beings and can judge for yourselves!"

I almost called on the future "shepherds" to step on that ice which was breaking under my feet. But I did not do it for cruelty. I did not want them to find themselves in a predicament similar to my own—so that after decades expended on a dream seen in religion, they should suddenly realize that life had swept past them taking along all their dreams, strivings and aspirations. I perceived only too clearly the intolerable burden of a disintegrated consciousness, myself resisting the temptation of suicide only because of the thought of my near ones.

More and more often I was choked by bitter remorse for my futile life. I was approaching the merciless brink of 50 years of my life. I knew that after 50, life would begin its path of decline

whether I wanted it or not. And when the decline had begun how awful it was to know that the mountain you had been struggling to scale all that time was only a soap bubble, a mirage which had once fascinated you and which was now melting. I could have done so many things, I was capable and not devoid of talent, I had not been slighted when it came to brains, yet I had traded reality for dreams, calling the dreams reality and eternity.

The time came when even the prophecies and the books of the prophets, in which I used to see the everlasting citadel of revelation, began to fail me in the Holy Scriptures. Daniel was the first to collapse, he who had related the historical events of the II century BC in the form of prophecy about the future of mankind and allegedly announced it to the world in the VI century BC. Isaiah fell apart, having lost all his divinity, and Jeremiah's politics predominated over his faith. And finally, at the excavations of the Urartu fortress of Taishebaini on the hill of Karmir-Blur near Yerevan, over a point of a Scythian arrow, I said my last prayer for Ezekiel's great visions of the coming invasions of Gog and Magog.

Despite the fact that between 1955 and 1956 I had acted as learned editor of the last Patriarchal edition of the Russian Bible and that later, in 1956, I had to present the views of the Russian Orthodox Church on the "word of God" at the dispute with the Anglicans, it was my revision of the Bible from the standpoint of modern science, that completely shattered my theological platform and broke to pieces my former religious convictions.

True, I could have tried to create some new

and more refined version for myself, as many of my colleagues in theology and pastoral work had done. I could have sacrificed the Bible and history, theology and the canons of the Church and convinced myself that gone was the beautiful tinsel of the ages of human gropings, but what remained was the Human Spirit and the Spirit of the Universe which had born it, a spirit which had discarded its childish attire, which in the times of human naivety used to look down upon people through the eyes of shamans and idols, who spoke through the lips of Buddhas, Christs and Mahommeds, who had worn robes cut to worldly patterns; who had been depicted in the writings of holy fathers and teachers of the Church, philosophically refined in modern theology, abstracted in the doctrines of Kant, Hegel and Co., the Spirit which, nevertheless, had always remained the supreme Substance above the Essence, Reason above the Maind, Self-Perception above those perceiving. In my fear of remaining without God and a support, I could have removed the one who had not been and who was not, and who did not exist, and tried to hypnotize myself into believing that science dealt with real things and could not rise as high as this God. I could have, and yet I could not.

I was too much a historian to reconvince and force myself to forget the entire evolution of the human race and the evolution of real and distorted conceptions of the external world. I could not ignore my knowledge of God, the image of whom had grown and became more subtle with the growth of human knowledge. I could not stop at the final result, crucial for religion, the result of religion's placing the idea of God in the sphere

of the imperceptible, because for me that last screen before emptiness had always been a final modification and inevitability from which the religious belief had once sprung up in people.

What I could accept as a way out during the years of the first student doubts could no longer serve as a fig leaf on the consciousness of a mature person, who had found himself on the ruins of his former beliefs.

Another factor that influenced my consciousness was the reality of that time—the ordeal of the war multiplied by my own share in it; the cruel injustice of the cold war in which humanity thirsty for peace had been involved under the disguise of the defence of Christian culture.

The high morality and humanism of the principles of the unreligious world now surrounding me had had their effect. I saw that even the believers, inspired by fanatics and “shepherds,” having met evil and decay in their own church environment were not afraid to write to Soviet papers, that they were sure that though unreligious, the Government and the press represented justice. These people did not even hesitate about writing because they knew it was worth while to write, that it was necessary, that it would help.

Everything which before had taken the shape of subconscious nostalgia, which had driven me in the direction of the Soviet Union, became definite, understandable and justified, now that I was actually there.

Such was the situation when I realized that the time had come to do away with the split in my ideological make-up, which actually, I had already done in my soul, but which was preserved on the surface by the force of routine.

This realization did not come unexpectedly and in one hour, and not as a result of a chance pretext.

One of the remaining and the strongest anchors that kept me tied onto religion was the doctrine of religion promoting morality and being the source of some abstract "morality in itself."

Serious study of dialectical and historical materialism, which I had finally approached, had opened my eyes and showed me that there could be no morality in itself, but that society forms its ideas of good and evil at each stage of its development. It became clear that religious morality, in my case Christian morality, was nothing but a version of morality of the slave-owner society, only embellished and disguised to satisfy certain classes. It had long since been replaced by new standards corresponding to the higher stage of social development which the human race was entering.

For a long time I had been still deceiving myself with the hope of being useful to the young people in the seminaries by calling on them to strive for broad knowledge, to study the treasures of world culture, and by making them think harder about what the truth was. Since during those last few years Sunday lectures on general subjects were arranged for the students and each Professor and associate Professor had to read a lecture twice a year, I devoted mine to the great Russian and foreign artists. I thought I would be able to be useful by bringing up within the Church (since there was still a Church and believers) churchmen, who even if they should speak of faith, would at least preach no wild superstitions and fanaticism, would not try to stop his-



tory and human progress. True, no fanatic can stop history, but I thought, he could bring about unnecessary afflictions, raise additional obstacles along the path of mental growth and development of individuals who still believed.

I did not realize at once that it was a mistake to continue working in the Academy after I had become convinced of the illusiveness of religion itself. I saw that behind the backs of those who tried to be what I wanted them to be swarmed thousands of drones. And my efforts to be the carrier and propagator of advanced science and culture only played into the hands of the preachers of darkness and backwardness, the general trend of the educative process at the ecclesiastical schools being reactionary.

I came to realize that my efforts only retarded the emergence of healthy doubts in the minds of the more capable students. Seeing in me a well-educated person, who was not running away from science, not wallowing in scholastics yet remained in the Church, they were becoming convinced that the two poles—progress and science, on the one hand, and conservatism and stagnation in thought, the support of religious illusions and superstitions, on the other—were compatible.

I noticed with horror that the good lads who sometimes entered the seminaries with primitive beliefs soon began to draw theological blinkers over their eyes and minds, to consider every dream a "revelation" and see a "miracle" and "aid from above" in every chance coincidence. My colleagues, educators of the future "shepherds," meanwhile, were doing their best to nurse and support the terrible spiritual complexes of neurasthenia, auto-suggestion and fanaticism.

It jarred me when the learned council of the Academy seriously discussed theses like N. Mironov's thesis on "evil spirits." It said, among other things, that today, too, Satan made his appearance before people but without the horns and the hooves, in the image of a handsome, naked man with bronze skin.

Moreover, I did not like the idea of being a saboteur, undermining religion from inside, on the quiet. It was becoming more and more difficult for me to continue teaching. It was still more difficult when inquisitive students showered me with questions. I could not speak the whole truth and was often compelled to resort to the language of Aesop, to hints and half-truths. And I wanted to unburden my soul so much!

I was realizing with ever greater clarity that only a complete break with religion could reconcile me with my conscience and give me the right to consider myself an honest person. I also thought: "You have taught them openly, preached and wrote openly. And you want to quit secretly? It's dishonest. For if a thief steals something and then confesses and asks for pardon, without returning the stolen thing, his remorse is not worth a farthing! The same with you. You must find the courage to tell people openly that what you preached by word and deed now seems faulty to you. You remember what Taras Bulba said to his son: 'I begot you—and I will kill you!' In these words Gogol expressed his ideal of an honest fighter. Of course it is very difficult to do it but was it not you who always taught others: 'Be active! Sleep is stagnation, death!'

"Now show them that you yourself follow the rules you preached."

It was so hard those days to teach them one thing and think something entirely different, that I was ready to face any storm only to recover my peace of mind. It was the 14th year of my work as Professor at the Leningrad ecclesiastical schools. And I made up my mind.

I spent a few days thinking over my "Letter to the Editor" and a message to the Rector, the learned council, students, pupils and employees of the Leningrad Ecclesiastical Academy and Seminary. In my message I wrote:

"I hereby declare to all with whom I worked and whom I taught for over 13 years, that being of sound mind and in full possession of my faculties I consciously leave the Leningrad ecclesiastical schools, the Orthodox Church, Christianity and religion in general.

"It is not my hurt feelings or any personal considerations that have led me to this decision. No, I was well respected and loved by you.

"I am leaving for reasons exclusively ideological and scientific, not influenced by the moment but as a result of years of quest, meditations and scientific check-ups of every point.

"While critically studying the Bible I came to the conclusion, and I can prove it scientifically, that the religion of the ancient Jews, as well as the Christian religion stemming from it, cannot be accepted as divinely inspired and exclusive. It developed under the same laws, went through the same stages as all the other religions of the world; it is related to them and is a natural result of the development of the human race throughout its history.

"While studying the history of religions, I came to realize that any religion which exists now

or existed in the past is only a distorted projection 'in heaven' of real relations of human beings with nature and among themselves, a reflection of clashes between classes and of class ideology. It always contains numerous superstitions born of human conscience at preceding stages of development, in the course of the struggle between and replacement of different social and economic formations, in the course of the development of productive forces and the social systems depending on them.

