

The Measures Taken

(1930)

by Bertolt Brecht

*Liberated from
capitalist control
to educate the masses
by
Socialist Stories*

CHARACTERS

Control Chorus

Four Agitators

Young Comrade

Leader

Overseer

Two Coolies

Two Textile Workers

Trader

Policeman

CONTROL CHORUS: Step forward! Your work has been successful. In yet another country the ranks of the fighters are joined, and the revolution marches on. We agree to what you have done.

FOUR AGITATORS: Stop! We have something to say. We announce the death of a comrade.

CONTROL CHORUS: Who killed him?

FOUR AGITATORS: We killed him. We shot him and threw him into a lime pit.

CONTROL CHORUS: Demonstrate how it happened and why, and you will hear our verdict.

FOUR AGITATORS: We shall respect your verdict.

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THE CLASSICAL WRITINGS

FOUR AGITATORS: We came from Moscow as agitators. We were to travel to the city of Mukden to make propaganda, and build up the Chinese Party in the factories. We were to announce ourselves at the last Party Headquarters from the frontier and demand a guide. In the anteroom a young comrade came to us, and we spoke of the nature of our assignment. We shall repeat what was said.

Three of them stand together. The other, presenting the YOUNG COMRADE, stands by himself.

YOUNG COMRADE: I am the secretary at the last Party Headquarters from the frontier. My heart beats for the revolution. The sight of injustice drove me into

the ranks of the fighters. I am for freedom. I believe in humanity. And I am for the measures taken by the Communist Party which fights for the classless society against exploitation and ignorance.

THREE AGITATORS: We come from Moscow.

YOUNG COMRADE: We expected you.

THREE AGITATORS: Why?

YOUNG COMRADE: We're getting nowhere. There is scarcity and disorder, little bread and much struggle. Many are brave, but few can read. Few machines, and no one understands them. Our locomotives have broken down. Have you brought any locomotives with you?

THREE AGITATORS: No.

YOUNG COMRADE: Have you any tractors?

THREE AGITATORS: No.

YOUNG COMRADE: Our farmers are still straining their muscles at old wooden plows. And so we have no way of putting our fields in order. Have you brought any seed?

THREE AGITATORS: No.

YOUNG COMRADE: Have you got munitions at least and machine guns?

THREE AGITATORS: No.

YOUNG COMRADE: There are just two of us to defend the revolution here. Surely you've brought us a letter from the Central Committee telling us what to do?

THREE AGITATORS: No.

YOUNG COMRADE: Then you yourselves are going to help us?

THREE AGITATORS: No.

YOUNG COMRADE: Day and night we never get out of our clothes, in the struggle against hunger, decay, and counterrevolution. Yet you bring us nothing.

THREE AGITATORS: Exactly so: we bring you nothing. But over the frontier to Mukden we bring the Chinese workers the teachings of the classic writers and the propagandists, the ABC of communism; to the ignorant, instruction about their condition; to the oppressed, class consciousness; and to the class conscious, the experience of revolution. From you, however, we are to demand an automobile and a guide.

YOUNG COMRADE: Then I was wrong to ask?

THREE AGITATORS: No, but a good question led to a better answer. We see that everything has already been asked of you. But even more will be asked of you: one of you two must guide us to Mukden.

YOUNG COMRADE: Then I'll leave my post, which was too hard for two, but which one alone must now learn to handle. I shall go with you. Marching forward, spreading the teaching of the communist classics: World Revolution.

CONTROL CHORUS:

Praise of the U.S.S.R.

Certainly our misery
Was something to talk about.
But seated at our sparse table
Was the Hope of all the oppressed
Who is satisfied with water.
And in a clear voice
Behind the broken-down door
Knowledge taught the guests.
When the doors are broken
We only become visible from a little further away

We whom frost does not kill, nor hunger
Untiringly conferring about
The world's destinies.

FOUR AGITATORS: In this way, the Young Comrade of the frontier station agreed to the general character of our work and we came — four men and one woman — before the leader at Party Headquarters.

