

The Party of Moderate Progress within the Bounds of the Law

by Jaroslav Hašek



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

INTRODUCTION

One of the most curious episodes in the bizarre life of Jaroslav Hašek was his decision to found a political party of his own called "The Party of Moderate Progress within the Bounds of the Law", and to stand as its candidate for the Prague Royal Vineyards (Vinohrady) constituency at the Austro-Hungarian elections in 1911. His object was to find further ways of debunking the Monarchy, its institutions, and its social and political system. He was particularly disgusted by the "immoral" pacts which the parties had concluded with each other regardless of their principles and purely to advance their electoral interests. Not only did Hašek need to satisfy his innate love of exhibitionism, but he had another motive. A friend of his was in love with the daughter of the proprietor of the inn where the election meetings of the new party were to be held. By increasing the inn-keeper's custom they both hoped to persuade him to look more favourably on his prospective son-in-law's suit.

Hašek's cynical and derisory attitude to politics had also been expressed earlier in a poem he had written and dedicated to "The Tortoise", the café-bar, which he happened to be patronizing at the time, and to Karel, its head waiter:

Education, gentlemen? The main thing's BEER!
I like to go where there's plenty of cheer.
Our nation's a church, where a candle flames.
Velké Popovice * is one of its names.
Long life to "The Tortoise". Let's get used to Karel.
My politics, gentlemen, are — the barrel.

* A famous brand of Prague beer.

One of the supporters of the new "Party" was the leading Czech playwright František Langer, who has left us an unrivalled description of one of its electoral meetings in his book *They Were and It Used to Be*.

Hašek as parliamentary candidate*

František Langer

ZVĚŘINA'S RESTAURANT HAS A BETTER CLAIM TO A COMMEMORATIVE tablet than The Chalice and other taverns which were only of incidental significance in Hašek's life. It lay in the very centre of the Royal Vineyards (Vinohrady), behind the House of the Nation (Národní dům), in the gardens of which band concerts were held in the summer. Zvěřina's had the advantage that you could sit there very comfortably and listen to the music without paying an admission fee, and always find a seat there if the gardens were full.

Apart from that it had great attractions of its own. It was bright and clean, and its cuisine was widely praised for the quality, variety, and moderate price of its food. It was patronized by young officials, old bachelors, families with relatives from the country, sometimes wedding parties from the nearby Church of St. Ludmila, Yugoslav and sometimes even Czech students, when they could afford a better meal than they got in their college refectories....

Zvěřina's served a very good lunch for 80 hellers to one crown including sweet, and with portions of a size to satisfy any glutton. In the evening it was frequented by many lovers of good

* From *Byli a bylo* (1963) with the permission of the Estate of František Langer.

beer, of which Mr. Zvěřina was both a renowned connoisseur and consumer. His family boasted five daughters, three of whom were already grown-up, and with their help Mrs. Zvěřina managed the whole kitchen department. It was thanks to this that the cooking was always so dependable and the costs so low. The results of their worthy labours were reflected in the appetizing taste of the dishes and the very moderate prices.

The daughters were not allowed to go into the dining room, where a waiter looked after the service. The mother saw to it that they did not become an integral part of the traffic of the inn. They were very well-educated and pretty girls, lovers of literature and the theatre, and later good friends and, in some cases, patrons of the artists who were customers. Already at that time the dark-eyed Miss Boženka was being continually courted by the most orderly member of our group, Eda Drobílek, whom she later married. He was treated as a member of the family and formed a link between its fortunes and Hašek's circle.

After a time Zvěřina's moved, allegedly because of the rise of the rent, to The Cowshed Inn (Kračin) in what was formerly Coronation Avenue (now Avenue Wilhelm Pieck), also in the Royal Vineyards. This was a less favourable site, because there was rival competition at every corner. . . .

At first after the move Mr. Zvěřina did not do too well. He had to fight for custom against the superior forces of the inns in the immediate neighbourhood, his only weapons being his great experience in the business and his wife's culinary skill. At the very moment when he was going through these difficult initial stages, the writs were issued for the Royal Vineyards by-election. Elections were always a gold mine for innkeepers, as all the contesting political parties set up their electoral offices in different inns in almost every street. Various party leaders and sometimes even the candidate himself came there to make speeches, and the voters stayed there drinking beer and debating politics with party heat until the great day came when the votes were finally cast into the ballot box. These electoral bastions were chosen in the first place from among well-tried party members, and preference was given

to such inns and restaurants as had a dance hall, a covered-in veranda, or large spaces in general for an expectedly copious crowd of voters.

Because Zvěřina took no interest in politics and his dining-room was only of moderate size, it was ignored at the elections by all parties. He must have looked enviously through the window at the streams of thirsty voters, who went every evening to the rival establishments just across the street, and sorrowfully calculated the takings by the noise they made as they left the political meeting at night.

I have already mentioned Eduard Drobílek as a link between us and the Zvěřina family. He was then almost thirty and, as an official in the office of the Rector of the Czech Technological College, had an assured existence. He had lively dark eyes, spare features, an angular nose, and fine thin hands. A voracious but discriminating reader, he was playful, witty, and full of ideas which he passed on to others without writing anything himself. Nor did he claim authorship of them, when he found them in his friends' humorous sketches. Further, he was probably the only one of us who was absolutely orderly, punctual, and systematic, so that he was able to organize and keep going whatever he initiated. Above all he had for every one of our group a friendly word, sympathy, and advice. He was wise and experienced and smoothed out quarrels and squabbles. Nothing disturbed his equanimity and good humour. In short he was the good genius of the whole crowd and often its invisible *spiritus rector*. One should add that his participation in Hašek's undertakings was limited to what went on within the walls of Zvěřina's restaurant and ceased on his leaving its doors, whereas Hašek and his other boon companions made pilgrimages to other establishments which stayed open later. But just because of that restriction and because of his loyalty to Zvěřina's, one of his ideas laid the foundations for the most glorious epoch of the life of Hašek and all his boon companions as well as of Mr. Zvěřina's inn.

And so that is how it came about that in these difficult electoral times Drobílek was anxious to help Zvěřina's new restaurant increase its takings and came forward with the suggestion that,

if none of the established political parties would make Zvěřina's their base, we should reverse the process and organize a special political party to help his business.

I was invited to attend what they called an "embryonic" meeting to discuss the plan, but unfortunately arrived too late. I ran into the poet, Josef Mach, at the door, but only when we were both coming to attend the second meeting, and so I do not know whether the Party of Moderate Progress within the Bounds of the Law had existed for years and was only now roused to new life and new aims (as someone maintained) or whether it had come into existence only at this moment and for these elections. This was probably discussed and debated already at the first meeting. Mach always asserted, and even wrote, that it had been only just set up, but he could hardly have had any definite information since he only entered its life at the same time as I did and through the same door. But the preparatory committee commissioned him at once to write a hymn for the Party and he did so on the spot with only slight interventions from the other members. It started as follows:

A million candidates rose up
To hoodwink honest people.
The electorate would give them votes
And they would gladly take them.
Let others call for violent progress,
By force world order overturn.
Moderate progress is our aim
And Jaroslav Hašek is our man.

Armed with this hymn, which quickly spread over the Czech lands, the Party of Moderate Progress within the Bounds of the Law (for brevity I shall now call it only "The Party of Moderate Progress") began to acquire a more distinct shape. Further consultative evenings helped the process. Hašek's candidature was accepted as a matter of course, and it was organizational and ideological matters of all kinds which were always gone through late into the night.

It was for example resolved that anyone who liked could sit on the Central Committee, and that the number of its members was limited only by the capacity of two tables knocked together in the middle of the dining-room. . . . *

The preparatory committee had already determined the Party's electoral strategy, which was that at every meeting Hašek would make his electoral address with interruptions, questions, discussion, and free proposals. Before the meeting terminated, a collection would be held for the secret electoral fund, and at the end there would follow a free entertainment for the voters. Drobilek and Khun were detailed to design posters with Party slogans and stick them on the windows.

You can say what you like against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, but this electoral campaign was organized and passed off magnificently smoothly. There was no limit on the number of parties participating in the election, except that each party must register the name of its candidate with the authorities . . . so that the votes cast for him should be duly noted and officially counted. Electioneering meetings required no permission and did not have to be reported, even to the police, and no police were sent to them and there was no ostensible surveillance, except for a detective in plain clothes. Moreover, faithful to our anarchist principles, we had completely ignored the authorities, even in the most important matter of all, that of the official registration of Hašek's candidature, but even so the police did not interfere with our meetings. And so we calmly stuck up posters on the windows, announcing that here were the electioneering offices of the Party of Moderate Progress and that on Sunday evening at eight p.m. our candidate, Jaroslav Hašek, would present himself to the politically conscious voters of the Royal Vineyards and its surroundings and expound to them the program of our party.

On Sunday evening the inn was full. A lot of our friends came — artists, journalists, and bohemians — but respectable citizens

* Drobilek was their *rapporteur* and among the other members of the Central Committee were Langer, Mach, and Lada (later to be the illustrator of *Švejk*).

from the neighbouring streets as well. They were attracted by Hašek's fame or the name of the unknown political party. An hour before the start, Hašek arrived, clean and sober, together with the whole Central Committee. On the stroke of eight the Committee solemnly struck up the hymn "A Million Candidates Rose Up", and afterwards Dr. Grünberger declared the meeting open according to all the formalities, as he was the only one of us who knew them, and with considerable panache presented the candidate to the electors.

Then Hašek went into action. He portrayed himself in the most favourable light as the most suitable candidate for the seat and for the subsistence allowance which went with it. He outlined his program, which contained a whole heap of promises and reforms, abused the other parties, and expressed his suspicions of the rival candidates — in fact said everything that would be expected of a normal contestant for such office. Dr. Grünberger, who conducted the meeting, occasionally suspended it for five to ten minutes, so that the speaker could go and relieve himself and the waiter bring another round of beer. With these intervals and the time taken up in answering questions and objections, Hašek spoke for a good three hours.

Then, according to the program, a hat was passed round for a collection for the Party funds, and it was chiefly coppers which were thrown into it, I suppose because the voters had not yet begun to take us seriously. Finally came the time for "free entertainment". The Committee shared out the electoral funds and gambled with the proceeds. The guests at the tables stayed until far into the night. Zvěřina was satisfied and Drobílek likewise, since the inn's sale of liquor was greatly helped.