"My research showed me that religion played a positive role at some stages of the development of human society, when it constituted and ideological reflection of the new, more progressive formation which was replacing the old, when it preached and realized the ideas of that new and more progressive formation. But what was useful and progressive at one stage could not remain so at the next stage. It would be absurd not to use the tractor today only because in ancient times the invention of the wooden plough constituted progress in agriculture and was useful to humanity in replacing the mattock and the sharpened stick. Yet, this is exactly what is happening in religion: some monasteries played a positive part in old Russia and now they are still considered progressive and indispensable. Are not all religious institutions in general organizations which tirelessly proclaim their right to exist because of their former actual and imaginary services?"

"My study of Marxist philosophy and the historical development of society has shown what unjustified expenditure of human energy and ability the serving of religion involves, serving for

the sake of the preservation of illusions and distorted ideas about the world and its essence. And I have come to feel an imperative need to give all my strength and knowledge to real and creative work, even if only a small one."

My message ended with an appeal to my former colleagues and also to my students:

"And now I address you, my students. Forgive me that it has taken me such a long time to do what I am doing now. Take a look at yourselves, analyse your doubts, which I know you have, and you will understand how difficult it is to revise views and make a cardinal turn in such a sphere as ideology. Be more inquisitive and bolder, do not be afraid of raising a question, and, I believe, we will see each other again, and not as opponents but as colleagues and once more friends. But remember, I am not going to persuade or tempt you. Think for yourselves! A person should decide such things for himself—one has only to indicate the real paths which should be taken. But he must make the choice himself. Only himself! No, I am not tempting you, I simply love you. With this I am winding up, good-bye."

In the evening of December 2, 1959, I sent my letter to *Pravda*. It was published on December 6. On the same day I took my message to the Rector of the Academy. We parted simply and peacefully: shook hands and each expressed respect for the other. In the evening Associate Professor G. P. Miroljubov brought me a letter, while I was out, asking me not to tempt the "small ones" by my actions.

It seems to me that what I said in my confes-

sion is enough to understand that I could not have complied with that request.

Nearly ten years have passed since those stormy days.

Even now postmen bring letters to me and during my trips to different parts of the Soviet Union I still see the tense and doubting faces of our grannies, the inquiring looks of middle-aged people, the wondering, searching eyes of the young.

I, man among men, *homo sapiens*, declare as the popes used to declare *urbi et orbi*, the right and obligation of every one to be a human being above all, always and in everything; not to look for props on the side; to feel himself, in spite of his short individual existence, which can be likened to a spark in the night, to feel himself, I say, mingled in the human sea of sparks. For it is of the sparks of distant stars that the Milky Way is made, and of our sparks—the creative flame of human progress. I have no joy outside the joy of humanity, and there can be no joy of humanity when the units making it up are suffering.

Religion, "God's word" declares: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" "You and your God is what is most important in life and the rest is 'vanity of vanities—all is vanity'."

But I shall find no peace of mind as long as I hear moans in the jungles of South Vietnam, as long as the ashes of Maidanek and Oswiecim are crying out for vengeance, as long as the sinister crosses are burning in Alabama. In the world of men, a man, if he is a man, cannot be indifferent. Here is where the essence and justice

of humanism is rooted. Humanism outside man and people is an empty egg-shell. I, one who only thought for decades that he was a man, today know it finally. Today and tomorrow and till my last day.





*NIKOLAI AMOSOV*

**MEDITATION  
AND THE  
HEART**

**(From a Surgeon's  
Notes)**



● The laboratory is my love, my last love. I've had many interests in my life: poetry, women, surgery, motor cars, my granddaughter. Now, as I come to the end of my life, I desire only one thing—to understand what man is. Humanity. To understand what I and other people, old and young, have to do in our age, when everything is moving forward at such a furious pace. Humanity seems to be a fantastic titan, soaring to the skies, but with his legs in fetters. He is ready to fall, to disappear, to burn up. It could happen now, this very minute. As if in a terrible nightmare I want to cry out, to stop someone. But whom? And how?

The laboratory has simpler aims, however—to keep patients from dying too often. For the present, only that.

...The new day begins as usual. . . The morning conference.

There are 145 patients in our clinic. One very serious case on the third floor. . .

I repeat to my colleagues: we have our own code in this clinic. A doctor works as much as the patient's condition requires. The day starts at nine sharp and ends when everything necessary has been done. If one of us is not suited for the work here, he must leave of his own accord, without interference from the administration or the trade union. The question of a colleague's efficiency is decided by me. Since to err is only human, I always consult my senior assistants.

A great deal has happened since our group of doctors and nurses began working together. We have made considerable progress. ("We"—is the whole clinic.) Outwardly, it is to be seen in the number and delicacy of operations, but behind that lies greater knowledge, greater understanding of the nature of diseases.

Our doctors have also changed. Semyon is to do a repeat operation on Botallo's duct, which only I was able to undertake in those days. Maria Vasilyevna and Petro are operating regularly with artificial blood circulation. Petro is now a Doctor of Science. Besides that, ten Masters of Science are sitting in front of me. I really don't see that they have become much wiser, but I suppose if you take a detached view and read their papers it all looks quite impressive.

We still haven't perfected our AIK (apparatus for artificial blood circulation), but it works quite satisfactory. We can disconnect the heart for two or three hours and haemolysis stays within permissible limits. That's not bad but it could be better, and the engineers are working on new models. We can use it as an auxiliary apparatus for many hours. And there are other advances.

Yes, we have added to our fame, and our clinic is envied. People talk about the "miracles" we perform. Everyone sees the outer side of our work but very few know what it all costs us. I would willingly give up my fame and my degrees if only patients did not die. Honestly.

Now they will report on Sasha. Of course, I have already discussed the operation with my senior assistants many times, but routine must be observed—all the doctors must be informed, the more so since they all know and like him.

Vasya's report is short and dry. But in my mind the whole story is in colour and full of tormenting doubts.

"Patient, Alexander Popovsky, thirty-two, mathematician, Doctor of Science; was admitted to the clinic four months ago with diagnosis of mitral insufficiency. During the past two years has been under treatment in our clinic three times and several times in other hospitals. General condition—moderately serious. Pulse 110; fluttering arrhythmia."

The data of numerous analyses and examinations then follow. Diagnosis: mitral insufficiency with calcification of the cusps. Impairment of circulation. Pronounced secondary changes in the liver.

...I myself report on the plan of the operation. Opening of left pleural cavity, then pericardium. Artificial blood circulation. Hypothermia. Incision of the left auricle. Exploration of the valve. If the cusps are not too greatly changed, attempt to repair, that is, ligation of the valve ring. If the effect is doubtful, implantation of artificial valve. This will eliminate the insufficiency and immediately facilitate the work of the heart. It should, anyway—it has been shown in experiments and in two patients.

I'll go to my office and sit down. I've got to think. I've got to collect myself. I want to smoke terribly, but I mustn't. I try not to before delicate operations, because it dulls the brain and my hands shake.

What shall I do while they're getting things ready—it will probably take them another hour. It's always that way—hunting for the sister, and first one doctor, then the other, finding a trolley,

making the injections. I can't get any order into our work. It's hopeless. Evidently, I don't know how. I've heard there are clinics where operations begin exactly at nine. I envy them.

I feel awful. The way one feels in wartime before a crucial battle.

The first time I saw Sasha was in the X-ray room where out-patients were being examined. Quite a number of people. One of them, a young man sent to us with a diagnosis of mitral stenosis. My categorical statement:

"No stenosis at all but third degree insufficiency."

I listened to Sasha's heart and examined him. There was still some fat on his belly then. Not the way it is now—only his hard liver protrudes. His face was so intelligent and pleasant. I told him about the operation we'd thought up. What for? Maybe I felt like boasting. He grew excited, not realizing that it was all nonsense. I myself didn't, for that matter. The more we talked the more we liked the idea. First, it was talk about medicine in general. That it wasn't worth much—no theory, too inaccurate. Then we discussed the diagnostic machine. There had been reports about one in the papers and we were interested. He offered his services as a mathematician. I remember thinking: "He's so intelligent and such a pleasant chap, but he will feel worse and worse. It will be such a pity. And we won't be able to help. Call it off? But maybe it will be all right."

Here you are. If you had called it off then, you wouldn't have been in such a wretched state now.

It would be a good thing to have one of those machines now. I'll need one especially today for

automatic control of AIK. Those girl-operators make mistakes sometimes. It will be a very difficult operation.

Sasha didn't take up diagnostic machines seriously, but went over to psychology. It's a pity. Perhaps, something would have come of it.

My thoughts of Sasha are all mixed up with anguish. What will happen today? AIK will be operating a long time. An hour and a half maybe. Will they be able to keep all the blood characteristics at a constant level? If hypochsia sets in, that will be the end. He won't survive that.

What an interesting person he is! I fell in love with him after several meetings. It's a pity that our relationship was spoiled and we couldn't return to the past. The former warmth is gone. Did he ever feel the same as I did? I don't know.

He opened a new world for me. Quantitative relations in everything. "The informational model of the world." I can't explain it in words. I'm too weak in this: biology, art and the social sciences—are all governed by the law of processing information. Don't try to make it clearer. It's he who knows how to put everything in order, find the possible quantitative principles—sometimes exact and sometimes only probable.

