

specified date. During these few months the Allies and Russia ought to start negotiations with Germany on a basis that could not fail to produce positive results. If the Allies refused to enter into such negotiations, Russia would stop fighting at the date fixed and conclude peace with Germany. In that case Russia would become a neutral Power. Protopopov proposed this plan to the Tsar in December 1916, and he assured me that the Tsar approved it.'

Now Protopopov was either a liar who insufferably slandered his sovereign, or else he told the truth just before his death, at a time when he had nothing to lose. If he told the truth, his testimony proves clearly that Nicholas II contemplated definitely, from 1916 onward, signing a separate peace with his cousin William in case

the Allies refused. We may even go to the extent of saying that the only reason he did not carry out the plan was because the revolution did not leave him time to do so.

The Bolsheviki themselves 'committed the treachery' that the Provisional Government under Kerenskii refused to commit. And it is to be observed that they adopted the same tactics that Protopopov contemplated — first, to try to get the Allies to make a general peace; second, if the Allies refused, to break the pact of 1914 and to treat separately with Berlin. So let me repeat once more that, although we have no desire whatever to whitewash the Bolsheviki, we cannot shut our eyes to the light of such a document as the one from which I have just quoted. The Soviet Government did not stand alone in its policy of betrayal.

DEATH'S HERITAGE

BY HUMBERT WOLFE

[*Spectator*]

ALL men are heirs to riches. They inherit
 A vast estate the day that they draw breath.
 They by the right of Eve, and Adam's merit,
 Assume the feudal policies of death.
 Their actions wear his livery. Their thought
 Is the tradition of his seigneurie.
 Their dreams are heirlooms, and their love is naught
 But whispers and his fleeting memory.
 But some refuse their heritage. These owe
 Dangerous fealty to life the lord
 That lights them home by ways death does not know
 To Eden by the flashes of his sword —
 The poets from the riches of the dead
 Magnificently disinherited.

PLAYGOING IN CHINA AND JAPAN¹

BY PAUL SCHEFFER

My first visit to a Chinese theatre was made in Shanghai during the hottest days of August. Handkerchiefs waved here and there throughout the audience, as the spectators stolidly cooled their perspiring faces. The lighting maintained an unpleasant sort of half-darkness, depending as it did on electric lamps that were thickly covered with dust. The light on the stage, however, was extremely bright. Throughout the audience there was constant movement, and as a great many children were present there was a certain amount of crying and screaming. But no one seemed to pay the slightest attention to it.

As a matter of fact, it was scarcely noticeable at all, for the Chinese drama is fundamentally musical, but 'atonal.' The notes seem to range over five scales all at once. The orchestra — which, along with a good many other things, takes its place on the stage — is very rarely silent. It consists of six or eight men, and if there were more it would be unendurable. In Hangchow, where I heard an orchestra of fresh young players, I finally had to flee from the house.

Chinese orchestral music seems to me to have three fundamental tonal elements. One is dizzyingly shrill; one is thunderous to the point of delirium; one is simply scraping. Its whole thematic system seems to consist of overstimulation, deafening noise, and an approach to the limits between sensu-

ousness and pain. The high points that our music now and then reaches for a moment at a time as climaxes — where one could no more rest than on the point of a bayonet — are on the ordinary level of Chinese music. When the oboes or the violins are used as solo instruments, they provide a kind of relaxation simply through contrast — but only in that way. After a dozen notes are produced you begin to feel that this music too is a cyclone, albeit a simplified one. The Chinese enjoy immensely these modulations of the extremes. To us they are but half comprehensible. Only Europeans who have become thoroughly Orientalized can understand what this music means to the Chinese, and these Europeans are as silent about such things as the Chinese themselves.

Every now and then a little 'super' stumbles over one of the musicians. Even the apprentice actors loiter about the stage — probably in order to learn how to behave there. The hands who bring on and remove the necessary properties, and carry the pillows that are used to protect the costumes, are there *ex officio*. A couple of spectators walk up on the stage, probably to speak to someone they know. Indeed, the stage seems to be a kind of meeting-place, even in the eyes of the actors.

Six hundred years ago a Chinese actress became an imperial concubine and later the mother of an emperor. Since then, it is said, only men have been allowed to adopt the profession of acting. Young actors are trained from

¹ From the *Berliner Tageblatt* (Berlin Liberal daily), April 25