THE BLOTTING OUT

FOUR AGITATORS: But the work in Mukden was illegal, so, before we crossed the frontier, we had to blot out our faces. Our Young Comrade agreed to this. We will repeat the incident.

One of the AGITATORS presents the LEADER at Party Headquarters.

LEADER: I am the Leader at the last headquarters. I have agreed that the comrade from my station should go along as guide. But there is unrest in the Mukden factories. At the present time the eyes of the world are on this city to see if one of us won't be found leaving a Chinese worker's hut. And I hear that gunboats stand ready on the rivers and armored trains in the sidings, ready to attack us at once, if one of us is seen there. And so I am having the comrades cross the frontier as Chinese. (*To the AGITATORS:*) You must not be seen.

TWO AGITATORS: We shall not be seen.

LEADER: If one of you is wounded, he must not be found.

TWO AGITATORS: He will not be found.

LEADER: Then you are ready to die and to hide the dead one?

TWO AGITATORS: Yes.

LEADER: Then you are yourselves no longer. You are not Karl Schmitt from Berlin, you are not Anna Kjersk from Kazan, and you are not Peter Sawitch from Moscow. One and all of you are nameless and

motherless, blank pages on which the revolution writes its instructions.

TWO AGITATORS: Yes.

LEADER (*gives them masks; they put them on*): Then, from this time on, you are no one no longer. From this time on, and probably until you disappear, you are unknown workers, fighters, Chinese, born of Chinese mothers, with yellow skin, speaking Chinese in fever and in sleep.

TWO AGITATORS: Yes.

LEADER: In the interests of communism, agreeing to the advance of the proletarian masses of all lands, saying Yes to the revolutionizing of the world.

TWO AGITATORS: Yes. And in the way the Young Comrade demonstrated his agreement to the blotting-out of his face.

CONTROL CHORUS: Who fights for communism must be able to fight and not to fight; to speak the truth and not to speak the truth; to perform services and not to perform services; to keep promises and not to keep promises; to go into danger and to keep out of danger; to be recognizable and not to be recognizable. Who fights for communism has only one of all the virtues: that he fights for communism.

FOUR AGITATORS: As Chinese, we went to Mukden, four men and one woman, to make propaganda and support the Chinese workers through the teachings of the classics and the propagandists, the ABC of communism: to bring to the ignorant instruction about their situation; to the oppressed, class-consciousness; and to the class-conscious, the experience of revolution.

CONTROL CHORUS:

Praise of Illegal Work

It is splendid
 To take up the word as a weapon in the class war
 To rouse the masses to the fight in a loud and ringing
 voice
 To crush the oppressors
 To free the oppressed.
 Hard and useful is the small daily labor
 The grim, persistent tying and spreading of the Party's
 net
 For the capitalists' guns
 To speak
 But conceal the speaker
 To win the victory
 But conceal the victor
 To die
 But hide the death.
 Who would not do much for fame
 But who would do it for silence?
 Yet the impoverished host invites Honor to supper
 And out of the tiny and tumble-down hut steps
 irresistibly
 Greatness
 And Fame calls in vain
 On the doers of the great deed.

FOUR AGITATORS: In the city of Mukden, we made propa-
 ganda among the workers. We had no bread for the
 hungry but only knowledge for the ignorant. There-
 fore we spoke of the root cause of poverty, did not
 abolish poverty, but spoke of the abolition of the
 root cause.

THE STONE

FOUR AGITATORS: First, we went down into the lower section of the city. Coolies were dragging a barge with a rope. But the ground on the bank was slippery. So when one of them slipped, and the overseer hit him, we said to the Young Comrade: "Go after them, make propaganda among them after work. But don't give way to pity!" And we asked: "Do you agree to it?" And he agreed to it and hurried away and at once gave way to pity. We will show you.

TWO AGITATORS *present* COOLIES, *fastening a rope to a hook, and then pulling the rope over their shoulders. One presents the* YOUNG COMRADE, *one the* OVERSEER.