And his soul? That I don't know. I am often mistaken in my judgement of people. Sasha: a friendly smile, gentle manner, flawless tact, politeness. Complete absence of vanity. Never finds fault with anybody, only sometimes makes a subtle hint. I now think that there must be tremendous calm underneath it all. Is it wisdom or emotional poverty? Were we friends? For my part we were, but what about him? We met once a

week. As a doctor I could see that he was getting worse. Short breath. Exhaustion. He often had to lie down during our conversations, after begging a thousand pardons, which irritated me. There was no simplicity in him. I could never tell whether it was because of his upbringing or his innate coldness? I always felt a little hurt. Let's forget about it—it's too late to judge him. He's ascending his Golgotha. Sounds pompous.

They've probably taken him in already: 10:30, it's about time. He smiled nicely today. I think he doesn't realize how dangerous it is. What is going to happen in the next few hours? What if he dies?

Will it be like that time after the operation I had mentioned when we met in the X-ray room? I was sure I'd cope with it. Silly confidence! The patient died a few days later from heart weakness. I'd failed to mend his valve. "It's the last time. I'll never operate again. Let them die without my help. . ."

Sasha's spirit fell then. Soon decompensation appeared and we had to admit him to our clinic. Even in bed he wrote something all the time. "I'll not live much longer and I must think about some philosophical and psychological problems. Even if only to make them clear to myself—there won't be any time left to explain them to others. . ." He'd read all about the Yoga and telephathy and he read the Bible. He didn't become a mystic, though. "There's nothing—it's all a machine!"—and laughed.

A machine. . . In my mind I've never believed in God. Yet, it's a little disquieting when you hear them boast about simulating human feelings, consciousness, will—in machines. I'd like to believe



that those will be different feelings. Not real. But Sasha is absolutely certain: they will be real, human feelings.

I remember the wonderful feeling of happiness after my first successful operation with AIK. Will the machine be able to feel that way? I don't know. Of course I trust him very much, but I suppose I'm too old to worship new gods. Conventional materialism with its "qualitative differences" and "irreducibility" of the psychological to the physical is quite enough for me. As for cybernetics, I can do perfectly well with the diagnostic machines and automatic devices to control artificial blood circulation. They don't need any feelings.

Then there's conscience. Will the machine have this, too?

I'll fight like a wild beast today. I won't miss anything. Or I'll have to give up. . .

Sasha. What a pitiful sight he was in the reception room! Pale face, swollen legs, enormous liver. The beginning of the end.

"I've come again, Mikhail Ivanovich. Will you keep me going some more?"

"What are you talking about, Sasha? Everything'll be all right. You'll stay here about a month and then go back to work."

"No, not this time. I'm officially an invalid now and in general. . . I need another two months. I must still write something. . ."

We put him in a separate ward. My people are good, after all. Know what to do better than the therapists. Maria Vasilyevna, particularly. She's only a sister, yet it would be fine if all the doctors were like her.

Only a week had passed when Sasha began

to talk me into this operation. "Sew a new valve in!" That's simple! But the idea got around the clinic. After a while I got used to it myself.

I can almost see them wheeling him in now. That second dose should have had its effect by now. We have "ataractics" now to kill fear and suppress emotion.

He knows about his condition. He knows me. My hands are shaking... He knows there are a lot of indefinite factors. I feel a little ashamed for myself and for my medicine.

We've talked a lot lately, since he began to feel a little better. He even came to my office. Sat in that armchair (they're so comfortable, these low modern armchairs!).

I was so anxious to understand him. His speech is very precise, a little sketchy, maybe.

"I've no choice. I've read everything. Know everything. Besides, I'm tired of it all. I can't start on anything big now: too little time left. It's like living at an airport—take off postponed but will definitely take place. Of course I continue to think, but its more due to inertia, only for myself.

"Besides I've completed one stage—perceived the general construction principles of the programmes of action of a cell, man and society. I've just thought it all out while staying here. Now there's a lot of arguing and fighting to do. A lot of work for a whole team. We'll begin. I live through the operation."

And another time:

"Make me a new valve and I will describe all human behaviour by means of differential equations!"

Still I couldn't see his soul. Is it his comp

sure or just absence of soul? Is he a Yoga-Raja ("attainment through knowledge"), or simply a man obsessed by his scientific hypotheses?

"Sew it in, I'll die anyway. What's the difference, with or without a new valve, a month earlier or a month later?"

Really, was there a difference? If he were a person to relish life, he might treasure each day of it, might want to live till spring, to smell the poplars once more. . .

But it's all the same to him. And what about me? What will I have to say to myself if he dies? Without the operation he will live another year. But it will only be slow death: no sleep, short breath, oedemas. Then it will be too late for him to decide his fate, while now he still can. But no, he can't decide by himself. Only with me. This is not an ordinary operation when you can go to another surgeon if the first one refuses you.

It seems I'm already looking for excuses. It's no good. Death is death and I'll be the one to blame.

Why do I have to mull it over and over again? It's too late now. He's already in the operating room. Dima is injecting the thiopental and Sasha's falling asleep. What were his last thoughts? No one will know.

I had resisted honestly: "Let's wait some more, make sure that Sima's valve has imbedded well and have another try."

"I'll be the next one."

"No, we must first take a patient in a better condition. Your liver is bad. It'll take time to get it in shape."

And thinking to myself: "At least three or four operations more!"

But who will these "three or four" be?

A patient in a serious condition always insists: operate. Ready to take any risk. But I know only too well that it is impossible to operate on Sasha now: there's an 80 per cent risk. As for Sima, I was simply lucky. But if one dies, and then another how will I be able to risk the third time? Then go and try to prove that death was caused by the patient's serious condition. I won't be able to prove it even to myself.

Two months have passed since I operated on Sima. The valve has undoubtedly been incorporated. I have to do some more of these operations. Plenty of patients. I have only to pick them and set the date. This is how it probably seems to an observer. Take an easier case, with definite heart insufficiency, but still without decompensation.

It's not easy at all. You can't go and tell them: "See, we have a fine new valve; we'll sew it into your heart and you'll live to old age." Most of them will believe and agree. And if there's failure? What will the relatives say?

"But, Professor, you told us. . ."

All the other patients will hear about it. There'll be no more trust.

And it's not only that: I'm simply ashamed to lie and I can't do as I please with somebody else's life. I do it all the time, but I can't get used to it.

How I want a smoke!

What's in his notebook, I wonder?

In my thoughts I have to say goodbye to him here in the office. It won't be him in the operat-

ing room. It will be only a body which may become a corpse. Something is holding me back even from opening his notebook. I'll be able to do it only after the operation. I'll have the right to then. That is, if he lives through it. Then he'll be as dear to me as my own son. If he dies, he has named me his executor.

How naked is the cruelty of life in our profession! The professor starts speaking in maxims. Disgusting, but you can't help doing it sometimes.

Here they come! Knocking.

"Yes!"

"Mikhail Ivanovich, time to wash up!"

That's all. No feelings left. They are slipping somewhere far back in my consciousness.

I change into my gown. Wipe my glasses.

Today I operate in the small operating room. It is equipped for AIK. Besides, there's a skylight for spectators. That's good because it doesn't interfere, but bad because it's too accessible. An operation is not a theatrical performance.

I glance in from the corridor. He is lying on his side, covered with sheets. It's no longer Sasha but an abstract patient. I don't see anything familiar. I won't look at his face under the sheets. It's probably strange, too.

Everything seems to be in order. The anaesthetists—Dima and his assistant, Lyonya—are standing quietly by. Dima is rhythmically compressing the breathing bag of the anaesthetic apparatus. Blood is slowly dripping into the patient's vein. Quiet blood. Maria Vasilyevna is preparing the operative field. Today she is simply Masha or Marya, depending on the circumstances. The assistants are in their places. The AIK oper-

ators are at their posts by the apparatus. Only Marina, the sister, is for some reason red in the face. They've probably had a little tiff. I won't go into it. Let them thrash it out themselves. It is clean everywhere. The basins are still empty. The only blood is that in the ampule of the dropper. What a pleasant scene. If it would only stay like that!

I scrub up as usual, in silence and with a blank mind. I simply rub my hands with the brush. Everything has been thought out—there's nothing I can add. I'm in a state of special calmness.

I enter the operating room. The incision has already been made, and bleeding points are being cauterized by diathermy.

Someone puts me into my surgical gown and ties on the mask. It is rather crowded—four surgeons and a sister, all round the patient's chest.

“Valves?”

A nod—no need for words.

The muscles are cut through and I open the pleural cavity. See that? Unpleasant surprises are beginning. The lung has adhered to the thoracic wall. This is maddening: it takes time to separate the adhesions properly and there's not a minute to spare. And they may bleed. Well, there's nothing I can do about it. Keep cool.

The pericardium is opened and the heart exposed. It frightens me. We had seen it was large in the X-ray films, but now when exposed... Ugh! The left auricle is like a bag and the ventricle is huge and pulsating rapidly. When it contracts, only half the blood enters the aorta—the rest flows back into the auricle through the defective valve.

Exploration. That means I insert my finger into the heart through an incision in the auricle. I feel the cusps of the valve: they are coarse and inflexible, and rough from calcification. A strong stream of blood beats against the tip of my finger with every contraction of the ventricle.

Actually, that is what I had expected. I concentrate. Shall I implant the artificial valve at once or try to repair? Putting in a valve is quicker and Sasha won't die during the operation—or he shouldn't. But afterwards? There are pronounced changes in the heart and conditions for healing are bad. And how long will it serve him? But if plastic surgery is unsuccessful, a valve must be implanted anyway, which means keeping the machine running another hour—and with it haemolysis and its effects on liver and kidneys.

Like any surgeon, I don't want Sasha to die right here on the table or soon afterwards. If he dies later—after several months or years—it will not be so painful.

No, that won't do. Think it over calmly.