The news of Hašek's candidature spread all over Prague and we had a full house every evening. We even had to borrow from neighbours in the house more chairs for the visitors. One by one the whole of the artistic and café life of Prague came along: Bass, Lada, Brunner, old Anarchist comrades, as well as accepted politicians like Dyk and the Šmeral brothers. They had there and then to listen to many of Hašek's innuendos and accusations of graft and

thieving, and to defend and clear themselves before our public. Posters stuck on the windows before each meeting announced how our Party was growing by thousands and what Hašek would speak about that evening.

He, of course, never stuck to the program but said just what came into his head. Sometimes he kept tolerably well to a certain theme. At other times he skipped from one subject to another. Sometimes it was brand new, at other times he repeated what he had had success with before or had already alluded to in one of his stories. In general we listened to speeches about various saints, the fight against alcoholism, the genuineness of the Old Czech Manuscripts,* the usefulness of missionaries and other features of contemporary society. He pillaried abuses, supported or tolerated by the State, like the obligatory fee of twenty hellers charged by concierges for opening the house doors at night, as well as the charge for admission to public lavatories and the fining of poor citizens for using an even more public place, when they had no money to pay such charges and only did what they did because they were obliged to do so in the interest of their health. He thought up grandiose promises, with which he tempted voters of the most diverse occupations and conflicting interests. He hinted darkly that the next evening there would be frightful revelations about the rival candidates, whom he would accuse of various crimes such as having murdered their grandmothers.

With the help of Drobílek and ourselves, who played up to him, his address was sometimes enlivened with a dramatic interlude as, for example, when he elaborated that part of the program of the Party in which it promised to relieve rate-payers by doing its utmost to abolish the twenty hellers paid to concierges. This was received with enthusiastic applause. But so as not to lose the votes

* A cause célèbre at the time. Early in the nineteenth century the archivist of the Czech National Museum in Prague claimed to have found two manuscripts which threw a new and flattering light on early Czech history. Most Czechs finally accepted them as genuine but with time T. G. Masaryk successfully exposed them as forgeries.

of the concierges he hastily added that this part of the program was not directed against them; on the contrary, their interests were neglected by all parties and he would take them in hand and ensure that they became State employees with rights of promotion and pension. He asked those voters in his audience, who were themselves concierges, to speak up and give their views on the matter. But no one spoke up, because there were in fact no concierges present. Hašek then proposed the appointment of a commission which should go from house to house, ring at the doors and, when the concierges came to answer the bell, bring some of them to the meeting. This was agreed to and the meeting was suspended until the Commission finally brought in two concierges, just as they were, in shirt sleeves and slippers. They had been tempted by the promise of a few free glasses of beer, to be paid out of the electoral funds. To the delight of the audience Hašek got the concierges to talk about the trials they had to undergo at the hands of the tenants, and let them go with the promise that, when he had been elected, he would see that they would be able to attain inspector's rank.

Sometimes such interludes were fairly short; at other times they were longer. Thus, Hašek once recounted how the government tried to "buy" deputies, but they would not succeed in doing so in his case, he said, because thanks to the generosity of the editorial offices, he always had enough money. Then a voice was heard "from the back row" asking Hašek in that case to return the crown he owed him. Hašek immediately let fly at the interrupter, saying that the Crown must not be drawn into our debates. (To help younger readers understand I should explain that in political jargon the "Crown" meant the crowned Head of State and his family, and their non-involvement in parliamentary debates was always observed by the deputies.) "On the one hand," continued Hašek, "we are supposed to be a party within the bounds of the law and on the other hand there by the door" — and he pointed with his finger — "sits a questionable individual who is known throughout the whole of Prague to be a member of the secret police." The unfortunate man at the door, an entirely harmless neighbour, began to protest and to call witnesses. Hašek, however, started to

enumerate the various acts of provocation which he had been caught committing. In the end, however, he took a closer look at him, asking him to stand up, and then begged his pardon, saying that the real police agent he was thinking of was in fact taller than him by two heads. He even invited him to come to the president's table and drink a toast of friendship with him in order to restore calm among the public, who a moment before had been prepared to tear the alleged police informer to pieces.

Hašek's electoral speeches were the most voluminous and the most consistent humorous works of his that I had known before the publication of *Švejk*, nor did they in other respects fall short of the chief work of his life. They caricatured the hackneyed style, generated by the then political profession of party canvassers, speakers, journalists, and self-styled representatives and spokesmen of the Czech people. Hašek knew how to make literal use of it, guy it, and imitate it to perfection. He had at his finger-tips the complete jargon and slang of posters, the banalities of leaflets and leading articles, together with the bombast and sentimentality of slogans and proclamations. He spouted out whole cascades of this stuff, interpolating them into his address, whether they suited it or not. In addition he thought up false quotations and sayings, which he attributed to various authorities. In the fashion of speakers he was impassioned, enthusiastic, or emotional, but in the wrong places of course. . . .

In the stream of his oratory Hašek produced strings of long sentences, heaps of empty and muddled clauses, which with their rhythm and change of intonation resembled the complex sentences with which speakers lead up to some very important and emphatic conclusion, which should sound like a program or a manifestation and of course be extremely radical. With Hašek all this headed for something which, in its comic and grotesque way, was a piece of unexpectedly colossal nonsense. Often he either knew about it already in advance or invented it in the course of his speech. Even more often he just prayed that something would occur to him at the last moment for this climax and save him from a complete mess-up. When we saw that he had got so mixed up that he was

already losing hope of disentangling himself, we helped him by shouting out an interruption or a protest. One only needed to shout "Oh!" or "Shame!" and Hašek at once turned on the interrupter, tore him to pieces, and when, after a digression like this, his audience had forgotten about his unfinished sentence, he immediately set about starting a new one, ten minutes in length.

Many times regrets were expressed that no one ever took down in shorthand these glorious speeches of Hašek's and so preserved them. But even if that had been done, they could not have had a fraction of the effect they made in the heat of their improvisation. For the reader there would have been long and barren passages, which to the listeners did not seem at all long and barren, because they listened to them in the benevolent anticipation that their diaphragms would very soon be titillated by some juicy mouthful. Moreover the reader would not have shared in that collective feeling, which was produced by a combination of listening and seeing and which filled the whole smoke-laden hall; nor would they have been influenced by the receptiveness of listeners well-disposed to the speaker. The core of them were his friends and admirers from the whole of Prague, who voluntarily, gladly, and enthusiastically took part with him in the absurd play at elections, and for whom elections in general meant a ridiculous game. Both afforded Hašek's speeches a sounding-board, which would not have had the same resonance in any written account.

And similarly readers would not have had before them the visible figure of the chief actor in this play, because in Hašek, as we knew him, there was a substantial element of the actor. In these speeches, at every communal session, during the telling of his adventures, wherever he had listeners beside him, even in his every action and very often even in his life-style, Hašek played as a soloist on the stage, who seeks and needs approval and applause.

At The Cowshed Inn the voters saw before them someone who was almost a cabaret candidate. He acted his address with winks at the audience and a foxy smile on his rubicund face. He parried every successful reaction from the audience and supported it with a still broader smile, and he was visibly happy if he could set

off a regular salvo of uninhibited laughter. Generally he let it subside and used the moment to refresh himself with a sizeable draught. At other times he assumed the deadly earnestness of a political orator and in a heightened tone made pronouncements about utterly unimportant things, accompanying his words with a fanatical beating on the table, exaggerated gestures, and a challenging and stern stare at the audience. He seemed to be asking whether anyone would dare to express an objection, as though he had just pronounced the most radical truth or announced the greatest discovery. He exploited fully all the advantages of an attested humorist and so had no inhibitions, but allowed himself sufficient time and build-up, which instead of causing boredom, transformed itself into a tense anticipation on the part of the public of what the speaker intended with it and what would eventually come out of it. He liked to act and liked to play tricks and it was obvious that performing this role gave him the fullest enjoyment. When he began to speak, he went on for an hour or two and it was difficult to stop him, so as to pass on to the next part of the program of the meeting. A reader of the account of the proceedings, who would not have the live Hašek before him in his role of popular tribune, would have been deprived beforehand of the main spearhead of the wit of his "Cowshed" speeches.

The Royal Vineyards campaign culminated on the last day, the Sunday, when the voters dispersed all over the streets in the direction of the ballot box. Drobílek rewrote the posters in the window hour by hour, on which the number of votes cast for Hašek up to that moment rose to dizzy heights, and promises were made of a free electoral snack and beer for any new voters. In the afternoon, while the official counting of votes had only just started, we announced on the windows of the inn that our candidate and the Party of Moderate Progress were definitely the victors. Then impassioned voters from other parties began to crowd in front of our electoral offices and stormily urge us to take down the posters. The announcement of such an imposing number of votes for Hašek was regarded by them as a provocation. Finally a policeman came to ask us in quite a friendly way to remove the posters "in the

interest of public order". Hašek promised this friendly policeman that for his conciliatory conduct during the elections he would at once at the first session of the Diet see to it that he was promoted police sergeant, which utterly confused the poor man.

That day our Party's committee sat in plenary session from lunch onwards. Towards the evening it transpired that the coalition had won—I think it was the National Socialists and Young Czechs. The Social Democrats with their candidate, Škatula, obtained quite a decent number of votes for that bourgeois quarter of the city, whereas the poet Viktor Dyk, a radical, got altogether only about a hundred votes. Twenty valid voting papers with Hašek's name were cast into the box, but to them we added another ninety of one sort or another, the so-called split votes, which for some formal reason were not assigned to any candidate. And so in this way we presented the improved success of our Party as something stupendous, and our friends, the press reporters, announced it in such terms in the newspapers.

After the announcement of the results of the voting, which the victors celebrated on the streets with speeches, the singing of patriotic hymns and processions to their electioneering inns, the Party of Moderate Progress enjoyed the honour of having all the defeated candidates gathered together in their Party premises in the evening. Each one spoke a few words of farewell. Škatula had a reconciliation with Hašek and they sealed it with a kiss. Dyk made a speech full of aphorisms about the army, the muses, and an electoral Thermopylae. He was proud, he said, to fall and lie beside such glorious dead as, for example, our candidate. Hašek took up the idea of the fallen at Thermopylae and, after his speech, solemnly lay down on the dirty floor. Dyk, although his rotundity made this difficult, self-sacrificingly enacted his metaphor and joined Hašek in that position.