TWO COOLIES: We are the coolies and we pull the rice barge up the river.

CONTROL CHORUS:

Song of the Rice Barge Coolies

In the city up the river
 A mouthful of rice awaits us
 But the barge is heavy that we must pull up the river
 And the water flows down the river
 We shall never get there
 Pull faster
 We want our dinner
 Pull evenly
 Don't jostle the next man

In the barge is rice
 The farmer who grew it received a few cents

We get even less
 An ox would cost more
 Than we do
 There are too many of us
 Pull faster
 We want our dinner
 Pull evenly
 Don't jostle the next man

Night will soon fall
 A resting place smaller than a dog's shadow
 Costs us a mouthful of rice
 Because the river bank is slippery
 We are making no headway
 Pull faster
 We want our dinner
 Pull evenly
 Don't jostle the next man

YOUNG COMRADE: It is repulsive to hear how the torture
 of these men's labor is masked by beauty!

OVERSEER: I am the Overseer. I must get the rice to the
 city by evening. Pull faster.

CONTROL CHORUS:

Our fathers pulled the barge from the river mouth
 A little farther upstream
 Our children will reach the source
 We come between
 Pull faster
 We want our dinner
 Pull evenly
 Don't jostle the next man

ONE COOLIE (*slipping out of line*): I can't keep going.

CONTROL CHORUS (*while the COOLIES stand and are
 whipped*):

The rope that cuts into our shoulders
 Holds longer than we do
 The Overseer's whip has seen four generations
 We are not the last
 Pull faster
 We want our dinner
 Pull evenly
 Don't jostle the next man

YOUNG COMRADE: It is hard to see these men without pity. (*To the OVERSEER:*) Can't you see the ground is slippery?

OVERSEER: The ground is what?

YOUNG COMRADE: Slippery! (*To the COOLIE:*) I now take a stone and lay it in the mud. Now walk!

CONTROL CHORUS:

When the rice arrives in the city
 And children ask who dragged the heavy barge
 The answer given is:
 The barge was dragged
 Pull faster
 We want our dinner
 Pull evenly
 Don't jostle the next man

OVERSEER: What? You claim this bank is so slippery it's impossible to pull a barge full of rice?

YOUNG COMRADE: I've only put a stone there for this man.

OVERSEER: Then you think we can't pull the barge without you? Or that the city of Mukden doesn't need rice?

YOUNG COMRADE: The men can't pull the barge if they fall down.

OVERSEER: Should I provide a stone for each of them to walk on — from here to the city of Mukden?

YOUNG COMRADE: I don't know what *you* should do, but
I know what *they* should do.
The food from down there
Feeds people up here
Those who brought it up for them
Have not fed

COOLIE (*to* OVERSEER): This fellow's a fool. They all
laugh at him.

OVERSEER: No, he's one of those that stir up the workers.
Hello there! Hold that man!

FOUR AGITATORS: And they at once took hold of him.
And they pursued him for two days till he met us.
Then they pursued us and him together in the city
of Mukden for a whole week. They wouldn't let us
get near the central section of the city.

DISCUSSION

CONTROL CHORUS:

But is it not right to support the weak man
And help him wherever he confronts us?
To help the exploited man
In his daily hardships and oppressed as he is?

FOUR AGITATORS: He did not help him. But he did hinder
us from making propaganda in our section of the city.

CONTROL CHORUS: We agree to that.

FOUR AGITATORS: The Young Comrade perceived that he
had put his feelings above his understanding. But we
comforted him and spoke to him the words of Com-
rade Lenin:

CONTROL CHORUS:

Intelligence is not to make no mistakes
But quickly to see how to make them good.

JUSTICE

FOUR AGITATORS: We founded the first Party cells in the factories and trained the first functionaries, established a Party school and taught them how to make the forbidden literature secretly available. Then we spread propaganda in the textile works, and each man had his assignment, and we said to the Young Comrade: "Place yourself at the factory door and hand out leaflets, but don't give yourself away." Then suspicion fell upon a man who stood near him and was seized in his stead. And he could not keep quiet. We will show it.