I put my finger into the heart again. For a split second the thought flashes into my mind: how simple it has become to enter the heart. Remember how you trembled the first time? Eight years ago I was younger. Today I wouldn't have started doing such operations.

I feel and probe and try to picture what the valve is like. I must decide now, because when I open the heart, it won't be contracting and I won't be able to see the movements of the valve.

I have no thoughts of Sasha. I don't see his smile nor hear his voice. I don't feel that this is a live person. It's all in my subconscious. In my

upper consciousness there is only intense thinking—how to do it better.

I'll have to put in a new valve—but I'll make the final decision when I see. . .

I glance up at the skylight. Our doctors and nurses are sitting in a circle, and there are even some strangers. I don't like it. As though we were gladiators: us against Death. Don't look. None of that matters.

“Connect the machine!”

One tube from AIK is inserted into the right ventricle and blood from the heart flows through it to the oxygenator—the artificial lung. Then the pump (the artificial heart) drives it through another tube to the femoral artery. On the way it goes through a heat exchanger. This at first cools the blood in order to bring on hypothermia, and at the end of the operation warms it up again.

The connecting technique has been worked out well but takes time. Everything's going fine. The tube has been inserted into the heart without spilling a drop of blood. That's pleasant. Shows I know how. Don't boast, Professor, when about to come to grips with the enemy. Shame, Professor! Sasha would never say anything so pompous. Well, you aren't as refined.

“Everything ready?”

“Yes.”

“Start her up!”

The motor still makes too much noise, but it's bearable—not like our first machine.

The operators check up venous pressure, oxygenator, tubes, pump capacity.

“Everything normal!”

“Start cooling.”



I must insert a tube into the left ventricle, in order to pump out the blood entering from the aorta and, most important, the air when the heart starts functioning again. That's where I made my mistake with Shura.

A scene flashes before my eyes: a ward at night. The artificial respiration apparatus is running smoothly. She is lying there almost dead, no pulse, cold. Only a flicker of light on the electrocardiograph screen shows the infrequent contractions of the heart. The brain has died from embolism and after it, the whole body. I have only to say "Turn off the apparatus!" and in half a minute the heart will stop—forever. It's terrible to say those last words. I shiver as if from a chill.

That's what the tube in the ventricle can mean! It must be well sewn in. That is quite easy because we constantly insert instruments into the ventricle. Four stitches must be inserted round the puncture—what is called a purse-string suture—and when the tube is removed the thread is drawn taut and the hole is closed.

Everything is done and a break follows.

Another ten minutes are needed to cool the patient to the required 22°C. We all wash our hands with mercury dichloride.

Marina is fussing at her table: preparing for the decisive stage. The operators are taking samples for analyses. Dima is checking up on his drugs and asking for something to be brought.

Only we surgeons have nothing to do. The calm before the battle. No thoughts. I simply stand and stare at the heart. It is contracting less and less frequently as the temperature falls.

It is idling because the machine is pumping the blood.

Twenty-three degrees. Fibrillation.

“Let’s start.”

The auricle is cut wide open. There is the valve. The holy of holies! Everything I suspected is confirmed: impossible to repair the valve—or extremely risky, at least.

“We’ll have to resect.”

I hold the flaps with clamps and resect them along the perimeter of the valve opening. It’s a little frightening—I am not used to it yet. Just as when I did my first amputations: the legs were gone forever. In place of the valve, a shapeless aperture into which the new valve must be sewn.

This is where the hard work begins. It’s very difficult to suture: too deep, and there’s no room to handle the instruments. The needle holders won’t hold the needles at all. . . .

I am suturing and swearing for what seems hours. Everything comes to an end at last. The valve is in place—held tight with thirty stitches. That makes it easier and I can look around.

I begin sewing up the heart. The heat exchanger has been switched to warm the blood. The heart is rapidly warming up.

There’s no sense in hurrying with the suturing. It will take twenty minutes for warming up in any case. So I can do everything very neatly and calmly. Peace and silence reign in the operating room once more. The only sounds are those coming from the washroom where the nurses are making a din with the sterilizers.

Now the heart is functioning and contracting well! We’ll warm the blood a bit more and stop

the machine. Success! I am ready to shout with joy.

That lifeless body will again become Sasha, clever, pleasant Sasha.

“Time to remove the drain tube from the ventricle. Masha, you remove the tube while I draw the purse-string tight. Well. . . Let’s have it!”

“Oh, my God! Hold it!”

I don’t know what happened. Either the suture material broke or tore through the muscle. At any rate, the tube has been removed and there is a gaping hole in the heart. When the heart contracted, it shot out a stream of blood a metre high. Only once of course. By the next contraction I have the hole closed tight with the tip of my finger.

Now I have to sew up the hole. Without removing my finger I insert fresh stitches. However, as soon as I draw the ends tight, the material cuts through the muscle and the hole opens wide again. Horror! The hole is bigger, much bigger. The blood spurts out. I jam two fingers into the hole but the blood leaks through just the same.

Peace and composure have gone in a trice. Everything is suddenly sinister and evil.

I am like a man walking across a frozen river on a quiet winter day, when suddenly the ice gives way. The water is closing in on him. He shouts and flounders but the ice cracks under his hands and the black water spreads all around. . . red blood, a lot of it. . .

What shall I do? What shall I do?

“A patch, Marina! A plastic patch! Hurry! And get some good sutures ready on a large

needle. Suction! Suction! It's not drawing. You, there!"

Some choice cursing.

I must patch it up the way a hole is patched in a ship's hull. Only it's very difficult to put on a patch when the heart is beating in my hands and the needle is twisting in the needle-holder.

I don't know how long this goes on. First a small patch. It doesn't hold—blood squirts out from under the edges. Then a larger one on top, almost the size of my palm. A lot of stitches along the edges. The blood is sucked out from the wound by the aspirator and pumped back into the machine. The aspirator is not fast enough sometimes, and some of the blood flows out through the edges of the wound onto my gown and down on the floor. I am on the point of cooling the patient again and stopping the heart. But that would mean certain death.

Finally I succeed. The bleeding stops. Only thin streams are seeping out from under the patch. A few more stitches and all is dry.

All dry. The aspirator has been disconnected. The heart is beating very weakly now—we have not yet made good the loss of blood. Transfusion. It's better now.

I glance around me. They all look exhausted and unhappy. No more joy. Everyone is gripped with the horror of what we just went through. They can't believe that it is all over. And they have good reason. Anything may happen now, and it is frightening. They're really anxious. Don't think you are alone. People are good. G-o-o-d. You must always remember that, otherwise it would be hard to live.

The machine makes less and less noise and

finally stops. We all look intently at the heart. Dima continually checks the pupils and tries to measure the blood pressure. He finally succeeds.

It's nearly over now. All that remains to be done is to insert a few stitches in the pericardium, put a draining tube into the pleural cavity and suture the wound. What is most important is to see that bleeding is stopped. Coagulation is very poor and post-operative haemorrhage is the most frequent complication.

We can't afford to hurry. Another hour goes by. We are all a little stupefied from excitement and fatigue and are only slowly coming to ourselves. The heart is working well! If he woke up now we should rejoice. For a while. Afterwards new complications and new anxieties may arise.

We are inserting the stitches in the skin. Dima's quiet voice breaks in:

"He has opened his eyes."

He says it as if it were the most ordinary thing in the world.

Everyone bends over Sasha's face. Yes, he's alive! His eyes are open. His glance is entirely vacant, but a person with embolism of the brain does not open his eyes. Another load off my shoulders—and off my heart. Of course, there's still the danger of haemorrhage and kidney failure. Haemolysis was a hundred and fifty when the machine was disconnected. That's a lot. Such patients used to die, but now we've learned how to treat them. If the heart holds up, the kidneys will be able to cope with their job—all the haemoglobin in the plasma will be excreted in the urine in six or eight hours.

The complication most to be feared, however,

is haemorrhage. Unfortunately, it often occurs after operations when the machine is kept running for a lengthy period. (Certain vital factors in the blood are destroyed).

“Dima, have a supply of blood ready, so there won’t be any panic tonight. There will have to be at least two litres.”

The operation is over. The wound has been closed and Sasha has been turned over on his back. He has closed his eyes again, but now it is the post-operative sleep. If you pinch him, he moves his hands and legs. There is no paralysis.

It all lasted five and a half hours from the incision to the last stitch. Along with the preparations it took all of six hours.

“Mikhail Ivanovich, may we dismount the machine?”

“No, wrap up the tubes in sterile sheets and wait. Marina, have something sterile handy on the table.”

“This is all dirty, I’d better cover the table again.”

I’m saying all this just in case... Everything should be all right but how many times I’ve had to reopen the pleural cavity to search for some bleeding point because there was blood in the drain.

We are all in the nurses’ room. Taking it easy. Utterly exhausted I have slumped into a chair. I’m so tired I can’t move a finger. I have experienced many bitter and happy minutes in this armchair, after operations. I can’t stop yawning. Oxygen deficiency, as if I myself had been operated on.

As usual, there are not enough chairs and everyone has flopped down wherever he pleased—on

the table, on the window-sill, and even in an open cupboard. We are all smoking with the window open. The air smells of spring.

How pleasant it is when you've finished your work and everything has gone off well! When Sasha himself is lying there alive, with a new valve in his heart and a new life before him.

And it's not just because it is Sasha. Were anybody else in his place we would feel just the same: patients are always so good to look at after serious operations. You put so much heart and labour into each one. . . I don't know how to explain it.