And this was how we bid farewell to the electoral campaign, the climax to the activity of the Party of Moderate Progress within the Bounds of the Law, and as magnificent a practical joke as the heart could desire! With the end of the elections the freedom of assembly, granted under the Imperial and Royal electoral laws,

came to an end too, and we were only allowed to meet again as ordinary beer-drinking private persons. This could of course again threaten the turnover of Zvěřina's restaurant.

Then Drobílek intervened once more and refused to allow the enormously increased popularity of Hašek's party to be wasted. He came forward with the idea that as a continuation of its hitherto so beneficial activity the Party should form a cabaret. . . .

THE HISTORY OF THE PARTY

Langer tells us that, after the elections were over, the Party treasurer, Drobílek, refused to allow the "enormously increased popularity of the Party to be wasted". No doubt with his encouragement, Hašek started to write what he called "The Political and Social History of the Party of Moderate Progress within the Bounds of the Law" and completed it in 1911. It has never been traced in its entirety, but seems to have consisted of (1) the Party records, (2) the "apostolic activity" of three of its members, as recorded in the letters of two of them to the "executive committee", (3) the Party's attempts to investigate so-called "scandals", and (4) its electoral activities.

After many adventurous experiences the greater part of the manuscript was traced, placed in the Czechoslovak National Museum (!) in 1963, and published for the first time in that year.

The work, with its pretentious title, consisted of little more than a string of articles ridiculing the activities of the various political parties of the time, satirizing their leaders and parodying their speeches. The humour of most of these can only be appreciated by those with an intimate knowledge of the political conditions in Bohemia at the time. Into this gallimaufry Hašek threw for good measure some humorous personal sketches of his friends and drinking companions, including even his brothers-in-law. Since some of them were highly libellous, if not scurrilous, they obviously could not be published when they were written, and were lucky to survive at all, in view of Hašek's known carelessness in the handling of his manuscripts.

Some of the profiles of the Party members took the form of mock eulogies, the subjects being treated as outstanding members of society and especially of the Party. The totally unimportant Drobílek, for instance, is portrayed as the noblest of men but unlucky in love.

An electoral speech

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, FUTURE CONSTITUENTS:

... No sooner had I been accorded the honour of adoption as candidate for the Party of Moderate Progress within the Bounds of the Law for the seat of a Deputy for the Kingdom and Lands represented in the Imperial Council than I became at once the victim of a slander campaign... for the opposing side has said of me that I have already been gaoled twice.

My honourable constituents, I declare before you that this is a vile invention and a dirty lie. It is quite untrue that I have been gaoled twice. I have been gaoled three times! And only as a result of prosecution by the police and each time of course when I was totally innocent, like last year for instance, during the autumn demonstrations, when after arresting me they found on me some fragments of granite from the middle reaches of the Vltava and some pieces of pink and blue marble from Slivenec, which I found by pure chance on the street and carried off for my mineral collection. But of course a police official, who hadn't the foggiest idea about mineralogy, thought they were bits of Prague paving stones for throwing at the police! The fact that a piece of brick happened to have found its way in among these minerals was, as I explained, solely due to an error of mine, because in the press of the crowd around me, when I picked it up to save it from being trampled on, I took it for limestone tuff. Another time, although

equally innocent, I was sentenced for interfering in official business when all I had done was to advise a policeman, who had just arrested a citizen on the street for committing a nuisance there, to deal with him extremely severely. In this case the police commissioner acknowledged that I had probably acted in good faith, but said that the policeman in question had no need of my advice, and so I was sentenced to a fine of six crowns and, in case of irrecoverability, to one day's imprisonment — which I accepted as more advantageous for a Czech writer, who gets paid for the number of lines he writes. Finally I was sentenced a third time for an article written in *Youth*, the organ of the movement of Czech-speaking theoretical anarchists, and here again I was completely innocent because the article in question was confiscated by the censor and so my friend, the editor, paid me no fee for it.

My friends, that is all there is to it. And, just because of this, is it fair that I should be written off as a degenerate, incapable of looking after the interests of his constituents? My friends, please give this your most careful thought.

Ladies and gentlemen, future constituents. . . .

If we pass from concierges to sextons, we can frankly state that we are now dealing with representatives of religion, whom — be they Mohammedans, Buddhists, or Fetishists of the tribe of Nyam-Nyam around the river Tul in Portuguese Africa — we hold in proper esteem according to the spirit of the statutes of our Party, paragraph 3, point 7. Statistics teach us — and I always go by official statistics, because they are very carefully compounded and, even if they are false, we have no others — statistics, I say, teach us, ladies and gentlemen, that in Prague and its surroundings there are 58 sextons of which 1.3 come under the electoral district of the Royal Vineyards if we include the husband of the charwoman who cleans the chapel in King George's Square. But, not included among those 58 sextons is the sexton of the Church of St. Alfonso, who has been arrested on suspicion of having stolen the church offertories and has thus spoiled the statistical picture. Well, my dear friends, you will certainly be asking yourselves, what use to us are those 1.3 sextons who come under our district? But, my dear friends, I tell

you that if you're having any doubts, you are making a mistake, and I shall endeavour to correct you. You must understand that those 1.3 sextons mean 800 votes for our candidate.

You see, sextons have free access to the funeral offices and consequently to the lists of dead voters. These lists, as has been shown in the past successes of the National Freethinking Party (and I sincerely hope that this will be their last), can acquire exceptional importance on polling day. When the electoral campaign is in full swing and is well organized and, of course, generously financed as well, then a dead voter, like one from the 10th electoral district of the Royal Vineyards, knows very well what his duty will be on June 13th, and if the sextons coming under our electoral district are members of our Party, that dead voter will cast his voting paper into the ballot box with my name on it, even if he is unable to walk and has to have himself brought by cab to the ballot box. Incidentally, all the cabs are already hired in advance for June 13th by the candidate of the immoral Young Czech-National Socialist bloc. Now, not even I can say anything good about this bloc, which is no doubt the most appropriate way for me to characterize it.

Our slogan is: "Sextons of the whole of Prague, close ranks and support us in our electoral contest, and you will most certainly be incorporated into a higher grade, as soon as we implement that most important point in our program—the nationalization of concierges and sextons." And at the same time we shall repel the immoral attack of the bloc, which was directed at us, when its top canvasser, Mr. Novák of Charles Street, was sent yesterday to Mr. Fuchs, the undertaker in Ryc Street, to find out which voters from the 10th electoral district of the Royal Vineyards have had coffins delivered to them most recently, and to obtain the precious list of their names.

My dear constituents, as far as I can remember, since the time of the coronation of Ferdinand V the Benign, who was the last monarch to be crowned King of Bohemia, Prague has never witnessed such enthusiasm as at these elections, when once more the principles of moderate progress within the bounds of the law begin to sway the whole Czech people as they did on that

memorable day in 1835. "We are against violence, and so we withdraw before it," say I, just like Dr. Kalabis when he fell down the steps of the House of the Nation while the police were dispersing his meeting and pushing his supporters out of the hall into the corridor. All the same, I would not like anyone to have any doubts about our enthusiasm and peaceful disposition just because yesterday I happened to break the jaw of a man who insulted me, and because I said that by moral superiority alone I would not be able to achieve anything.

[At the table of the "old medicos" cries are heard once more of "Hašek, the innkeeper has just announced that he's not going to serve any more rounds!"]

Friends, we are where we did not want to be, as the man said when he wanted to go to Budějovice and got into a train going in the opposite direction. He was caught by the Inspector for occupying a second-class seat, when he only had a third-class ticket, and was thrown off the train at Bakov. Because one of the first precursors of our Party, Mr. Galileo Galilei, said as I do, "But, all the same, it goes round," Miss Boženka, please serve one more round: three more beers for me, two beers and one cognac for Mach, two beers and one allasch for Opočenský, a quarter of a litre of white wine for Langer, a beer and a magador for Diviš, and a soda water for Gottwald. So Galileo's words "it goes round" are proved true, and it is also abundantly clear that the Party of Moderate Progress knows how to defend itself and looks after the interests of its voters.

After this digression, ladies and gentlemen, let us return to our theme and devote a few agreeable moments to abusing the opposing candidates.

Just today, at the beginning of the meeting here, the poet Louis Křikava, who not only has the same name as the police director and government counsellor, Křikava, but is in confidential touch with him, gave the executive committee of our Party a piece of information which we gave our word of honour to keep strictly secret. According to this, which is strictly confidential and known to only about three people in Prague, at two p.m. yesterday the

Young Czech candidate, Dr. Funk, knocked at the gates of the Convent of the Barnabites next door to the Schwarzenberg Palace, allegedly only in order to persuade the Mother Superior of that order to influence the votes of the clergy and the electors of his constituency. He did this in spite of the fact that, as a freethinking Young Czech candidate, he must have been aware of the church regulation forbidding Barnabites to have any contact with a man, especially at two p.m. in the afternoon. But Dr. Funk did more than that: he was guilty of an electoral fraud, when he burst into the cosy sanctuary of these innocent ladies: in other words, he went in person—as we have with certainty established—and asked if the Barnabites would pray two hours every morning and afternoon for the victory of Mr. Choc and himself. My dear friends, that is a dirty form of competition. I can tell you that we have an offer from the nuns of St. Ursula and from the Rabbi of the Maizl synagogue to pray for me and my victory in return for a trifling payment, but, honourable constituents, we do not intend to be so moderately progressive in this electoral contest as to rely on God's help. In this case we could hardly rely on it anyhow. Let our enemies play around with that sort of thing, if they like!

My dear constituents, I know similar and even far worse things about the candidates Viktor Dyk and F.V. Krejčí, not to mention the fact that they regard the job of a deputy as nothing more than a quicker way of making a living than by writing, in which they have conspicuously failed. I could say all I know about the widowed sister-in-law's half-sister of Mr. Dyk's cousin on his mother's side and about a widow in Satalice who is related to Mr. Krejčí. But even in an electoral campaign I have some regard for the proprieties and shall therefore wait to say it until next time. As for the candidate of the immoral bloc, I have a confidential meeting with Mr. Choc today at four o'clock, and if I don't force him to resign then don't let us mince matters but "let the truth come out" to quote the headline of *Time*. Yes, everything has its "time".