THREE AGITATORS: With the barge workers you failed.

YOUNG COMRADE: Yes.

THREE AGITATORS: Did that teach you something?

YOUNG COMRADE: Yes.

THREE AGITATORS: Will you handle yourself better with the textile workers?

YOUNG COMRADE: Yes.

Two agitators play TEXTILE WORKERS.

TWO TEXTILE WORKERS: We are workers in the textile works.

CONTROL CHORUS:

The Song of the Textile Workers

Today once again
There was less money in the pay envelope

If we leave the looms
Others will take our places
We cannot leave.

YOUNG COMRADE: Strike! Your wages are too low. Leave your looms! Place yourselves at the gates and let no one get to your looms!

CONTROL CHORUS:

If we place ourselves in the gateways and
Let no one get to our looms
The soldiers will come and shoot at us
We cannot place ourselves in the gateways.

YOUNG COMRADE: Strike! Your wages are too low. Place yourselves in the gateways and fight the soldiers!

CONTROL CHORUS:

Who will be first to go hungry? Who first
Will set his face against the guns? Who
Will begin? Who will be able
To eat his supper?

YOUNG COMRADE: Strike! Your wages are too low. All begin together. Every man must be the first man!

TWO TEXTILE WORKERS: When the factory closes, we're going home. We are very dissatisfied but we don't know what to do.

YOUNG COMRADE (*sticking a leaflet in front of one of them, the other stands inactive*): Read it and pass it on. When you've read it, you'll know what to do.

FIRST TEXTILE WORKER *takes it and walks on.*

One of the agitators plays a POLICEMAN.

POLICEMAN: I am a policeman and get my bread from the ruling class for combating discontent. (*He takes the leaflet away from the* FIRST TEXTILE WORKER.)
Who gave you that leaflet?

FIRST TEXTILE WORKER: I don't know. Somebody just stuck it in my hand as I was passing.

POLICEMAN (*stepping up to the* SECOND TEXTILE WORKER). *You* gave him the leaflet! We have orders to hunt up the ones that give out the leaflets.

SECOND TEXTILE WORKER: I didn't give out any leaflet.

YOUNG COMRADE: Is it a crime to teach them they are ignorant of their situation?

POLICEMAN: These teachings lead to God knows what. Teach a factory that sort of stuff, and they don't know who the owner is any more. This little leaflet is more dangerous than ten cannon.

YOUNG COMRADE: What's in it?

POLICEMAN: How would I know? (*To the* SECOND TEXTILE WORKER:) What's in it?

SECOND TEXTILE WORKER: I don't know the leaflet. I didn't hand it out.

YOUNG COMRADE: I know he didn't.

POLICEMAN (*to* YOUNG COMRADE): Did *you* give him the leaflet?

YOUNG COMRADE: No.

POLICEMAN (*to* SECOND TEXTILE WORKER): Then *you* gave it to him.

YOUNG COMRADE (*to* FIRST TEXTILE WORKER): What'll happen to him?

FIRST TEXTILE WORKER: He could be shot.

YOUNG COMRADE: What do you want to shoot him for? Aren't you a proletarian, too, policeman?

POLICEMAN (*to* SECOND TEXTILE WORKER): Come with me. (*Strikes him on the head.*)

YOUNG COMRADE (*trying to stop him*): It wasn't him.

POLICEMAN: Then it was you!

SECOND TEXTILE WORKER: It wasn't him.

POLICEMAN: Then it was the both of you!

FIRST TEXTILE WORKER: Run, you fool, run, your pocket's full of leaflets!

POLICEMAN *cuts the* SECOND TEXTILE WORKER *down.*

YOUNG COMRADE (*pointing at* POLICEMAN. *To the* FIRST TEXTILE WORKER): He's killed an innocent man. You are a witness.

FIRST TEXTILE WORKER (*attacking the* POLICEMAN): Hireling!