I'm in an unusual frame of mind. A state of animation and great clarity and freedom of thought. Entirely different from what it was before the operation. Then I was weighed down by apprehension. All my thoughts were about the operation and things connected with it. That was also animation, but of a different kind—purposeful and unpleasant. Now everything is clear, fresh and interesting.

What shall I do while I'm waiting? I can't read these boring theses. How tired I am of them! A scientist's entire life is taken up with theses. First, he writes them himself, then he advises others and reviews their theses and listens to them being presented before academic councils.

It seems odd, calling myself a scientist. I don't feel that I am one. I'm a physician, a surgeon. I'm a good doctor but many of those downstairs (in the operating room—*Ed.*) will be better. That thought is to the forefront, but below the surface, another more arrogant one is buzzing: all the same, I've done things others couldn't do. And now this valve. I've written a stack of

scientific papers and several books. And how many theses have gone through my hands... You're a humbug! Just let your thoughts run free, and you soon start thinking that you're somebody—all your papers aren't worth a cent. In a few years nobody will read them—they'll be hopelessly outdated. You can't stop surgical progress. At first we operated on the stomach, then the oesophagus, then the lungs. And now the heart and the valves. My articles and books on surgery of the stomach and the lungs don't interest anyone any more, and my work on the heart will finish up the same way. But the egoist in me says: "I contributed to that progress, nevertheless." Of course I did, even though I wasn't a pioneer. But what difference did it make? Did it even in the tiniest way change the world? Do you really want to change it? Yes, I do and so does everyone else. So that there won't be any more wars and all people will be good.

Only science can change the world. Science in its widest sense: how to split the atom, how to bring up children and adults, too.

Sasha, now, is a scientist. God, it's good he is going to live! Medicine was useful after all. I've learned a great deal from Sasha. My medicine has become much clearer. A framework began to emerge which needed only to be covered with figures. Sasha explained that genuine science begins when it's possible to calculate. I seem to remember that Mendelejev said something like that.

Shall I read Sasha's notebook? It would seem I have a right to now. I suppose it has science in it. Most likely I won't understand anything. Such a pity I don't know mathematics! I feel a



little sick from formulas and I hurry to skip them or to close the book.

Yet, I'm curious to know what Sasha's notebook says. At least to leaf through it.

It's quite thick. The title runs across the whole front page: "Reflections." How cheap! Like a schoolboy. Well, don't be too strict—we all make mistakes. Besides, I'm not entitled to judge. How many silly and mean things I've done in my life... really mean?

I'm leafing the notebook. It's an odd thing. Science is mixed with entries, the same as in a diary. Obviously not for publication.

"It is sad to realize that I am going to die soon. I'll leave behind only these model-articles, this notebook, letters with some lies in them; images in people's memories and photographs in albums—all frozen, motionless. It would be a good thing to leave behind at least a 'working model'..."

I remember all those conversations. But why leave anything behind? An illusion of immortality... I remember one of his other versions. Man disappears as a biological system. But if you consider the supreme system—humanity—there's something left.

Really, humanity is not just a system made up of people. It also includes the product of their activity: models of thoughts—manufactured things, books, paintings, machines. There are also images in people's memories. Man dies and the models continue to live a life of their own, different from that of their author. Sometimes this life benefits society. Yet, it can become harmful later. For these models are dead, frozen. Their life is passive. Sasha's idea is clear now: to make

a working model of the brain so that it will be able to live and change.

The duality of human nature is frightening. On the one hand, man is an animal, like a wolf or a monkey. On the other, he is member of society, an element of a higher system and he belongs to it.

I read some more:

“Human cognition is a collective process. We draw our knowledge of the world in the greater part from models made by our predecessors or contemporaries. This fact greatly increases our modelling possibilities, but not infinitely. A limited collective of people is as powerless to cognize a very complicated system as one man is, because there is no possibility of uniting several modelling systems into one huge system—a colossal brain.”

I feel that Sasha is right from the example furnished by the human body. Dozens of doctors—all specialists in their narrow fields—examine a patient by means of medical devices. They make thousands of analyses and graphs. But it needs another doctor, the most intelligent one, who is capable of synthesizing all this material in order to understand the functioning of the body. There is no such doctor. Our narrow speciality helps us because each specialist produces his model, but we cannot unite them. The size of my modelling installation is too small. For that reason all the data will hang in the air or I'll process it too late. The patient may die. . .

I know, however, Sasha made his last conclusion in such a frightening way only to be able to use his main argument—machines. Here it is:

“Collective cognition cannot overcome a certain limit in modelling complicated systems, since

it cannot create a complicated acting model. Modern technology promises to construct artificial modelling installations with any degree of complexity. Scientists will mount in them their individual models, as they put them in books, but the effect will be entirely different: a book is dead but an electronic model can live. For instance, cell specialists will introduce into the machine their model which is connected with other cells making up an organ. Some physiologists will establish the connections between the liver and the heart, others will model the physiology of the nervous system, still others, the physiology of the endocrine system. As a whole it will constitute the model of an organism able to live. One need only turn on the current and the model will come to life. It will be possible to affect it by a model of a microbe and it will fall ill. In this way, in unusual conditions there will develop the dynamics of interrelations between cells, organs and systems regulating them. That will be the 'working model' of an organism, so complicated that it is beyond the conception of a single human brain.

"In this way, by creating modelling electronic machines, the human genius has taken the first step to overcoming the limit in his cognition. This is the greatest step in mankind's history."

I've already heard this from him—the limits of collective cognition. It is strange—to compare the volume of knowledge of ancient Greece and that of the present time... Incommensurable! Sasha explained it this way: it is the volume of models, accumulated by the whole of humanity. It grows constantly. People learn more and more

facts about the world. The models become more and more precise. Does it mean that there are no limits? It seems there are. With the old means of cognition, that is, when models are incorporated in books, it is impossible to perceive a very complicated system as a whole—simultaneously in detail and in general. Without this there can be no complete understanding, such as is needed for precise control, for instance. Everything has been studied in separate units but there is no whole. This is a vital question for doctors: we're so anxious to have a "working model" of the human body in order to be able to treat patients properly.

Will humanity reach the stage of stagnation? They say it won't. Modelling machines have already been designed. They will become more and more complicated. It will be through them that humanity, not man, will cognize systems of any complexity.

I'm too old to actively promote these exciting ideas. I don't know mathematics. My profession drains me of all my strength and loads my brain to capacity. Yet I look upon these ideas with hope and admiration; and upon such people as Sasha, too: they will put them into practice.

At the same time I feel a little sad. Like a pygmy I stand before the colossus of human knowledge, from which I can nip off only a tiny bit. When I was young I thought I could study everything, that there was no limit. Now this self-confidence amuses me.

... How are things going in the operating room, I wonder? Haven't they brought him back to the ward yet? Of course, not. Only thirty minutes have passed. Shall I go there or read some

more? Dima has a fairly good modelling system . . .

Let's have some more of it: "Behaviour Programmes."

"The cortex of the human brain differs from that of an animal only in that it has a few more storeys . . .

"The models of social behaviour, morals and ethics are developed in man from early childhood. Even if you are hungry you must share your food with you fellow-man, sympathize with him. You must protect a child, even somebody else's child, you must not steal, kill or cheat. This elementary moral code was established in ancient times, even before the appearance of the religions we know today . . .

"Human behaviour depends on the programmes set by the cortex. These programmes do not serve the individual's interests and instincts exclusively but also the interests of a more complicated system—society. Often they contradict each other. The two programmes—the animal programme and the social—can change in the course of their own creative process.

"The creative process is the building of new models on the basis of ready elements. It is possible to set a creative programme even for an electronic machine—it will write poems or music. This programme is inculcated in man among other programmes. He realizes it in application to different models—from designing machines to creating philosophical systems.

"Yet, one must not exaggerate. Social programmes can overwhelm the instincts, but it is not an easy process and often does not take place at all. When the instincts are exposed to a pow-

erful influence, they are capable of breaking through all moral principles inculcated by upbringing. It must be borne in mind that people are different, and the balance between the power of their inborn and acquired programmes is likewise different.

“The main conclusion to be drawn from this is that society must not only ensure proper upbringing—inculcate proper social programmes—but also create conditions under which there can be no overstress on the instincts.”

I quite agree with Sasha. It is not only that there should be no hunger but also that there should be proper matrimonial laws, enough living space, and there's another thing: the “freedom reflex” should not be suppressed too much.

Sasha told me all this. The idea is clear. I can skip the details. I remember the meaning. It is difficult to create such a society.

Now to think from a different angle: passions and their suppression. Hunger. I associate it with Leningrad. Masses of people were able to suppress hunger—one of the strongest instincts—till they died.

Other examples—something quite different. People will sell everything sacred because of women, or liquor, or because of greed for money. Criminals. When I come across such things I wonder: why?

But what about myself? I'm not an ideal either . . .

I must be off. It's almost seven. I'll only smoke another cigarette. What else is there? Some fiction. I'll skip it and lyricism, too. I'll read it later. Here are some more interesting chapters.

"About Happiness." It's small. I'll read it. "The dream of happiness . . ."

The door swings open. A figure in white. Someone shouts:

"His heart's stopped!"

"My God!"

I race through the door and down the steps, a great many steps. Fragments of thoughts. This is the end! Why? What for?

Sasha supine on the table . . . A corpse? Dima is standing on the stool, kneading his chest. External massage of the heart. Lena is desperately squeezing the breathing bag. Oksana is wringing her hands. Nurses are fussing around. Pale faces, frightened eyes.

"Adrenalin! Did you inject adrenalin?"

"No time—massage is quicker."

"Marina, two cc's!"

I want to massage him myself. I can probably do it better . . . You, fool. Keep quiet. Dima is doing it well.