Today, my dear friends, if I am to recapitulate the statistical data you have already heard me quote, then we must tell ourselves that figures cannot lie. Our principles are such that every politically

conscious voter must be guided by them, whatever party he decides to vote for, even if it should be for the parties of the bloc which have conspired together to dig a grave for us, into which they themselves are going to fall. And these principles, my dear friends and voters — whether we look at them from the point of view of the nation, the minorities, social justice, trade, or religion — these principles, I say, cry out to you in the name of moderate progress within the bounds of the law, so that it must be clear, even to every idiot, that there is only one thing to be said and that is — “Elect me!”

Lecture on the rehabilitation of animals

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, MY FRIENDS, CZECHS AND FELLOW-countrymen: It is indeed a remarkable phenomenon that there should be a party in Bohemia which has had the courage to come forward with a new program, one paragraph of which runs as follows: "Animals, be rehabilitated at last!" Thanks to the way animals have been regarded up to now, every one of them has undeservedly acquired an exceptionally bad reputation.

Take for example, the pig. From time immemorial pigs have enjoyed the reputation of being swine. When people said, "You're a swine," it meant "You're a pig" and vice versa. Indeed there have even been whole peoples who have boycotted pigs. Take the Jews for instance. Moses tried to prove that by eating pork people could contract venereal disease. And so in the time of Moses many Jews pleaded this in excuse for their treatment of pigs. Only under the influence of Christianity, which abolished all the Jewish laws, did the use of pork spread to such an extent that in the end the Catholic Church even introduced pork feasts, to show that Moses was not speaking the truth.

All the same, the pig is still generally regarded as something unclean, because it wallows in mud, which is after all only what

* In Czech animals' names are used as a common form of abuse. To call anyone an ox, cattle, or cow is even more insulting in Czech than it sounds in English.

balneologists recommend for human beings. Take for instance the spa at Piešťany and its mud. Even the aristocracy wallows in it for the good of their health, yet it probably wouldn't occur to anyone to call any aristocrat a pig. Nor is Dr. Kučera, who recommends this type of cure, a swine. None the less, pigs, who have given such a glowing example to suffering humanity, are still despised and their name serves especially now in election time as a term of abuse, by which an opponent seeks to characterize his enemy as a dishonourable creature. But, ladies and gentlemen, have you ever seen a dishonourable pig? Doesn't a scalded pig in the window of a butcher's shop seem to you to be a creature of noble character, when even after death it smiles at those people who are going to eat it? I should like to know what you would do, if you were in its place.

And, as it is with pigs, so it is with all animals, which serve people for the benefit of all humankind and parliamentary candidates as words of abuse. Those of you who frequently attend election meetings at this time must certainly have heard the exclamation: "Shut up, you stupid ox!" This again discredits a certain species of animals, by which term I do not mean the parliamentary candidates. I would just like to mention the fact that it actually redounds to the credit of that parliamentary candidate to whom it is addressed, because an ox like that has much greater value than a parliamentary candidate. It weighs 700 kilos, while a parliamentary candidate hardly weighs as much as 80, and when you sell an ox you get 400 crowns for it, while for a parliamentary candidate you won't get a single guilder.

I've also heard that at a political meeting a man shouted at a candidate "You hound." If this happened to me, I should thank that man for honouring me with the name of a dog, which is the noblest of creatures and I would promise to follow in the footsteps of that animal and "retrieve" from Vienna the electorate's demands. The only thing the public seems to be able to do is systematically to insult animals, calling the humble and faithful dog by the names of various monarchs. A milkman's dog, which patiently and devotedly draws a cart with provisions, is called

Nero. A little toy dog, like a Yorkshire Terrier, which has never injured anyone, and is never tyrannical to anybody, is called Caesar.

People talk of dogs with the greatest contempt, just because their name is used as a term of abuse for human beings. And yet we see that dogs under the name of police dogs perform today yeoman service for the safety of all humanity. It would therefore be only right for animals to be rehabilitated, at least as far as concerns these wisest representatives of the the whole animal kingdom. It would be a good thing if those who insult police dogs were prosecuted for insulting official personages. Let us all in future do our best to see that animals are looked upon as beings which deserve the respect of every political party, and that their names are not used by them for unwarranted agitation in the electoral campaign.

The Party treasurer, Eduard Drobílek

NONE OF ALL THOSE WRITERS WHO BELONGED TO OUR CIRCLE, I must, alas, say, were worth as much as that one simple man of the people, Eduard Drobílek. He had had a very chequered past. Having lost his parents when he was very young— which is always inseparable from a chequered past, whenever a writer with an illustrious name like mine begins to write the biography of an outstanding man— he was left completely alone in the midst of life's vortex. And so he set out one fine day on foot to visit his uncle somewhere across the Elbe above Mělník. And what happened to him on his journey? Did any adventure befall him in the night darkness, which enveloped the valley of the Elbe, when that river, being in spate, roared and beat its waves against the banks (which it actually did not have, since at that time it had not yet been regulated)?

What befell Drobílek was that he met a gendarme.

"May I ask where you are going?" the gendarme asked Drobílek with that gentle sarcasm of which only gendarmes are capable when they meet a suspicious individual in the night hours. The gendarme took Drobílek for just such an individual and the latter answered with extreme politeness:

"May I ask where *you* are going, sir?"

"I'm going to Neratovice," the gendarme replied in some surprise.

"Now that's a coincidence. I'm just *coming* from Neratovice."

"Please then, could you tell me whether Sezemský's inn there is still open?" said the gendarme.

"So you're thinking of going to an inn?" said Drobílek. "Then you're failing to observe the decree of the Ministry of Defence, which enjoins on the gendarmerie of all people to be on their feet without rest day and night and to abjure all worldly delights, because it is just in such delights that there lurks the danger that they will not be able to carry out their duties properly. You have, for example, just asked me whether Sezemský's is open. You, sir, do not know who I am, and indeed I am beginning to suspect that you are no gendarme at all, but some rogue in disguise. Because, if you had been a real gendarme, you would certainly never have asked anyone on the road at night whether there was an inn open anywhere. Your first sacred duty was to ask to see my documents. And, if I did not have any, to arrest me and take me to the nearest gendarmerie station. And then you should have made a report, and, if it appeared that I was a rascal and good-for-nothing, then according to the decree you should have taken me off to the nearest district court, to be tried for the offence of vagabondage. I am going to lodge a complaint against you."

"But, your Honour. . . ."

"Don't 'Your Honour' me. I am now talking to you like a friend. Do you know the Minister of Defence?"

"No, I don't, your Honour."

"Well, all the worse for you. Are you aware of his last decree of May 12, 1901?"

"Pardon me, sir, no."

"Then you are unaware of that decree which lays down that when you meet a suspicious person in the night in your district and you don't know him, you have not only to ask him for his documents, but also to say: 'How much money have you got on you?' Then I would take out my purse and say, 'I have only two kreuzers', or correctly — according to the decree of the Ministry of May 3, 1900 — 'four hellers'. And don't you know that every one of us who travels in Austria must have at least four crowns fifty hellers

on him? And since I have only got four hellers, I am four crowns and forty-six hellers short of the sum fixed by that decree, and you will have to lend me the money, even though I don't know you and only know that you have not carried out your duties properly and can be penalized for it."

"I've only got a five-crown piece on me," said the gendarme feebly.

"Then give it to me," said Drobílek. The gendarme looked in his purse and cried triumphantly, "I've got some change after all. By how much did you say you were short of that sum?"

"By four crowns, forty-six hellers." And by the light of his pocket torch he paid Drobílek the whole sum, and so Drobílek arrived at his uncle's with the gendarme's money. Since then people say that that gendarme, whose name is František Kohout, lends four crowns forty-six hellers to all suspicious looking chaps whom he meets on his round and that he has fallen so deeply in debt since the Party has existed that he is going to leave the gendarmerie as soon as possible and himself act the part of a suspicious individual at night.

By this act Drobílek won the affection of all members of the Party and in the next chapter it will be appropriate to tell how heroically he bore the loss of his fiancée in a restaurant.

Drobílek's amorous adventure

THERE ARE NOBLE NATURES IN THE WORLD WHO PERFORM THE passive role of the deceived — people who are doomed in the end to experience every kind of ingratitude. When it concerns the relations of such noble beings with the other sex, the view is often taken that it is just these noblest of all men whom women are most prone to deceive and who suffer the bitterest of disappointments in love. Thus Drobílek, who was always ready to make out a cheque for his friend, Josef Mach, was sometimes very unhappy in love.

He loved Baruška, a cook in the restaurant *The Candle*, a country wench, buxom and naive, and when he plucked up courage to tell her that he would like to go with her to the cinema, she replied, "You dirty pig! What do you take me for?" From that time on Drobílek felt great respect for Baruška, and whenever there was talk about women he always used to say that he knew only one decent and respectable girl and that was Baruška. She was the girl who some years later wrenched off the water tap in the flat of her employers when she was making the coffee, and when she could not stop the flow of water, jumped out of the third floor and killed herself. It's only nihilists in Russia who die like that.

After that Drobílek fell in love with a dressmaker. He lavished his favours on her to such an extent that in the goodness of his heart and in all honesty, without any bad motive, he invited her to go with him on an outing to the country and arrived at the

appointed meeting place with a large package under his arm. "What are you carrying there?" the young lady asked with a charming smile, when they got on to the steamer to go to Závist. "Wait till we get to the forest, miss. There are too many people here," he answered, looking devotedly into her eyes. And when they at last reached the forest and sat down in a spot hidden from all human gaze, Drobílek snuggled up to his second love and said to her tenderly, "I have brought with me two pairs of pants, my love, and two shirts. I've got some thread as well. These pants are torn in the fork, and these shirts have holes in the elbow. Heart of gold, please mend them for me here." And turning round rapturously, he cried out, "Listen how beautifully the birds sing!" And as he told us about this, he always sighed and added, "And do you know what she called me? A vulgar brute! And before I could hand her those pants and shirts, she had gone. I can't imagine what that female thought, when I suggested we should go into the thicket together."