POLICEMAN *draws his revolver.*

YOUNG COMRADE *grabs the* POLICEMAN *by the neck from behind. The* FIRST TEXTILE WORKER *twists his arm back slowly. The shot goes wild. The* POLICEMAN *is disarmed.*

YOUNG COMRADE (*yelling*): Help, Comrades! Help! They're shooting innocent bystanders!

FOUR AGITATORS: The workers at once came running out of the factories to demonstrate against police violence. That is how the textile workers' strike arose. But the coolie organization demanded the punishment of the policeman, and the policeman was punished. But the strike was discontinued for a long time, and the guards were reinforced in the factories. Everyone talked about the murder of the innocent man; but we were banished from the factories.

DISCUSSION

CONTROL CHORUS: But is it not right to act justly and always to combat injustice wherever it may be found?

FOUR AGITATORS: In order to uphold the great injustice the small justice was conceded. But the great strike was knocked out of our hands.

CONTROL CHORUS: We agree to that.

WHAT IS A HUMAN BEING ACTUALLY?

FOUR AGITATORS: Daily we fought those old associates: oppression and despair. We taught the workers to transform a struggle for higher wages into a struggle for power. Taught them the use of weapons and the art of street fighting. Then we heard there was conflict between the merchants and the British, who ruled the city, on account of tariffs. In order to exploit this rulers' quarrel for the benefit of the ruled, we sent the Young Comrade with a letter to the richest of merchants. It said: "Arm the coolies!" We said to the Young Comrade: "Win his confidence." But when the food came on the table, he didn't keep his mouth shut. We will show you.

THREE AGITATORS: In the spinning mills you failed.

YOUNG COMRADE: Yes.

THREE AGITATORS: Did you learn something by it?

YOUNG COMRADE: Yes.

THREE AGITATORS: Will you bring arms from the merchants?

YOUNG COMRADE: Yes.

An agitator as **TRADER.**

TRADER: I am the trader. I'm expecting a letter from the coolie organization about the possibility of our getting together against the British.

YOUNG COMRADE: Here is the letter from the coolie organization.

TRADER: Please come and dine with me.

YOUNG COMRADE: It's an honor for me to be permitted to dine with you.

TRADER: While dinner's being prepared, I'd like to give you my opinion of coolies. Please sit down over here.

YOUNG COMRADE: I'm very interested in your opinion.

TRADER: Why do I get everything cheaper than anyone else? And why would a coolie work for me almost without pay?

YOUNG COMRADE: I don't know.

TRADER: Because I'm bright. You're pretty bright yourselves or how would you squeeze union dues out of your coolies?

YOUNG COMRADE: That's true. — Incidentally, are you going to arm the coolies against the British?

TRADER: Maybe, maybe. — I know how to handle a coolie. You must give him enough rice to keep him from dying. Otherwise, you can't get any work out of him. Is that right?

YOUNG COMRADE: Yes. That is right.

TRADER: I say it is not right. If coolies are cheaper than rice, I can get me a new coolie. Isn't that nearer the truth?

YOUNG COMRADE: Yes, that's nearer the truth. — Incidentally, when will you start sending weapons into our section of the city?

TRADER: Soon, soon. — You couldn't help noticing that the coolies who load my leather eat my rice in the canteen?

YOUNG COMRADE: I couldn't help noticing.

TRADER: What do you think: do I pay a lot for the work?

YOUNG COMRADE: No, but your rice is expensive, and you insist on the work being well done, and your rice is bad rice.

TRADER: You people are bright.

YOUNG COMRADE: And when will you arm the coolies against the British?

TRADER: After dinner we can inspect the arsenal. Now I'm going to sing you my favorite song.