"Oksana, what do you see?"

"I can't see anything because of the massaging. Interference."

No. We won't be able to do anything. And I was sitting reading. Scientist!

"Dima, stop for a second. Well, what do you see?"

Silence. Everyone is waiting. Oksana is watching the screen. It seems an eternity has passed.

Oksana gasps out:

"Slow contractions!"

"Keep on massaging! Adrenalin!"

Maybe we can do it. We've got to keep it up. The plaster has been torn off.

"Wait a second!"

A long needle right to the heart. One cc of adrenalin.

"Massage!"

A minute. Two minutes. Silence.

Darkness and despair fill my soul. Why? Oh, why? Don't complain. It's not retribution. It's just that we are fools. Our modelling abilities are too limited as Sasha would say. But that doesn't make it any easier. I'm not a machine but a living person.

But maybe we'll succeed.

"Stop, Dima! Oksana, watch the screen! Feel his pulse, somebody! You, don't stop the respiration!"

"Very good contractions, about a hundred a minute!"

"I can feel his pulse!"

But there is no need feeling for his pulse. You can see his chest is moving. The heart's working well again.

"How're his pupils?"

"Narrow. They contracted soon as we started massaging."

"A-ah!"

Everyone gives a sign of relief. Faces brighten and eyes light up. I am trembling all over and feel faint. I am almost ready to fall.

"I must sit down. And you, climb down. Why are you standing there?"

I say this to Dima. He's still standing on the stool leaning over the table, long and awkward.

Sasha has left me again. A stranger is lying there, unconscious. And I am completely exhausted. I know what can happen later, and so I'm not rejoicing yet.

Helpless frustration. It's disgusting to look at



everybody. Disgusting even to swear. Mistakes, more mistakes!

"Where were your eyes! The pulse was falling fast—that meant something was irritating the vagus.<sup>1</sup> You were in a hurry to go home? I know there's lots to do and it's late. But what's that to the patient? And you just stood there gaping, satisfied that everything had turned out well. I suppose you were too busy gossiping!"

No one says anything. They're offended. That isn't fair. We were all talking and later I sat around thinking about philosophical matters, reading those stupid notes. If I had been here, it would not have happened. . . Or would it?

They should have injected a little atropin to neutralize the vagus. That's what I think should have been done. But maybe it was all more complicated. The human body is a terribly intricate machine! We are helpless before it!

But much more could be done, even now. Engineering could be called in. . . Well, that can be gone into later. I suppose I shouldn't ride them so hard. They're probably thinking: "To hell with you and your clinic! We work like the devil, give all our heart to it, and only get cursed for it." I'll have to be easier. They're a good lot. I ask in a quieter tone:

"Did the heart stop for long, do you think?"

Dima is quick to answer:

"I can't say for sure but think it lasted very little. Perhaps a minute."

Lyonya backs him up:

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<sup>1</sup> The vagus nerve inhibits the functions of many interior organs.

"The pupils narrowed immediately he began massaging."

"Let's have all the values. Take a blood test. How's the heart, Oksana?"

She is watching the screen, immovable. Very upset and flushed. She is taking the count.

"Not bad but worse than it was. One hundred and forty a minute."

"That's because of adrenalin. It will pass."

A minute or two go by. . . They measure again and report:

"Satisfactory."

I'm not satisfied. It's good, of course, that he's alive—so far alive. But I have doubts. In the first place I don't know how long the heart stayed still. I'm not inclined to believe their account. Not that they're lying but it's difficult to be exact about time, and everyone wants to present things in a better light.

If the heart stops for more than five minutes the cerebral cortex dies.

In the second place, very few patients have recovered after the heart had stopped. In almost all cases we've been able to start the heart going again, but not for long. It usually stopped a second time or even a third. And then forever. That valve was put in well, the stoppage was of a reflex type, not because of muscular weakness. There's very little hope but still there is some.

"He's opened his eyes."

Everybody's happy, but not in ecstasies. The danger is too great. Only Dima is beaming. Perhaps he made a mistake, but now everyone sees that it has been corrected—almost—and that it was he who noticed the stoppage in time.

We'll have to introduce some sort of monitor-

ing apparatus so as not to depend on people. How can one depend on Dima's attention when he has been under such strain for seven hours! They have such apparatus in some countries, but we haven't designed any yet. It's annoying...

Death again. I know there's little hope. But the heart is working well—see how the chest is heaving. No need for self-deception; that's the adrenalin. There's little chance.

Well, and what next? Will I just lie down on my couch and have a drink, weep some dry tears and begin all over again? How much longer?

But what can I do? Supposing I quit: that wouldn't make me happy and it would be cowardice. I am not deluded by dreams of my own importance, but how can I leave these people who pin their hopes on me? I can't offer them anything in place of surgery. I am not young any more, and my head's weak. I'm not Sasha.

It's funny how people and books have inculcated this code of conduct and this pattern of social duty in me so deeply that they have become part of my nature, like instincts. I cannot get away from them. I believe Sasha who said it is all mechanical, but it is painful to me just the same.

I'm not a hero. I'm afraid of physical pain. I don't fear death, but I do fear pain. Am I striking a fine pose? No, I'm not posing. Freud must have been a very petty person if he really thought that instincts couldn't be subdued.

Never mind Freud and all these fancy theories! I sat in my office longer than necessary because of theories. Sasha is alive and I must think of how to keep him alive, no matter what happens.

I feverishly try to assemble everything in my head. Like a machine, but much less efficiently. The sensibility of the vagus nerve has been reduced by the adrenalin. Now it's necessary to strengthen the contractions of the heart.

"Inject AFT and lanacordal. Then check all the values."

The girls start bustling about. Everything is done rapidly and accurately. It's pleasant to see good work done. Good work? If they had only thought of it earlier! Are you sure you would have thought of it? I'm not sure but still my modelling unit is better.

There's nothing left for us to do but wait. And we are doing just that.

"Transfuse blood at the same rate. We must keep the balance."

Another worry. What shall we do if the bleeding doesn't stop? Open the thorax and check all the stitches? That is always dangerous and especially so after what has happened. Can't even be thought of now—if we do, the heart will stop again. Sure. We'll have to try all the haemostatics.

"Use everything you've got to stop the bleeding!"

They go to work.

I am in very low spirits. No one leaves. Ten doctors are waiting. It's already seven o'clock and no dinner is served in our clinic.

"Open the window! It's stuffy in here! What are you sitting around for? Why don't you all go home?"

No one answers.

Much is written about communism. That it is almost here. And, to be honest, it is more often

ridiculed: "Communism, hah! How about those robberies and swindles..." Why so petty-minded? Take a look at our doctors sometimes, it makes you feel better. Many of them are married and have families. They would probably like to go to the cinema or play with their children, but here they are, waiting until seven or ten in the evening, or even until morning, with no extra pay or time off. The next day they come to work as usual at nine o'clock. And you never hear a word of complaint. Of course, they sometimes forget things or overlook something.

About communism. I've been in American clinics. Physicians over there work hard, from morning till night. And they feel for their patients, or so it seemed to me, just as we do. But no, not quite, I'll never forget one scene I saw over there. I was watching from above, through a skylight, like the one we have. A long and tiring operation, involving artificial blood circulation had just ended. The patient was still lying on the operating table barely alive. In one corner the surgeons and anaesthetist were in a huddle. They were speaking in low voices and writing something. I asked my interpreter—a good chap—what they were doing. The microphone was still connected so he went over to the loudspeaker and listened. He said: "They're dividing the money for the operation."

It was so sickening that it hurt. I didn't want to look at them any more and couldn't resist telling the interpreter what I thought. He was surprised: "Why, didn't they earn it honestly?" What could I answer? Could such a scene have happened here? No. Forty-six years haven't passed in vain. Of course, much more could have

been done. We'll have to think a great deal more as to how to improve things. There are too many losses—so many that sometimes it is frightening. . .

My low spirits have led to this train of thoughts.

“How are things, Oksana?”

“A hundred and twenty-five a minute. The contractions are weakening. . .”

Dima: “And the pressure is falling. It was a hundred and ten, now it's ninety-five.”

So it's approaching—omnipotent, irresistible. The blood pressure will fall, and then the heart will stop again.

Don't stop! Don't stop, I beg you!

There's no one to implore. Depend only on yourself. And on these people. . .

Dima: “Shall I add some noradrenalin to the dropper to hold up the blood pressure?”

“Just a bit.”

Noradrenalin contracts the blood vessels and the blood pressure rises, but so does the strain on the heart. It would be better to intensify the contractions of the heart, but drugs have already been administered for that and they didn't help. No, I'm afraid of noradrenalin.

“Have you given it yet? Then don't. Add cortisone. A large dose. Have you tried it yet?”

No, they haven't. How did we forget it? We don't know that hormone at all: sometimes it works wonders. It seems to heighten the activity of all the cells.

Lyuba, the anaesthetics nurse, fills a syringe with the solution and adds it to the dropper. Slowly it will drip into the vein along with the blood.

The bleeding hasn't been stopped, either, but it has slowed to forty-five drops a minute. That is probably because the blood pressure is lower.

"Ask the Blood Bank for two more litres of blood, fresh blood."

How much blood have we transfused today? Three litres. But this is an extraordinary operation. The Americans prepare five litres for an ordinary operation. Why should they economize? The patient pays and the unemployed workers are happy to get money for their blood.

What time is it? Half past seven. It's already half an hour since the heart stopped. That's not bad. I must phone home, I don't know when I'll get back. . . My wife is probably worrying about Sasha. She is also an admirer of his. She always sets him up as an example. "See how polite and well brought up he is." That's true enough but it's not the most important thing. I'll go call her.