After that he looked on women with distrust for a long time, until finally he announced to us one day that the owner of a wine-tavern was in love with him, because he always spent a lot of money there. But when he stopped spending money, she stopped loving him and Drobílek then discovered that women were utterly worthless. And so he renounced the whole of womenkind until the time when he met the sweet little daughter of the innkeeper, where he used to go to have his lunch. "Strangely enough," Drobílek used to say, "that innkeeper has several daughters and I only love just that one. That is a very strange coincidence indeed. I must marry her, unless something comes between us." But somebody came between them and it was his friend, Förster. "Miss," said Förster one day to the girl Drobílek loved so much, "you must not marry Drobílek, because I love you myself. But if you don't want to marry even me, you would do best to run away from home."

The next day Drobílek celebrated his engagement with Miss Vilma. An hour after it Mr. Förster came along and had a long talk with her, in the course of which he explained that she would not be doing a good thing if she insisted on marrying Drobílek. For one thing she was still young, and for another he loved her himself, so

that she would be acting in her best interests if, as he had told her the previous day, she ran away from home and gave up everything. . . . And if she would not give up Drobílek, he himself would force him to let her go and to make love to one of her sisters instead. And then he proposed that she should run away that very evening and spend the night in a hotel somewhere. And he said she should write to Drobílek and ask him to forgive her, and that it would be great fun if she did. And if she also wrote to him that she did not love him, that would be even more fun. "We are all curious to see what will happen then," he said. Then leaving her standing in the corridor, he called Drobílek, and told him that Miss Vilma wanted to speak to him alone about her future plans. And so Drobílek stood with Vilma in the corridor for half an hour, and when he came back he said, "That splendid girl is weeping with joy, because I told her that I already have the furniture on order and have arranged everything so that there will be three banns at one go." After that we celebrated Drobílek's engagement and Förster made a speech in which he said that it was true that an engagement was an important step into a new life, but no one should imagine that it was a final one. Then he embraced Drobílek tenderly and said, "Whatever misfortunes may befall you in your life, never forget that I am your best friend."

That very same night Vilma ran away.

When Drobílek came to lunch next day as usual, eagerly looking forward to the sweet which he enjoyed so much, the following scene met his eyes: in the bar sat Vilma's father with a glass of dark beer in his hand, and when he saw Drobílek he called out, "Mr. Drobílek, I am tearing my hair. There is nothing else I need say to you." In considerable astonishment Drobílek walked into the dining room and saw the innkeeper's wife sitting there in the back with a tear-stained face. And from the door of the kitchen there peered out the tearful faces of all five daughters, and a weeping waitress came up to him and said, "Poor Mr. Drobílek, don't you know what has happened? Vilma has run away."

"But you haven't brought me the sweet," exclaimed Drobílek in a panic. When the innkeeper's wife heard that, she

wrung her hands and called out to her daughters, "Lord love us, Mr. Drobílek has gone mad." And then the innkeeper himself came up to Drobílek and gave him this letter, written in Miss Vilma's hand:

"Mr. Drobílek, dear Mr. Drobílek. I asked your pardon a thousand times for not loving you and running away. Your loving Vilma".

And while tears ran down Vilma's father's cheeks, Drobílek thrust the letter into his pocket and said anxiously, "But haven't you kept some sweet for me, sir?"

And at that moment Miss Božena came in, and her tears flowed down onto the huge portion of raspberry soufflé which she put before Drobílek, saying, "Poor Mr. Drobílek, you always used to like this. And, think of it, she ran away in the night." And Drobílek began to tuck into his soufflé with a blissful expression on his face. "Thank God," he said. "I was afraid you had forgotten to keep any sweet for me."

And, when the conversation turns on this episode, he always says, "I shall never again get such a huge portion of soufflé as I did that time my fiancée ran away. I really did enjoy it."

THE "APOSTOLIC" PILGRIMAGES OF THE PARTY

An important branch of the Party's work was its "apostolic activity". Three of its members, the author Jaroslav Hašek, the painter Jaroslav Kubín, and the ballet dancer František Wágner, were sent out on an "apostolic" or "missionary" pilgrimage, the object of which appeared to be to make propaganda for the Party, but which generally involved them in scrapes and had the reverse effect.

In the following story Hašek explains how he came to meet the other members of the "pilgrimage".

The painter, Jaroslav Kubín

MY FRIEND, KUBÍN, WAS ANOTHER OF THOSE WHO STOOD AT the cradle of the Party of Moderate Progress within the Bounds of the Law. I met him for the first time in the gardens of Charles Square, Prague, just as I was studying a large map of Hungary. A young stranger, obviously in a merry mood, came up to me, seated himself beside me on the bench and said,

“Excuse me, sir, that’s France, isn’t it?”

“No, young man, it’s Hungary.”

“But I think you’re mistaken,” he went on. “They’ve cheated you at the bookshop. That sometimes happens, you know. They make a map of France, put Hungarian names on it and sell it as a map of Hungary.”

From the style of his utterance I immediately perceived that it was a painter or someone in that line who was addressing me. At that very moment another young man went by, skipping in time. The stranger seized the astonished man by his arm, dragged him up to me and said, “My good friend, now you must give us the final judgement. Is this France or Hungary?” The newcomer blinked under his pince-nez and said, “It isn’t either of them. It’s Britain.”

“Don’t make fun of us, man,” the young man who maintained that it was France exclaimed. “Sit down beside us, so that we can enlighten you.”

The newcomer began to stammer out something, but he was already sitting beside us, his eyes blinking and his left and right legs beating out the time.

"Well, now," said the newcomer, "a chap never knows when he will be offered a chance of learning something. You should know that this map is in fact neither France, Britain, nor Hungary, but Turkey." And suddenly his face assumed a menacing appearance and he shouted out, "But this is monstrous. You sit down here and you don't even introduce yourselves."

And so we all made each other's acquaintances. The first stranger said with dignity, "I am Jaroslav Kubín, Academic Painter." And then the second, "And I am František Wágner, member of the ballet of the Royal Czech Provincial National Theatre in Prague."

That same day I brought them to The Golden Litre, where they became members of the Party. With us the admission of new members was arranged without any formality, except that each new member had to make a speech on a theme which we had decided for him. It was a kind of preparation for courses in public speaking. In addition it was the duty of each member to submit unconditionally to that task which was imposed on him by a general vote as a punishment for his misconduct. And it happened that evening that when Jaroslav Kubín and František Wágner were admitted, the member of the Prague ballet committed that tactless act of starting to fiddle with his nose just when the president was making his speech. As a result the disciplinary committee met at once for consultation in a neighbouring room.

"Who introduced him?" Mahen asked.

"Kubín and I," I answered.

They sent us off to the unhappy Wágner, who could not understand all this and, after a quarter of an hour's lively debate, the president of the disciplinary committee, Mahen, read out the written verdict.

"In view of the unseemly conduct of František Wágner, he is sentenced as follows: he must leave by train for Jihlava tomorrow or the day after at the latest. Thereafter he is to go on foot across

Moravia, Lower Austria, Hungary, Croatia, Carniola, Styria, Upper Austria, and Bohemia and return in four months' time at eight p.m. on Saturday, October 7th of the same year, to our main organizational premises at The Golden Litre. At the same time Jaroslav Hašek and Jaroslav Kubín are invited to accompany him on his journey and to see that the task imposed on him is properly carried out. In the case of any lapse of his, the Executive Committee of the Party is to be immediately informed by telegram. At the same time the sum of forty crowns will be disbursed from club funds to the three persons concerned for expenses on their journey. They are all three instructed to propagate everywhere the program of the Party of Moderate Progress within the Bounds of the Law and every fifth day to send us a detailed report of their apostolic activity."

And punctually at eight p.m., on October 7th of the same year, all three of us reappeared at The Golden Litre, having walked through half of Central Europe.

That's discipline for you, gentlemen!

The apostolic activity of three members of the Party as reflected in the letters to the executive committee

Jihlava, the . . .

ACCOMPLISHING THE TASK IMPOSED ON US BY THE DISCIPLINARY committee, we report the following:

We came to fetch Mr. František Wágner at four o'clock in the morning and ordered him to dress at once for the journey to Hungary. I believe I am right in thinking that he regarded the whole affair as nothing more than a joke, and only when, after rubbing his eyes, he caught sight of the rucksacks on our backs, our short stockings, and other touristic equipment, did he become scared, and we can state on oath that he started to sob aloud. Only when we told him that he had no idea of what was in store for him, if he failed to obey the order of the disciplinary committee, would he allow himself to be persuaded to dress, and did so with an expression of unusual horror. Because he had obviously made no preparations for our missionary journey, he had to pack his clothes into a great basket, which weighed eight kilos. When he had weighed that basket, he fell on his knees before us and begged us in the name of the Lord to relieve him of the task imposed on him. We were inexorable however and found in his wardrobe long strips of dark green cloth, which this member of the ballet wraps round

his legs when he dances in the roles of Sicilian brigands. We wound these strips round his thighs over his trousers, so that they looked like the tourist leggings of that unfortunate English traveller, Lord Everest, who was the first to climb the Himalayas.

Mr. František Wágner watched all these preparations with the rigid gaze of a wild boar from the jungle when fixed by the glare of a cobra. Then we placed before him a half sheet of paper for him to write the news of his sudden disappearance to his old aunt, with whom he was living. And we dictated the letter to him:

Dear Aunt. Fate has ordained that I must travel round the world on foot. If I should perish on the journey, I shall immediately inform you. All my love. Your affectionate nephew, František.

We dragged him half dead out of his flat together with his heavy basket and in the nearest bar we pumped into him six glasses of slivovice, so that afterwards he was as meek as a lamb. At 6:20 a.m. we left by train for Jihlava by way of Kolín, Kutná Hora, and Německý Brod. At 5:32 p.m. we were in Jihlava, where we went to look for Mr. Bozděch, an official of the local branch of the Živno Bank.

František Wágner's behaviour was exemplary and in the evening of the same day we organized in the Czech club our first lecture on the Party of Moderate Progress within the Bounds of the Law and its attitude towards the Czech minorities. But hardly had the meeting opened, than the town commissioner and an official from the *hejtman's* office arrived and asked us kindly to come with them to the town hall. And so we went along with them and were subjected to a thorough interrogation there. They asked us about the aims of our party, and when Jaroslav Kubín declared that we intended to organize for the Czech minorities in the German towns lectures on the correct standpoint of the Germans in Bohemia, on Czech intolerance and expansionism and give a cycle of lectures on German literature, we were received very favourably and taken off to the German club. Here we were entertained until three o'clock

in the morning and on the initiative of the deputy-mayor a collection was made among those present, the proceeds of which amounted to 112 crowns and were given to us as support for our journey. The deputy-mayor, Šafránek, gave us a bed for the night and next morning we went to see our friend Bozděch, who welcomed us with great joy and declared that, after we had been taken off to the town hall, the assembled members of the Czech minority had sent a telegraphic report to *The National* on the violence committed on three Czech tourists by the Pan-Germans of Jihlava. The second telegram had been sent to the Minister of Justice, asking him to prohibit the violence committed on the Czechs on the soil of the glorious Margraviate of Moravia.