The Song of Supply and Demand

Down the river there is rice
 In the provinces up the river people need rice:
 If we leave the rice in the warehouses
 The rice will cost them more
 Those who pull the rice barge will then get less rice
 And rice will be even cheaper for me

What is rice actually?
 Do I know what rice is?
 God knows what rice is!
 I don't know what rice is!
 I only know its price

Winter comes, the people need clothing
 One must buy up the cotton
 And not let go of it
 When the cold weather comes, clothing will cost more
 The cotton-spinning mills pay too high wages
 There's too much cotton around anyway

What is cotton actually?
 Do I know what cotton is?
 God knows what cotton is!
 I don't know what cotton is
 I only know its price

Likewise men — they need too much food
 And so men get to cost more

To make the food, men are needed
 Cooks make the food cheaper
 But those who eat it make it cost more
 There aren't enough men around anyway.

What is a man actually?

Do I know what a man is?

God knows what a man is!

I don't know what a man is

I only know his price

(*To the YOUNG COMRADE:*)

And now we're going to eat my good rice.

YOUNG COMRADE (*stands up*): I can't eat with you.

FOUR AGITATORS: That's what he said. And neither threats nor laughter could bring him to eat with a man he despised. And the trader drove him out of the house, and the coolies were not armed.

DISCUSSION

CONTROL CHORUS: But isn't it right to put honor before everything else?

FOUR AGITATORS: No.

CONTROL CHORUS: We agree to that

Change the World, It Needs It

With whom would the right-minded man not sit
 To help the right?

What medicine would taste too bad
 To a dying man?

What baseness would you not commit
 To root out baseness?

If, finally, you could change the world
 What task would you be too good for?

Sink down in the filth
 Embrace the butcher

But change the world: it needs it!
Who are you?
Stinking, be gone from
The room that has been cleaned! Would that
You were the last of the filth which
You had to remove!

FOUR AGITATORS: Yet in those days we managed to spread
the net of the Party for the capitalists' guns.

REBELLION AGAINST THE TEACHING

FOUR AGITATORS: That week the persecutions sharply increased. All we had left was a secret room for the hectograph machine and the pamphlets. On the evening of the third day, reaching our retreat not without risk, we found the Young Comrade in the doorway. And there were bundles in front of the house in the rain. We shall repeat what was said.

THREE AGITATORS: What are these bundles?

YOUNG COMRADE: Our propaganda.

THREE AGITATORS: What are you going to do with it?

YOUNG COMRADE: I have something to tell you. The new leaders of the unemployed came here today and convinced me that we begin by taking action — right away. We want to hand out the propaganda leaflets. We led off by calling for a general strike.

THREE AGITATORS: Now you have betrayed us four times over.

YOUNG COMRADE: Poverty is spreading, unrest is growing in the city.

THREE AGITATORS: The ignorant are beginning to recognize their situation.

YOUNG COMRADE: The unemployed have adopted our teaching.

THREE AGITATORS: The oppressed are learning class consciousness.

YOUNG COMRADE: They go out into the streets and want to demolish the spinning mills.

THREE AGITATORS: The roads to revolution show themselves. Our responsibility increases. And at this point you place the propaganda leaflets at the door so everyone can see them!

YOUNG COMRADE: The unemployed can wait no longer
Nor can I
Wait any longer
There are too many paupers.

THREE AGITATORS: But not enough fighters.

YOUNG COMRADE: Their sufferings are enormous.

THREE AGITATORS: It is not enough to suffer.

YOUNG COMRADE: Inside with us here are seven who came to us representing the unemployed. Behind them stand seven thousand and they know: Unhappiness doesn't grow on the chest like leprosy. Poverty won't fall off the roof like a loose tile, no: poverty and unhappiness are man's doing. Scarcity is all the meat in their oven, and their own wailing is all they have to eat! But they know all this.

THREE AGITATORS: Do they know how many regiments the government has?

YOUNG COMRADE: No.

THREE AGITATORS: Then they know too little. Where are your weapons?

YOUNG COMRADE (*showing his hands*): We shall fight tooth and nail!

THREE AGITATORS: Tooth and nail won't suffice. Therefore hear this: on orders from the Party, we have spoken about the situation with the coolie organization which leads the working masses, and we have decided to postpone armed action till the delegates of the farmers' organizations have arrived in the city.