I get up to go and sit down again. I'm afraid. Afraid that if I go the heart will stop. I'll wait till the blood pressure is stabilized. Am I sure that it will be? Of course, not. I'm a pessimist at heart.

Everybody is silent. Dima is taking the pulse. Lyonya is working the breathing bag. The patient is asleep and we don't want to wake him.

"How's the blood pressure?"

"Ninety—ninety-five."

"Oksana!"

"No change. One hundred and twenty."

I must sit and wait. Surgery is not only operations and excitement and fervours; it's also waiting, and doubting and mental torture. What can be done?

Nothing yet. If the bleeding doesn't abate, I'll

have to reopen the wound. Oh, no! I tremble at the thought. I'd rather die than hold that heart in my hands again.

Life and death. How much passion have poets and scientists put into these words! And really it is all very simple. At any rate, that's what Sasha and his friends say. Living systems differ from lifeless ones only in their complexity; only in their programmes for processing information. Terrestrial living creatures are made out of protein bodies. From those bodies structures are formed which are capable of self-adjustment at various stages of complexity. A microbe assimilates nitrogen from the air. A worm reacts to only the simplest stimuli and its behaviour is limited to a few standard movements. This is its code of information. Man is capable of reacting to and remembering a vast number of external influences and his movements are extremely diverse. But he is only a machine which operates according to very complicated programmes. This once sounded like blasphemy. That was because people were able to make only the simplest things which could not compare with the things created by Nature. All this has changed now, or rather it will change more and more. Man will design the most complicated electronic machines which will simulate life. They will think, feel and move and even understand and write poems. Will they not be living things? It is unimportant from what elements an intricate system is built—from protein molecules or semi-conductor elements. Houses are built of various materials but their functions are the same. It is important that the structure of the system should ensure implementation of complicated programmes of pro-



cessing information. Man will then become immortal. Not all of him, but his brain, his intellect and probably his feelings.

Maria Vasilyevna and I are sitting in a corner of the operating room. Each has his own train of thoughts, but we are also thinking of the same things. Of him.

"Masha, have you any hope?"

She answers with conviction.

"Yes, I have. We must save him."

Maria Vasilyevna looks awful—she should dye her hair at least. Old age creeps upon one so imperceptibly. She was a young girl when she began working at the hospital. That was a long time ago. Twenty years!

"I have been to look at the patients. Let's not use AIK tomorrow. I haven't any strength left."

"Call it off."

She continues:

"Everyone is excited. They are whispering in every corner. Raisa Sergeyevna actually fell on me. She shouted: 'He is already dead, you are just keeping it from me!' You should have talked to her more tactfully this morning, Mikhail Ivanovich, she's a fine woman."

"Let her go to hell! I spoke to her tactfully. The idiot!"

Really, I couldn't act any other way. He may die any minute, and I feel rotten. But I'm not sorry. In three months he would have died in the ward. I would have seen the reproach in his eyes. It's better this way, fighting. And for him it's certainly better.

I could have been lying on the couch, reading a book. There's a new novel out by Steinbeck. Lenochka would have been chattering around me.

An idyll. But I would have been thinking of myself: traitor.

The next day his glance would have said: "You turned out to be a louse." My eyes would have shifted in embarrassment. No, it's better this way.

That's comical. People are so complicated! God could offer me any terms right now, but once outside this building he hasn't much of a chance of exerting pressure on me because I need nothing—neither money, nor fame, nor even love any more. Leave me in peace if you can. But there is no God. . .

Time is passing. It's already fifty minutes since the stoppage. The functioning of the heart seems to have been stabilized. The blood pressure is holding between eighty and ninety. He woke once and was uneasy, so we had to inject a hypnotic. He's sleeping now like a babe. But his lips are still blue because the heart still supplies very little blood. The analyses, however, are fair. Our hopes are mounting.

. . .I'll read some more of his notes. About love, for instance. Here it is—"Programme of Love."

He's written quite a lot here. Apparently he wrote it only recently, it's almost at the end of the notebook. It means that he was not in love with anybody. The sober view of a scientist.

Now, first: "There are inborn programmes of the sex instinct part of a more general instinct—continuation of the genus." This is clear. Everyone must have this instinct, otherwise the genus will die out. It will not be so easy to breed a complicated system in a test-tube, though they say it is possible in principle.

It is night now and all is quiet in the clinic, except for the sound of talking in the interns' room. Oleg, of course. He can't ever keep his voice down.

How much longer am I to wander about down here? Maybe everything is all right by now? I doubt it. Major surgery has cured me of optimism. Everything has to be won by force.

I go back into the operating room. There's no sign of light-heartedness. Sasha is breathing himself, but through the tube. Dima, at the head of the table, has dropped his head. Lyonya, Petro and Zhenya are all squatting round the ampule into which the blood from the drain tube is dropping. Maria Vasilyevna is looking at her watch.

It's eleven o'clock already and what have they eaten? Not much. They are young and have good appetites. I can go without eating. Again "I."

The situation has changed. We'll have to do direct blood transfusion. Preparations will take at least half an hour.

As always happens during such night vigils everyone's supply of cigarettes is exhausted. I have to send Zhenya to my office where there's a half-empty pack in my desk. It is passed around and gone at once. The conversation turns to the surgical profession. Why have people come to the clinic and tolerate this dog's life?

Semyon:

"I like the thrill I get during an operation. In no other field of medicine, even in general surgery, do you get the same feeling. What a sensation it is, when you hold the heart in your hands!"

These "thrills" attract many. They attracted me too, a long time ago. But now I am sorry

for the patients who are the object of such sensations. Why, there are surgeons who are ready to undertake risky operations just for that. Not in our clinic, of course, as we watch out for that very strictly.

But, just the same, you can't ignore the feeling. A surgeon is ready to pay very highly for this sensation he gets during operations, by days and nights of routine work: out-patient work, applying dressings, writing out endless case histories and even soothing patients' relatives. I suppose there's nothing wrong in this. Semyon has already received his Master's degree, but it was not science that brought him to us. It was operations; the romanticism of surgery lured him here.

Our Vasya, a post-graduate, is telling his story. He is young but has a firm chin. He will make his way.

"I came to this clinic to write my thesis. I could have done it at my institute, but it was so boring there. Only appendixes and fractures. Of course, they are also interesting to science but not to me. Here we have new ideas and delicate operations."

This is the second stimulus to our doctors—to finish their theses in a short space of time. Indeed, it is difficult to do scientific work in ordinary clinics; all the problems have been worked over many times. That doesn't mean that the problems of general surgery have all been solved. Quite the contrary, they are all in great confusion. Former views have become obsolete and new ones haven't taken shape. Clinics cannot study such questions as shock and infection because new ideas are too few and they haven't appropriate

conditions for studying them. We need large laboratories with the latest equipment. Otherwise we can't do anything.

Our clinic and similar ones throughout the country work on problems that have not been tapped yet. It is simpler to write theses on new operations and on related questions of diagnosis and physiology. Besides, this is in the young scientists' interests, since we both teach them and allow them to operate. A young man can make his surgical career here. Well, why not? Physicians are also people.

Maria Vasilyevna is shocked:

"It's disgusting to listen to you, young people! One speaks of operations, another of pure science, a third of his thesis, and a fourth of his career. And where do the patients come into it? Where is your charity? Where is the 'noblest of professions'?"

The question is direct. None of them reply—they all seem a little embarrassed. And really, what are we coming to? Are patients only material for operations, science and theses? No, it isn't like that. I know. I'm convinced. At any rate, it isn't altogether so. I must support the youngsters.

"Maria Vasilyevna, you are wrong. There is a noble profession and there is compassion for people. Can't you see it yourself? See how many of them are here. Why are they not leaving for home?"

"Please, Mikhail Ivanovich, you don't have to smooth things over. I think there is too little compassion amongst our young people. It's all the same to them what profession they follow—a doctor, engineer or agronomist. And the fact that

they are sitting here, hungry, without cigarettēs, is no proof. Some are obliged to, others because they are interested, and several of them—just because you are here. If you were to go home now, some of our brave lads would leave that very minute.”

She looks them all over significantly, but no one lowers his eyes. Then she tosses her head, offended, excited and defiant.

An awkward situation. Perhaps, someone will protest. But she is their senior and respected, and no one is ever rude to her.

Only Petro mixes in and says very calmly:

“You haven’t seen into their souls, Masha, and you don’t know. Not all of them shed tears after a death and not all of them talk about charity, but our boys. . .”

She interrupts:

“Oh, stop defending them! I know their minds. If anything happens to a patient in the ward they never think, unless you tell them, to send a telegram to the relatives to come immediately, while the patient is still alive. And you. . . Oh, why talk about it? I’m going. . .”

She gets up and leaves.

Silence. Everyone feels uncomfortable.

When she said “And you. . .” she had wanted to say “And you yourself. . .”

The words “charity” and “mercy” have gone out of use completely. I wonder why. We have no need of such phrases as “the mercy of God,” but “sister of mercy” was not at all bad. Charity used to be preached, but no more. No one speaks of pity for “thy neighbour” as a virtue nowadays.

The feeling of pity or compassion springs from

two sources. One is the instinct of preserving the family group, which is chiefly expressed as love for the small and weak; the other is the cortical programmes of imagination which transfer the feelings of others to oneself. This is to be seen even in dogs: when one is beaten another whines in pain.

There is a natural basis for charity, and when the moral code of social behaviour is instilled in a child this basis can be strengthened—not always to the same degree, but in everyone. The grey matter of the brain must develop good instincts, not suppress them.