If you read in *The National* of our tragic fate in Jihlava, you need not have any fears, because we are just leaving Mr. Šafránek and are taking with us a warm letter of recommendation to the German town council of Znojmo. It would hurt us deeply as Czechs if we had to touch the Czech minorities for money, and so we prefer instead to touch the German majority there.

Another letter from the missionary pilgrimage

Vienna, the . . .

TO THE GLORIOUS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PARTY OF Moderate Progress within the Bounds of the Law.

I feel constrained to lay before the Executive Committee this very unhappy account of the treasonable conduct of František Wágner. I expect that a telegram with instructions on what we are to do with him will be sent immediately to our address: 7, Mariahilferstrasse, Vienna. This is what happened:

We arrived safely at Znojmo with a letter of recommendation from the German town council of Jihlava to the German municipal authorities at Znojmo and handed it to the mayor himself. Let me add that we said all the time, "*Jawohl, jawohl.*" The mayor of Znojmo was president of the Association of German Tourists for South-Western Moravia, *Provinz Westsüd-Mähren*. He wrote us out a cheque for 100 crowns for our subsistence, which was paid to us immediately by the treasurer of that association, when we kept on repeating, "*Jawohl, jawohl.*"

As no one was controlling us, we went to the Czech club, where Wágner sang about four popular hits and we made a collection among the guests. It brought in enough to cover all our

expenses with twelve crowns to spare. Altogether our assets amounted to 142 crowns. According to our rules a different one of us acted as treasurer every third day. On this particular day, it was František Wágner's turn, and he, as was his custom, said, on taking over the money for safe-keeping, "I shan't spend one kreuzer unnecessarily."

Kubín wanted to go and have some wine, but Wágner said he would not allow it; he would not and indeed could not disburse the money for it, as his sacred duty enjoined him only to pay for what was necessary and never for any nonsense. He said that he looked upon himself as the custodian of that little hoard of ours.

I must point out that it was market-day in the town. The surroundings are very agricultural, as you are undoubtedly aware, for Znojmo cucumbers, onions, asparagus, tomatoes, and similar vegetables are staple items of Znojmo's export.

"Why does that fool write all that?" you will certainly be thinking, when you read these lines, which are more suitable for inclusion in a book of commercial geography.

Well, I write it simply because we were very much concerned with all those products and I still today have nightmares about unending heaps of tomatoes; I lie covered with onions, swim in Znojmo cucumbers, and bunches of asparagus rain down on my head. And beside me František Wágner is lying on his bed and howling like an old woman whose last grandson is just being hanged and she is left alone in the world. And Kubín is walking about the room and from time to time stands at František Wágner's bedside and hurls frightful abuses at his head.

Listen now to what that villain did to us. Already in Znojmo we were shouting that it would drive us crazy and now we are shouting about it here in Vienna.

It was that market-day. We took a room in a Czech hotel and bought tobacco for our short pipes. Wágner looked out of the window on to the square and exclaimed joyfully, "There certainly are pretty girls here."

I should perhaps mention that Wágner had already the day before suffered some unpleasantness as a result of his erotic

behaviour. On the way to Znojmo he gave a peasant wench a spank and she kicked him in the stomach, so that he was sick for more than half an hour and then said: "But you must admit that she had a very generous bosom."

"Never mind the girls," I said to him with great wisdom, when he started jumping up and down at the window as soon as he caught sight of girls from the region in their folk costumes, whirling round the square near carts full of all kinds of vegetables — those damned vegetables. But he would not take any notice of what we said, and suddenly called out, "Why, that's a pretty girl," and rushed off.

We took no notice and went on lying on the bed and sofa.

An hour passed and there was no sign of him. Another hour went by and still he did not return. He vanished with our money like the town of Messina when it was swallowed up by the earth.

He had gone. Gone! What a frightful word, so horribly short and terrifyingly long as well.

We went to bed hungry without supper. Had he betrayed us, had he left us, or had some misadventure befallen him?

"I have a hope that he has been killed somewhere," Kubín said in the night. "God grant he has been, because then I won't have to shoot him myself for his treason."

"God grant indeed that he has been killed somewhere," I said, "so that we may preserve a pure memory of him."

Then we fell asleep.

He did not even come back that night.

I know that you are already clenching your fists and calling out, "Where is that villain? Hand him over to us!" As I have already said, he is at the present moment lying and tossing about on his bed in Vienna and howling like an old woman.

He did not condescend to come back until noon the next day. Of course we at once threw ourselves on him, but all he did was to weep and scream "Maryša!" But what he now related to us was worse than the whole tragedy of the Mrštík brothers.

First of all, when he ran away from us, he went down to the square and got into conversation with a girl near a cart. He took

a great fancy to her and learned that she came from Drahoňovice, which is two hours' walk from Znojmo.

And so he passed the time pleasantly with her and at the end of it said firmly and resolutely that he would be waiting for her at nine p.m. in front of her farm or wherever she pleased. So she then explained to him where their farm actually was and how to get to it, saying that it would be best if he waited at the back by the orchard.

He could just climb over the fence and the rest would. . . .

Wágner burst out crying. "And so I set out at once on that road and waited there a long time until her father found me in the garden. I have it here confirmed by him. And he took out of his pocket various scraps of paper on which were written in a terrible hand and rusty ink:

"Received from Mr. František Wágner a deposit of 20 crowns for cucumbers."

"Received from Mr. František Wágner a deposit of 20 crowns for small onions."

"Received from Mr. František Wágner a deposit of 20 crowns for tomatoes."

"Received from Mr. František Wágner a deposit of 20 crowns for asparagus."

And so it went on, one item after another. . . .

And between his sobs he added, "What was I to do, when he had caught me there? I had to say I wanted to buy some vegetables."

"How much have you got left, you scoundrel?"

"Ten crowns."

"What, only ten crowns?" shouted Kubín. "Down on your knees, and at once say The Lord's Prayer."

So Wágner got going on The Lord's Prayer, while Kubín went downstairs to a shop. When he came back, he threw at Wagner's feet a ball of twine and said, "Now, I hope you know what to do with that." To me he said, "Come along."

And so Kubin and I went to have a glass of beer and a full breakfast, and when we came back, tearing off the leaves of an

acacia branch on our way and reckoning like a girl in love "he hanged himself, he didn't hang himself", and it always came out that he hanged himself, we found František Wágner sitting on the bed and winding the twine round his pants, which had slipped down. So that was the use to which that coward was putting our twine!

We did not let ten minutes pass without continually reproaching him for it. In the night we woke him up and shouted in his ear, "Villain, what have you done with our money?" Whereupon he growled out in his sleep the stock answer: "Carrots, gherkins, tomatoes, asparagus. . . ."

I now ask the glorious Executive Committee of the Party of Moderate Progress within the Bounds of the Law what we are finally to do with František Wágner. Please telegraph reply.

Jaroslav Hašek

Next morning a telegram arrived with the following brief message: "Sell him to Turkey as a eunuch."

And so Kubín and I decided that it would be best if we actually did take Wágner off to Turkey, and we should certainly have sold him to some brothel there if certain circumstances had not prevented us.

And who was it who suggested the contents of the telegram? Why, Louis Křikava, the poet.

The persecution of the first Christians in the Royal Vineyards

A MR. KOPEJTKO REGULARLY CAME TO OUR PARTY HEAD-quarters. He was a very pious man and he showed very plainly his utter contempt for us. You see, we were not exactly devout in the way we talked about the dear good Lord and at his tenth glass of beer Mr. Kopejtko considered it his sacred duty to defend his Maker. And so we called him "the first Christian in the Royal Vineyards".

Swathed in his Inverness cape, he arrived in a thoughtful and resigned mood—just as the first Christians came to the ancient Roman *osterie* when they were cram-full of Roman mercenaries. And when, in this atmosphere of unfaith, he raised his beer glass, he did it with a holy sublimity, as though he was raising the *ciborium* in the catacombs at the time of St. Peter. The most pronounced sign of his spiteful contempt for us was when on his way out he called over to our table, "Well, God speed you!"

We tried several times to take his God away from him, but he always shook his head in dull resignation and said, "You're wasting your time. Say whatever you like. In the faith in which I was born I shall live and die." Sometimes also he said: "In the faith in which I was suckled. . . ."

By profession he was an undertaker, and maybe that affected his pious turn of mind, although otherwise he never spoke about

those last rites with the appropriate measure of piety. He would say, for instance, "I had a devil of a job again until I had managed to stuff that old woman into her coffin today." Nor did his piety prevent him from being a passionate card player.

And so it happened that one Saturday when we were playing *vingt-et-un* he asked us if he might join in. At first he was in luck, because when the game started he made the sign of the cross. Then his luck turned and he lost every kreuzer of his week's wages. In a vague anticipation that, if he went on playing, he would win it all back again, he asked us to lend him five crowns, so that he could continue. And so he pitted those five crowns of ours against us.

"With all the pleasure in the world, dear friend," we told him, "but let us have your watch as a security, and make a declaration that you don't believe in the Lord God." There was exactly five crowns in the bank.

One of those great spiritual conflicts raged in Kopejtko's soul. He had the same expression on his face which those Christians must have had in the time of Nero, when they were hauled before that ruler and made to declare that they renounced their God.

"Never," he shouted.

"Then we'll play without you."

It was almost as if in Rome the ruler had shouted, "Toss him to the wild beasts!"

Kopejtko's face clearly showed his suffering. It was a dreadful and horrific struggle. Instead of the wild beasts in the Roman circus, his mind conjured up visions of his wife.

"Gentlemen," he said suddenly, handing his watch to us. "Very well then, I don't believe in God."

He was given his five crowns and when the cards were dealt to him again, he called out: "But all the same I do believe in God. I stake those five crowns."