YOUNG COMRADE: Then hear what *I* say: I see with my two eyes that poverty cannot wait. I see how easily, if we do nothing, they run away and go home. I therefore set my face against your decision to wait.

THREE AGITATORS:

Do not see with your own eyes!
 The individual has two eyes
 The Party has a thousand eyes
 The Party sees seven states
 The individual sees one city
 The individual has his hour
 But the Party has many hours.
 The individual can be wiped out
 But the Party cannot be wiped out
 For it rests on the teaching of the classic writers
 Which is created from acquaintance with reality
 And is destined to change it
 For the teaching will take hold of the masses.

YOUNG COMRADE: Let me ask this: is it in line with the classic writers to let misery wait?

THREE AGITATORS: They speak, not of pity, but of the deed which does away with pity.

YOUNG COMRADE: Then the classic writers don't advocate helping every poor man at once and putting that before everything else?

THREE AGITATORS: No.

YOUNG COMRADE: Then the classic writers are dirt. I tear them up. For man, living man, cries out. His misery tears down the dikes of mere teaching. And that's why I'm going into action — right now, this minute! For *I* cry out too. *I* tear down the dikes of the teaching! (*He tears up the writings.*)

THREE AGITATORS:

Do not tear them!
 We need every one of them.

Take a look at reality!
 Your revolution is quickly made and lasts one day
 And is strangled the morning after
 But our revolution begins tomorrow
 Conquers and changes the world.
 Your revolution stops when you stop.
 When you have stopped
 Our revolution marches on.

CONTROL CHORUS:

Praise of the Party

The individual has two eyes
 The Party has a thousand eyes
 The Party sees seven states
 The individual sees one city
 The individual has his hour
 But the Party has many hours
 A single man can be wiped out
 But the Party cannot be wiped out
 For it rests on the teaching of the classic writers
 Which is created from acquaintance with reality
 And is destined to change it
 For the teaching will take hold of the masses.

YOUNG COMRADE: That's no good any more. Looking at the struggle as it is now, I throw away all that was good yesterday, I reject every agreement *with* everybody and do what alone is human. Here is action. I place myself at the head of it. My heart beats for the revolution, and the revolution is here!

THREE AGITATORS: Silence!

YOUNG COMRADE: The sight of injustice drove me into the ranks of the fighters. Here is injustice.

THREE AGITATORS: Silence!

YOUNG COMRADE: Here is oppression. I am for freedom!

THREE AGITATORS: Silence! You are betraying us.

YOUNG COMRADE:

I have seen too much.
I shall therefore go before them
As what I am
And state
What is.

He takes off his mask and shouts.

We have come to help you!
We come from Moscow!

He tears up the mask.

FOUR AGITATORS:

And we saw him and in the twilight saw
His naked face, human, open, guileless.
He had torn up his mask.
And the exploited shouted from their houses:
“Who disturbs the sleep of the poor?”
And a window opened and a voice shouted:
“Foreigners! Throw the troublemakers out!”
We were now recognizable.
And in that hour we heard of unrest in the lower
section of the city
And the ignorant waited in the meeting houses and
The unarmed in the streets.
And we struck him down
And lifted him up and left the city in haste.

FINAL PURSUIT AND ANALYSIS

CONTROL CHORUS: They left the city!
 Unrest grows in the city
 But the leadership flees over the city line.
 What measures did you take?

FOUR AGITATORS: Wait a moment. When in the course of
 our flight we came near the lime pits outside the
 city limits, we saw our pursuers behind us.

CONTROL CHORUS:
 They run like race horses.
 The factory councils come to the central office for
 consultation
 But the shelterless slept on the propaganda leaflets.
 What measures did you take?

FOUR AGITATORS: Wait a moment. Yes, even now we
 helped him. Helped him along till we reached the
 lime pits.

CONTROL CHORUS:
 The masses wait in the meeting houses
 But the speakers are off at the mines.
 What measures did you take?

FOUR AGITATORS: Wait a moment.
 It is easy to know what is right
 Far from the shooting
 When you have months of time
 But we
 Had ten minutes' time and
 Enemy guns to think of and
 Had to see the face of the unhappy one
 Our comrade.