This concerns medical people most of all, because they are constantly in contact with suffering people. It would seem as if compassion should grow in them year by year because of the exercise given the cortical analogues of feeling. However, this is not true in most cases, and it's a pity

Habit is a wonderful mechanism—an adaption to powerful irritants, which at first shake the organism out of its equilibrium but then cease to have any effect. These programmes begin at the level of cells and continue up to the highest psychological processes. Another's suffering causes pain. But man adapts himself to this pain just as he does to his own, and the feeling weakens. After a time, a doctor or nurse discovers that his feeling of compassion has disappeared. Of course, most of us do not notice this, but if we delve into our personal feelings and remember our old ones, then we discover that it has happened—to varying degrees though. It is a defensive reaction, and is therefore inevitable. There are a

few people who do not give in to it. The "centres of pity" in these few are hypertrophied. This outweighs the mechanism of growing accustomed to pain. Such people are unhappy if they work in a place like ours, but in return they get terrific satisfaction from a victory over death. A state of bliss similar to the feeling one gets when acute physical pain is suddenly allayed.

Love for your fellow-men is a must for teachers and doctors.

"And so, young people, have we made a mistake in the choice of our profession?"

Silence. The best answer. It is immodest to speak about such things. At any rate, it is immodest for me, their "chief."

I'd better leave now, as our conversation will not be very inspiring today.

I leave.

Scenes flash before my eyes.

Doctors are grouped around Sasha. Maria Vasilyevna with her compassion. Stepan, ready to give his blood. Satisfied. Kind Petro. Vasya working for his thesis. Sasha himself—almost a fanatic about his formulas, into which he has written love, happiness, human behaviour and society. It seems he knew the risk was very great, and I thought that he underestimated it.

Something motivates everyone in life.

There was a physiologist—I've forgotten his name—who found the pleasure centre in the brain of rat. He introduced an electrode into it and sent a weak current through. The rat evidently experienced a very pleasant sensation although it is impossible to say just what it felt. It was



taught to close the circuit by pressing its snout on a button. Then it forgot everything else and kept pressing and pressing. I even remember seeing a photograph of that happy rat.

If only such a little wire could be sealed into the human brain . . . So one could press and press on the contacts, not looking for a source of pleasure—in operations, in love or in books.

The desire to have the maximum pleasure and avoid unpleasantness is the main mechanism motivating our actions. There is a regulator which switches on a programme from those offered by the body and the cortex. Those latter ones have been inculcated by society and supplemented by creative activity. Animals and children think only of today, while adults cast a glance into the future.

The pleasure centre is excited when the programmes of the instincts and reflexes are carried out: eating, loving, having a child, completing a piece of work, or being free, looking for something to satisfy curiosity, feeling warm, being patted on the back—you're good. Primitive happiness.

The cortex has covered all this with a layer of conditioned reflexes—substitutes for the real excitation of the subcortical centres. They can become so powerful in man as to smother all his bodily signals. Society, people can make them such, or at least stimulate it. When the machine is set this way, you can't stop it. It will be further developed and supplemented by the creative process.

Happiness is a powerful excitation of the pleasure centre. It's a pity it tires soon and pleasure

turns into indifference. Habit. There can be no lengthy happiness: it's too acute. Contrasts—suffering—accentuate it.

It's all simple in animals. Stuff themselves till it hurts—go for a walk or sleep. Some time passes and food is as pleasant again.

It's much worse for human beings. The conditioned irritant not backed by the unconditioned one ceases to excite and may turn into inhibition. Pavlov said so. Wise words. But they require a correction. This is true for the dog's cortex. As for a human being the subcortical models can become so hypertrophied, so strong, that their excitation will steadily cause pleasure, even if the source is abstract. Of course, it's not continuous pleasure, but something like eating . . . You can begin again after a while.

It's good if a person has some hypertrophied point, a subcortical model: to invent, write, do pleasant things for people, get pleasure from a well-done job.

Society must teach children well and inculcate correct social programmes. Otherwise there will be trouble ahead. Nature has set so many traps for us. The cortex is capable of turning any instinct into a vice. The feeding reflex becomes greediness; the sexual instinct, debauchery; the pleasant feeling that comes from praise may turn into vanity.

Is it possible? To inculcate a "point" and stop the ugly flood from "below"?

A human being is always engaged in some activity or other, and may be making a good job of it or not, as the case may be. He is also occupying his mind with something, again with varying de-

degrees of success. Sometimes he stands back and takes a detached view of what he is doing and thinking. A good remedy for some vices, such as vanity. Maybe I should examine today's events again, but from a distance. And I would find that I am nobody in particular. Neither good, nor bad, just average.

Why doesn't Aunt Fenya bring my bed? She is probably being considerate and giving me time to drink my tea in peace. That's more like it.

Here she comes. She's even bringing a mattress.

"Aunt Fenya, why bother with a mattress? The couch is soft enough."

"I want you to have a softer bed. You are very tired after such a long day."

"How are things in the post-operative room? Did you hear anything there?"

"Evidently everything is all right because Maria Dmitriyevna came to the senior nurse's room for a nap. She stays to help out if Sasha's condition gets worse... You have such clever hands..."

"Now, now, Aunt Fenya."

"But everyone says so."

"Well, well..."

That is a hint that she should leave. Whether or not she understands, she goes out saying "good night."

It won't be long till morning. The clock says half past one and I never sleep later than six.

I undress and switch off the desk lamp. What a pleasure to stretch out on the couch after such a day! My whole body aches, but it's a pleasant ache.

Sleep, sleep. . .

I lie motionless. Inhibition of reflexes should spread from the motor centres through the entire cortex.

Somehow it doesn't spread.

Sleep, sleep. . .

No, the thinking machine is working. Still puzzling over the meaning of life. There is no meaning—just two programmes of action. Sasha said so and he is right. How accustomed I've got to such words. I have learned how to use them. . .

The animal programme—to give birth to children and bring them up. So that they will live and multiply in turn. In general, not a bad programme. But it doesn't allow for humaneness in one's dealings with others. Grab, tear, crush. In order to produce posterity you must be well-fed and strong. Incidentally, it gives pleasure—to conquer, to accumulate, to command. The cortex has increased this pleasure even more.

Faces and events flash by. Animal programmes. To boast about an implanted valve is one. Raya's weeping is another.

The other programme is social. Man must work for others, even if it is unpleasant. So that everyone shall live better. That does not give such keen pleasure as love and a child. More often it gives none at all. You have to make yourself do it.

It used to be simpler: people believed in God. "Love thy neighbour" and you will go to heaven. If you don't—eternal fire. Punishment and encouragement. In other words, back to that animal programme.

There is no God, only science. Everyone knows that only people can punish here and now. If you can manage it, punishment can be avoided. And derive pleasure from it. The triumph of instinct. Freud.

Well, and what about happiness?

Primitive man considered himself happy if his belly was full and he was warm and with his family. What about modern man, if he lives according to an animal programme and knows that there is no God? He cannot live without society these days. The pleasure of social intercourse, not only with his near ones but with strangers as well; the pleasure of activity which evokes a response in other people; these have become necessary for man's peace of mind.

There is a well-worn formula, "useful social activity." Don't laugh at it. Happiness which comes from instincts may be acute, but it is not dependable and too limited for human beings.

Is there anyone who questions that? Has it been refuted in newspapers? No, but that is no way to decide. You must prove it.

How do I fit in?

I have lived long enough. Animal emotions have taken a back seat. I no longer have such desires. I know there is no sense in it. I am not fooling myself. The instinct of life keeps one going, but it does not produce happiness.

What urges me to carry on? My family, my granddaughter Lenchka? Yes, of course, but that is too little. I go crazy from boredom during my vacations. Is it the faces of children discharged from the clinic after operations? Or the mothers' eyes?

I know that those are "social programmes" inculcated by society. Well, let them stand. They give me pleasure and help me bear my troubles.

It is probably very important to convince myself of that. I will then become happy... I am happy... Isn't that so?

Sleep, happy one... sleep.

No, it is not so easy to fall asleep. New thoughts, one after another. Today already belongs to the past. Sasha will live... probably. Now, I've got one more valve done. That's good... the valve.

Even going at the rate of one operation a week we can save many lives. Perhaps, we could do two. The kind we did today? No, we couldn't. Everybody's exhausted. Me, too. That's nothing, we'll all get over it. Probably we should sew in valves by Zhenya's method—it should be easier. A smart chap. Does he think about the meaning of life? Probably not yet.

Even if we do one valve a week, we can operate on about forty patients a year. That's a figure worth talking about. Figure? Talk? The animal programmes can't be eradicated. To hell with them! I am what I am. I'll never be a saint.

What operations are scheduled for tomorrow? The one with AIK has been called off. I shouldn't have given way to weakness. Perhaps we can still do it? Better not—the mother has been told about the postponement and a mother's heart is not a toy—to pull around, this way and that. Instead of Lyova we'll take the adult, Sorokin—stenosis of the aorta. Petro will operate I'll have to be there myself, to intervene in case it turns out to be difficult.

But I wanted to leave early tomorrow to finish some writing. That article should have been sent off long ago. Let them wait a little longer. Patients are more important. How good it is to exhaust oneself and then stretch out like this. If only there were not so many problems. More problems... Yesterday... Today... Tomorrow... All my life... But that is happiness!





**ГУМАНИЗМ И АТЕИЗМ:  
ПРИНЦИПЫ И ПРАКТИКА**

*на английском языке*

Цена 51 коп.



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