He lost them all. Then he cried out, "I don't believe in the Lord God!" and borrowed ten crowns from the innkeeper on the security of his wedding ring. He lost them, shouting, "All the same, the Lord God still exists."

Then he handed over his overcoat, and in the end his wife came to fetch him away.

The following Sunday he went to the monastery of Svatá Hora to do penance and brought back a rosary for the innkeeper.

Persecution of the new Party by government circles

WHEN MR. KOPEJTKO RETURNED FROM SVATÁ HORA, HE WENT and denounced us to the police, stating that we played prohibited games and slandered the Lord God as well as the great ones of this world and the other one beyond the grave.

From then on Mr. Markup came to join our company. Who was he? He was a good man and an officer at police headquarters. He had a low salary and six children. At this time, when the clouds were gathering in Prague for the great storms over universal suffrage, people of his kind earned extra money by acting as informers to their superiors who in their turn passed the information on to the State police in Vienna. Moreover it happened just after the visit of His Imperial Majesty to Prague.

Mr. Markup was keen on adding to his income. Chateaubriand once said that the police are always romantic. And when Kopejtko on that occasion declared in the Security Department that he could not stand idly by while such things were being said in our tavern, they sent Mr. Markup to us. They did not worry about his being the father of six children.

When the Commissioner asked the pious Kopejtko, "And what sort of people are they?" he answered, "Your Honour, they're villains." And so the father of six children was sent among those

villains. He came like a Roman legionary who had been sent to Britain to stand in the front rank on guard in the fog of that strange island.

And he imagined that no one would know him. But he was at once recognized by the Police Chief's nephew, who was one of our company and who said quite simply, when Mr. Markup left the first evening, "That's Markup."

What he told us about him was rather miserable: the man let himself have his face slapped, had six children, and for every slap got two crowns commission. In addition he got daily, or in fact nightly, subsistence allowances at the rate of five crowns a visit to the villains' den. Altogether they paid him 52 guilders a month.

The next evening Mr. Markup arrived earlier than we did and sat down at our table, looking very genial. When we appeared, he apologized and said he would move to another table. But we invited him to stay and said that his company would be most agreeable to us. We told him that we talked politics, but presumed that that would be no obstacle to him.

"So, it's all agreed?" my friend Mahen said to me in a low voice, but loud enough for Mr. Markup to hear.

"Yes, indeed," I said, "I'm making the final preparations."

"Do they know about it already in Moravia?" said Engineer Kún, leaning over towards us.

"Yes, Moravia already knows about everything," I said loudly.

Markup gave a start. "If you pardon me, I know Moravia," he said. "It's a country which always stands shoulder to shoulder with us Czechs."

"I think you are wrong there," I said.

"Pardon me, gentlemen," said Mr. Markup, "you must surely allow that at the Battle of the White Mountain the Moravians fell at the Star Hunting Lodge."

"That's news to us," declared Opočenský. "But, you know, that's something one must not talk about. You could get yourself badly involved. You might find yourself beginning to talk about the Emperor Ferdinand."

Mr. Markup smiled affably. "Don't you think, gentlemen, that the Emperor Ferdinand was an outstanding man?"

"He certainly was," I said solemnly. "A man who in 1620 could stamp on the neck of the hydra of revolt was definitely a most honourable man, especially when you consider that he belonged to the noble House of Habsburg."

"Well, but look," said Mr. Markup, "after all he did have all those Czech lords executed in the Old Town Square."

"Perhaps you regret that, sir?" I shouted out savagely. "Surely it was a very mild punishment for rebels who threw the King's Commissioners out of the windows of the Royal Castle, deposed their own king, called a foreigner to Bohemia and killed in battles more than 20,000 of their own king's troops. And you would defend such people? Are you a Czech, sir? Are you not ashamed of yourself? I'm sure that in a moment you'll start talking about the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, praising Kossuth and saying what a fine chap he was. And that's the blackguard who forged bank notes and stirred up all the Magyars from the *puszta* against the Habsburg dynasty, and, when he should have been hanged, ran away—the scoundrel! And now you calmly come here and begin to defend him, you praise the Hungarian Revolution and shout, 'Long Live the Revolution!'"

"But, gentlemen, I assure you I never said anything of the kind."

I got up. "These gentlemen here are my witnesses that you did. Didn't he say so, boys?"

"Yes, he certainly did," they all chimed in, "and much worse things too."

Then Mahen stood up. "Sir, you wormed your way into this respectable gathering for the purpose of disseminating treasonable slogans here. You blasphemed against the Lord at this very table, where none but the sons of Catholic parents are seated. In your desire to lead astray orderly citizens like us on the path of heresy and unbelief you shouted out that you do not believe in the Lord and you spoke disgustingly about the Infallibility of the Pope. For

this there is only one answer — and that is gaol! Landlord, call the police at once!”

“But, gentlemen —— ”

“But me no buts, sir. You will have to be investigated by the police and we shall denounce you for offending against religion, insulting Their Imperial Majesties and things like that. Do you understand? Our watchword is: For God, Fatherland and King. And you want to come here and steal it from us. Are you not ashamed of yourself, you, who are a man of education?”

By this time the police were already here.

“Please, officer, be so kind as to enquire of this gentleman his name. In an effort to corrupt our morals he speaks disrespectfully of Almighty God, the Pope, and the whole dynasty. He wants to turn us into anarchists, terrorists, and blasphemers.”

Mr. Markup got up and said calmly and solemnly, “I am a police officer.”

The Chief of Police’s nephew jumped up. “You must be crazy, my good man. Show us your papers. What would my poor uncle say, if he knew about this?”

Mr. Markup started to rummage in his pockets and then, quite crestfallen, was compelled to admit, “I am sorry, sir. I’ve left my papers at home.”

Then the Police Chief’s nephew approached the officer and, showing him his papers with that dreaded name, said with dignity, “The Chief of Police, your superior, is my uncle.” And, pointing to the unfortunate Mr. Markup, he called out, “Take this man away!”

And while the policeman was leading off the dejected Mr. Markup there rang out after them the sounds of our sublime chorale, “Moravia shall never lose her faith. Preserve for us, dear Lord, the heritage of our fathers.”

Mr. Markup never showed his face in our midst again, as he was transferred to the archives department of police headquarters, to dust the old documents.

The struggle of the Southern Slavs for liberation from Turkish rule caused great excitement among some of the Slav peoples. In the nineteenth century many Russians enlisted as volunteers to fight for Serbs or Bulgarians, and at the beginning of the twentieth there was another wave of enthusiasm which even reached peace-loving Bohemia. Hašek here parodies the enthusiasm and bombast of Jan Klimeš, a Czech "volunteer", who came to Prague and told stories about his military exploits in the Balkans. Hašek's attention was first drawn to him by a series of articles he published in the popular illustrated Horizon, describing the life and organization of the Macedonian insurgents. In the following sketch Hašek takes a leaf out of the pages of Baron Munchausen or Conan Doyle's Brigadier Gerard.

Klimeš, Commander of the Macedonian Revolutionary Troops

...NONE OF US KNEW EXACTLY WHERE THIS CHAMPION OF THE oppressed was born. He was very tall of stature, and his enormous beard on his shaggy face, his menacing expression, and his fiery speeches showed him to be a born leader of revolutionary armies. And it was indeed in that capacity that I got to know him in Sofia, two years before our new Party was founded. It would require a whole chapter, and a voluminous one at that, to describe all his glorious deeds, the most renowned of which was when we fought together in that memorable battle on Mount Garvan. It was there that we laid siege to Monastir and, finding ourselves encircled by *nizam* or Turkish regulars, fled from the battle-field as gloriously as anyone can.

I repeat that we had this man in our Party for a certain time and felt extraordinary respect for him just because of his heroic deeds. But what follows should in no way be regarded as a belittlement of him, but rather as magnificent proof of his sterling character.

Truly, that man was totally without fear, but when the worst happened even he had to acknowledge that it was better to retreat, and he always did so in the most perfect order.

The finest moment was when I met him in Sofia. It was just at that troubled time when bands of Turkish *nizam* had surrounded the regions around Salonika and thrown their strongest force at the Bulgarian frontier beneath lovely Mount Vitoša, that magic spot which is so full of poetry. It was at that season of the year when everything is fragrant in the mighty groves and primeval forests of Vitoša. Below the mountain the Turkish guns thundered and there was an answering rattle of rifles from the Macedonian insurgents. And it was just there too that troops of the Bulgarian revolutionary, Sarafov, were advancing on and on and the guns thundering again further and further in the distance.

At that time Klimeš was sitting in an ottoman factory in Sofia, because he was not born a commander but a master upholsterer. And he sat there in perfect calm, quiet unaware that in the air over his head there hung, as it were, the exalted rank of a commander. And it was at that very same moment that I came to Sofia and got to know as a fellow-countryman of mine that man who up till then had known nothing but peace and quiet, and in whose heart were still slumbering the latent qualities of a legendary hero.

And there, over glasses of wine from the Athenian mountains (which was frightfully bad and excruciatingly expensive) and from Mount Olympus (which likewise was no nectar of the gods, but the most common hogwash), he lied to me for the first time in his life, saying that he knew all the passes, all the revolutionaries, and all the bands of Macedonian insurgents including their leader, the hero Sarafov, who was later killed by the comitadji because he misappropriated money intended for the purchase of machine-guns, hand grenades, and other agreeable objects.

I confess that at that moment I felt a great yearning to go with him to the frontier, and he was ready to set off at once or the next day—in brief, to go and fight for the liberty of his oppressed Macedonian brethren. And to prove it to me, he took his hat and exhorted me to follow him.

We went to a small café, which as he afterwards confided to me, he had imagined was not frequented by comitadji, but unfortunately he had miscalculated. And so, all because of this, that

good, heroic and valorous soul became the Macedonian Commander.

It happened that at that very same café they were recruiting volunteers to go to the frontier. When Klimeš heard this, he turned pale, but, having already a presentment that glory was in store for him, with the same spontaneous heroism with which the Russian legendary hero, Ilya Muromets, once took his decision, he announced in a Bulgarian which was more broken than fluent that he had with him a fellow-countryman from Bohemia and was ready, together with me, to risk his life for the liberty of his brethren beyond Vitoša, for the sake of their interests, their women and their children, and for everything that was beautiful, heroic, grand, and glorious.