CONTROL CHORUS: Your measure! Your measure!

FOUR AGITATORS: Wait a moment.

As even an animal
Will help an animal
We too wished to help
Him who fought for our cause at our side.

CONTROL CHORUS:

In time of extreme persecution and
The confusion of theory
The fighters depict the structure of the situation
And weigh the stakes and the possibilities.

FOUR AGITATORS: We did just that.

THE ANALYSIS

FIRST AGITATOR: The masses are in the streets, we said.

SECOND AGITATOR: But we must assemble them in meetings.

THIRD AGITATOR: Or they won't know what to do, and will disperse, before the delegates of the farmers' organizations have arrived in the city.

SECOND AGITATOR: Therefore we cannot get our comrade over the border.

THIRD AGITATOR: But if we hide him and he later reappears, what happens when he is recognized?

FIRST AGITATOR: There were gunboats on the rivers and armored trains in the railroad sidings, ready to attack whenever one of us was found. He must not be found.

FOUR AGITATORS:

If we are found, no matter where,
The cry goes up: "The rulers are in danger
Of annihilation!"
And the cannon fire.

Wherever the starving groan and hit back
Their tormentors shout
That we have bribed them
To groan and hit back.

CONTROL CHORUS:

It is written on our foreheads
That we are against exploitation.
In the letter of information against us is written:
“They are for the oppressed!”

Who helps the despairing
Passes for the scum of the earth
We are the scum of the earth
We must not be found.

THE INTERMENT

THREE AGITATORS:

We decided:

Then he must disappear, and totally.

For we must return to our work

And cannot take him with us and cannot leave him
behind

We must therefore shoot him and throw him in the
lime pit

For the lime will burn him.

We will repeat our last conversation

And demand your verdict.

FIRST AGITATOR: We are going to ask him if he agrees, for
he was a brave fighter.

SECOND AGITATOR: But even if he does not agree, he must
disappear, and totally.

FIRST AGITATOR (*to the* YOUNG COMRADE): We must shoot
you and throw you in the lime pit so the lime will
burn you. And we ask you: do you agree to this?

YOUNG COMRADE: Yes.

THREE AGITATORS: He said Yes.

CONTROL CHORUS: His answer was in accord with reality.
Did you find no way out, whereby the young fighter
might be preserved to fight again?

FOUR AGITATORS:

The time was short. We

Found no way out.

In sight of our pursuers

We reflected for five minutes

On a better possibility.

You too, think now about
A better possibility.

Pause.

Lamenting, we beat our heads with our fists
Since they had only this fearful counsel to offer:
forthwith

To cut off a foot from our own body for
IT IS A FEARSOME THING TO KILL.

But we will kill ourselves and not just others if
necessary

Since only by force can this dying world be changed
As every living man knows.

It is not granted to us, we said,
Not to kill.

At one with the inflexible will to change the world
We formulated
The measures to be taken.

CONTROL CHORUS:

Go on with the story
You are assured of our sympathy
It was not easy to do what was right.

THREE AGITATORS: Where shall we put you, we asked him.

YOUNG COMRADE: In the lime pit, he said.

THREE AGITATORS: We asked: Will you do it alone?

YOUNG COMRADE: Help me.

THREE AGITATORS:

We said: lean your head on our arms
Close your eyes
We will carry you.

YOUNG COMRADE (*unseen*):

He then said:
"In the interests of communism
Agreeing to the advance of the proletarian masses of
all lands
Saying Yes to the revolutionizing of the world."

THREE AGITATORS:

Then we shot him
And threw him down into the lime pit
And when the lime had devoured him
We returned to our work.

CONTROL CHORUS:

And your work was successful
You have spread
The teachings of the classics
The ABC of communism:
To the ignorant, instruction about their situation
To the oppressed, class consciousness
And to the class conscious, the experience of
revolution.
In yet another country the revolution advances
In another land the ranks of the fighters are joined
We agree to what you have done.