

Five Years of "Red Virgin Soil" (1927)¹

On 21 February, the Herzen House was the site of the five-year jubilee celebration of the journal, "Red Virgin Soil". In this relatively short interval of time, the journal has won popularity and sympathy among the broad masses of worker and peasant readers, and it has gathered in its pages, to cite the words of E. Yaroslavsky, "everything that has been talented and revolutionary in our literature."

On this evening, the grand hall of the Herzen House brought together the most prominent representatives of literary Moscow.

Opening remarks were made by **V. P. Polonsky**, who chaired the gathering. This was followed by speeches and the reading of various greetings (including those from Comrade Trotsky and Maksim Gorky), telegrams and so forth.

Comrade **Radek** pointed out that a holiday for "Red Virgin Soil" is a holiday for Soviet culture. "Red Virgin Soil" has followed a glorious path. But it still must portray more deeply and more significantly the great social shifts that have been brought about by the October Revolution.

After the greetings and well-wishes, Comrade **Yaroslavsky** delivered a speech devoted to the tasks standing before "Red Virgin Soil" at the present time.

"These tasks are shared by the entire Soviet press," said Comrade Yaroslavsky. "'Red Virgin Soil' must find broad paths to the factory and village; it must become a genuinely mass journal of workers and peasants. For this it is not enough to be simply a mirror which reflects everything that is happening in the life of our country; it must also indicate ways to move this life forward."

Comrade **Kh. Rakovsky** spoke about the enormous significance of literature in the struggle to overcome the hostile encirclement of the Soviet Union. This encirclement, according to the thoughts of the orator, is not only military, diplomatic and economic, but also cultural. Interest in the Soviet Union abroad is great, but the desire of foreigners to know the truth about what is happening with us is still satisfied to a significant degree by pulp

¹ "Pravda," № 44 (3576), 23 February 1927, p. 7.

literature in the form of a recent French novel taken from "Soviet life"... "Madonna of the Sleeping Cars"!

"Russian literature has still not given what Europe expects from it," declared Comrade Rakovsky in his speech. "Most of all, it has not portrayed the new man who has been born in the Soviet Union..."

Those honoring the journal were answered by Comrade **A. K. Voronsky**, who noted in his remarks the attentive and direct participation of V. I. Lenin in the organization of "Red Virgin Soil." The first organizational meeting of the editorial board took place in Vladimir Ilyich's apartment. He gave his article on the tax-in-kind for the first issue and later gave the editors advice and instructions concerning the composition of the first issues of the journal.

"I am interested not only in the praise which I have heard here directed both at me and the journal," Comrade Voronsky said in conclusion. "I am also interested in the reproaches made. I will take everything into consideration in order to make the journal the best that it can be."

The celebration ended with a performance by actors from various Moscow theaters.