“Give us some rifles, brothers,” he called, when he had drunk some *rakija*. And then we swore an oath — an oath to the banner of liberty. I must confess that up to that time I had only shot hares, and now it would have to be Turks. It was a rather unusual thing to have to do, but the second, third, fourth, and fifth *rakija* gave me courage.

As we took the oath, we trembled and our limbs shook. And this was how we set out for the Turkish frontier in the darkest and gloomiest night which I ever remember.

Next morning we came to an arms depot beneath Vitoša. It was a small hut, where first they gave us some cheese and only later handed us weapons. They were Werndl breech-loaders and you loaded them like Mannlicher repeaters, but neither Klimeš nor I knew exactly how it was done.

“Do you understand how to do it?” the leader of the band asked us.

“Of course we do,” said the valiant Commander, trembling all over when they put into our hands a supply of cartridges. “You just stick the cartridge into the rifle, brother, and aim it at a Turk, bang! And then that Turkish swine falls down. You then stamp on his throat and cut off his head. It warms your heart. It’s no child’s play, brothers. Pass the flask along.”

They handed him the flask and, when he had taken a swig at

it, he went on: "That's how it is, brothers. The Turk, that unchristian beast, lives like a dog and like a dog he shall die. I swear it, as my name is Klimeš."

And so they put us in the front line to implant fear in the hearts of the Turks — me, because I was wearing European clothes, and Klimeš, because he looked like Goliath. His gigantic figure rose up in all its grandeur, his blue eyes aflame and his bushy beard bristling. He was no longer Klimeš, the master upholsterer, but the terrible Klimeš, the true Macedonian Commander.

On that expedition, we nearly fainted with horror for the first time, when we thought of how the Turks would make mincemeat of us, when they found us in the front line.

Towards evening we set fire to an abandoned barn, which belonged to a Turkish priest. We were on Turkish soil, and the Mullah was insured in Salonika.

And before us there rose the peak of Mount Garvan, the guardian of the Turkish dominion, which swarmed with scorpions. Throwing away our rifles, we scaled that mountain. Being in the vanguard we were the first to reach the summit and see all around below us the fires of the Turkish regulars.

And we fled to the Turks. I knew a few sentences of Turkish and put them together to say, "Turkish gentlemen, comitadji pursue us. We flee." And it was only too true. The Turks formally took us prisoner and decided to bring us before their officer before hanging us. And when they did so, we found that he was a very charming man. He asked me in French why the comitadji were chasing us, and when I said it was because they took us for Turks, he burst out laughing and was very hospitable to us. The next morning he sent us to the frontier by train with a guard of honour.

That was that great battle on Mount Garvan, of which Klimeš, the Macedonian Commander, told the story in Prague and related how we had killed 2,500 Turks there.

But it was not only at the battle of Mount Garvan that the Macedonian Commander distinguished himself by his immense

courage, as we have already related. It was principally during the heroic capture of Monastir that he displayed his finest qualities as leader and his utter disregard for any other influences which might have been injurious to the sacred cause for which we fought so valiantly on the mountain.

Whoever followed the account he gave in Prague of that boyar-like struggle could have seen clearly how much the Macedonian Commander accomplished for the cause of oppressed Macedonia, and realized also how decisively we avenged all those atrocities the Turks were committing on the Christian population beyond Vitoša. I should like to mention, moreover that he was always so modest himself that, knowing my own modesty, he never spoke of the part I too had played in that glorious campaign. I am very grateful to him for not having done so, because in our circumstances one really prefers not to hear people say of oneself that one has cut off and truncated hundreds and hundreds of Turkish heads. Here we're above such trivialities. But if someone kills, say, only a kitten, then people talk of him as though he were a monster.

But Klimeš is not the sort who would try to cover up his actions, not the man to be ashamed of what he has done and to make inept apologies for it. There are witnesses in Prague of his marvellous description of the capture of Monastir:

"I can say, gentlemen, that I did not put too much reliance on my troop, who numbered 200 men, because I suspected that there were traitors among them. Moreover the road, along which we approached the city of Monastir, was not exactly the most attractive one, winding as it did through mountainous country which was, so to speak, utterly desolate. On our march through this territory a fortnight before we had poisoned all the wells to prevent the Turkish regular army advancing any further. And now, just imagine it, we could not even ourselves drink out of them in that frightful heat of 38 degrees. Some comitadji, who disregarded my express instruction not to come near the poisoned wells, paid with their lives for their daring. I had to have two of them hanged as a warning to the others.

“But that was not the worst thing. Traitors were to be found not only in our ranks. Behind every little rock there was one hidden, who rushed away to the nearest *vali* to inform against us so that at once the *aga* appeared with his janissaries. And, when I consider that I counted from 2,000 to 3,000 little rocks on that road, you can imagine what it was like for us. You may sit comfortably here over your beer, but you try and sit equally peacefully when shells are bursting over your heads and machine guns and rifles are rattling beside you! Every moment they score a hit, and the horse beneath you takes fright. You have to jump over ravines, because the Turks have torn down all the bridges, and you have to shoot at the same time. This makes the horse even more nervous and it gallops off with you to the enemy’s camp. Oh, it’s a glorious picnic, I can tell you!

“And so in the end there were only 80 of us left against 28,000 *nizam* infantry, 4,000 janissaries, and God knows how many thousands of other Turkish troops. And they all wore green uniforms and so wherever we looked, we thought we saw forest land and should have the chance of feasting ourselves on wild raspberries, but when we got there we saw that it was the Turks, and they all of them ran away before us, so that we found ourselves again on bare soil. Oh, it was some picnic, I can tell you! But we were favoured by St. Sava, the Bulgarian patron saint, whom the Turks hanged at that time without much ceremony because they found on him a letter from Sarafov. Oh, that was some picnic, I can tell you! And so in spite of all this one fine morning we advanced on Monastir.

“If I may explain it to you, gentlemen, Monastir is one of the most powerful Turkish fortresses in Macedonia. The actual inner fortress is, you might say, just like this table where I’m sitting now. That piano there on the left, that other table there on the right, the landlord there at the door, and there where they are playing cards in the other corner — those are the bunkers around Monastir. And every good strategist, if he wanted to capture Monastir, would have to proceed in the following way: first, he’d have to capture the piano, after that the landlord, and finally that table over there; because, if the fortunes of war changed and the enemy took the

centre bunker — that is to say the landlord — we should have to blow him up and shoot from the piano on to the table here, after, of course, having previously slaughtered all those who are playing cards over there. And of course I too acted in accordance with this well-thought-out plan. We blew up the centre bunker, occupied the others, and aimed our guns at the city. For three days and three nights we bombarded it without stop and then on the fourth day, towards evening, an enchantingly beautiful Turkish girl came to our camp. She desired to speak to the Macedonian Commander, Klimeš, himself and no one else — that is to say to me. I told them to let her come into my tent and, when she appeared, she fell on her knees before me and started to kiss my feet, begging me to spare the city and saying that she gave herself to me completely. I could do what I liked with her. That was a glorious picnic, I can tell you! And do you know what I did, gentlemen? Why, I ravished her, and next morning we took the city, ransacked it, and set fire to it in six places. We gave the population no quarter but murdered them and expelled them from Turkey. Friends, this may perhaps seem to you an act of atrocity and savagery, but it is really not so and I can easily convince you of the contrary. In the marketplace they had already set up gallows for all eighty of us and eighty barrels of paraffin were standing there. Just consider what our fate would have been if they had caught us!”

Those were manly words, with which the Macedonian Commander, Klimeš, clearly illuminated his activities in aid of the subjugated Bulgarian brethren beyond Vitoša. However, I am going to take the liberty, very briefly, not, of course, to rectify some of his statements — this I would certainly not think of doing — but simply to show that in his heart he harboured no bestial instincts, but that on the contrary all that he did at Monastir was done only for our preservation.

Monastir, for example, is not a city. The word means the same as “monastery”, where the monks serve refreshments to thirsty and hungry pilgrims for their journey further. When that

Turkish officer, to whom we appealed at Mount Garvan out of fear of the Bulgarian comitadji, arranged for us to be accompanied to the frontier by a military guard, we reached that monastery on the Bulgarian side after two hours' marching. And there we besieged its gate and asked for some refreshment. And it is true that the Macedonian Commander, Klimeš, plundered the monastery, because we stayed there a week and ate up all its provisions.

It is also true that a beautiful Turkish girl came to our camp. We crept into the hay stack of that eighty-year-old woman in a meadow and milked her goat. But that was already an hour before we came to Sofia, where afterwards we arrived safely towards evening and Klimeš first showed the wounds he had sustained in the battle beyond green Vitoša. He happened to graze his forehead and elbow when he fell down into the cellar of the monastery, where he had gone to look for the stocks of wine which the monks were carefully concealing from us. And you see, this cannot in any way diminish Klimeš's military glory, for in Prague during his visit here, whenever he was deeply moved by his own stories, he took off his coat and waistcoat, and stripping his shirt off his back invited all his listeners to feel the hard object over his left side, a splinter of a shell which had lodged itself in his body, when it exploded above us — one of those hundreds of shells which the Turkish artillery fired during that glorious battle on Mount Garvan, where we broke through two regiments of the regular Turkish army and completely annihilated a regiment stationed in its rear.

The hard object was actually a floating kidney, which Klimeš had come to Prague to have treated. I can say that his valour and his great commitment to the sacred cause for which he was fighting had a great appeal and won support for the Party of Moderate Progress within the Bounds of the Law. And his accounts of all those numerous battles and glorious victories of his own troops were the first instructive lectures with which the Party appeared before the public. We had taken upon ourselves the task of presenting an enlightening and instructive program, because what do people need to win their independence? Only enlightenment — enlightenment of the kind which permits people to acquire an

understanding of the right views on life so that they can learn that they should not be overhasty but go on steadily craving for self-education. And I can say that by the very fact that we included in our program cultural questions, we earned the affection of those classes who until then had had no inkling of the existence of our party.

Our cultural propaganda immediately caused a revolution. In literary and student circles people began to reflect rationally that a party which goes among the people with instructive lectures rather than barren phrases is a party with a future.

And people joined our ranks in flocks, following the theory of Darwin on the social life of higher mammals, according to which as few as six are needed to create a flock.

And so on December 14, 1904, there were altogether eight of us in the Party.