

Christa Wolf

ONE DAY A YEAR
1960-2000

*Translated from the German
by Lowell A. Bangerter*

ALSO BY

CHRISTA WOLF

Divided Heaven

The Quest for Christa T.

The Reader and the Writer

A Model Childhood

No Place on Earth

Cassandra

Accident: A Day's News

What Remains and Other Stories

Medea

In the Flesh

Parting From Phantoms

 Europa
editions

Europa Editions
116 East 16th Street
New York, N.Y. 10003
www.europaeditions.com
info@europaeditions.com

Copyright © 2003 by Luchterhand Verlag,
a division of Verlagsgruppe Random House GmbH
First Publication 2007 by Europa Editions

Translation by Lowell A. Bangerter
Original title: *Ein Tag im Jahr*
Translation copyright © 2007 by Europa Editions

All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction
in whole or in part in any form.

The publication of this work was supported
by a grant from the Goethe-Institut

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data is available
ISBN-13: 978-1-933372-22-8
ISBN-10: 1-933372-22-2

Wolf, Christa
One Day a Year: 1960-2000

Book design by Emanuele Ragnisco
www.mekkanografici.com

Printed in Italy
Arri Grafiche La Moderna – Rome

C O N T E N T S

NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER - 9
NOTE FROM GERHARD WOLF - 10

ONE DAY A YEAR - 13

APPENDIX I:

MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY OF CHRISTA AND
GERHARD WOLF - 619

APPENDIX II:

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CHRISTA WOLF'S WORKS
PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH - 620



NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Christa Wolf's husband, Gerhard Wolf, furnished this text with many valuable and colorful footnotes that constitute a rich repository of intimate details concerning the Wolf family, their friends and acquaintances, and events and personages prominent in Germany during the years dealt with in this memoir. His footnotes are indicated in parentheses with the abbreviation G. W. Additional footnotes have been provided by both the translator, Lowell A. Bangertter, and the editor, indicated in parentheses with the abbreviations Tr. and Ed.

NOTE FROM GERHARD WOLF

These notes are intended to identify persons and relationships that are necessary to the understanding of the diary entries. Names of authors and persons from contemporary history who are not directly related to the entries and events whose familiarity can be assumed were not included.

The Beautiful 27th of September

I did not read any newspaper.
I did not gaze at any woman.
I did not open the mailbox.
I did not wish anyone a good day.
I did not look in the mirror.
I did not talk with anyone about the old days
nor with anyone about the future.
I did not think about myself.
I did not write a line.
I did not start any stone rolling.

Thomas Brasch*

* Thomas Brasch: "Der schöne 27. September (The Beautiful 27th of September)." Thomas Brasch gave voice to a special kind of reception with his poem "Der schöne 27. September (The Beautiful 27th of September)," which also provided the title for his volume of poetry of 1983, Suhrkamp Publishing Company, Frankfurt/M. For the volume *Ein Text für C.W. (A Text for C.W.)* for the sixty-fifth birthday of the author (Janus Press, Berlin, 1994) he wrote for her the poem "3 Wünsche für C. (3 Wishes for C.)."

1. The place that between here and there again will always let you go, but never pass away. Stay, it calls to you, away at last remain. I want to be your land. Be my rest today.

2. The word that everyone can spell, who does not write what's grasped by all, you see. Never is it I, oft you, and sometimes tell me when you turned yourself at last to me.

3. The time that lies twixt now and darkened view and lasts quite suddenly unceasingly, as though it opened wide your doors for you and stopped. I'm here again, you see.

How does *life* come to be? The question concerned me at an early age. Is life identical with time in its unavoidable but mysterious passage? While I write this sentence, time passes; simultaneously a tiny piece of my life comes into being—and passes away. Does life thus consist of innumerable microscopic pieces of time like that? Remarkable, however, that we cannot catch it. It slips away from the observing eye, even the hand that diligently takes notes, and in the end—even at the end of a period of life—it has constituted itself behind our backs according to our secret need: more substantial, more meaningful, more exciting, more significant, more replete with stories. It shows that it is more than the sum of the moments. Also more than the sum of all of the days. At a certain point, unnoticed by us, those routine days are transformed into time that has been lived. Into fate, at best or at worst. In any case, into the course of a life.

The invitation extended to writers of the world in 1960 by the Moscow newspaper *Izvestiya* immediately fascinated me. Describe as exactly as possible one day of that year, specifically the twenty-seventh of September. It was a revival of the undertaking "One Day in the World" that Maksim Gorky had begun in 1935, which had not lacked appeal, but was then not

Christa Wolf's first diary text of September 27, 1960, was first published in the July 1974 issue of the periodical *ndf* (*Neue Deutsche Literatur*) and in 1980 included in the volume: *Gesammelte Erzählungen* (*Collected Stories*) of the Luchterhand Publishing Company, Darmstadt/Neuwied (now in Christa Wolf, *Werke in 12 Bänden* [*Works in 12 Volumes*] abbreviated in what follows as *Werke*, (*Works*), 1999, Vol. III, pp. 366ff.).

continued. So I sat down and described my twenty-seventh of September of 1960.

So far, so good. But why did I then also describe the twenty-seventh of September of 1961? And all the twenty-seventh of Septembers that followed, until now—for forty-three years, now already more than half of my adult life? And cannot stop doing it? I am not aware of all of the reasons for it; I can name some of them: first of all my horror in the face of the forgetfulness that, as I have observed, especially carries away with it the routine days that I treasure so much. To where? Into oblivion, of course. Transitoriness and futility as twin sisters of forgetfulness: again and again I was (and am) confronted with that eerie phenomenon. I wanted to write in opposition to that inexorable loss of existence. One day a year, every year, should at least be a reliable buttress for the memory—described purely, authentically, free of artistic designs, which means: left to and at the mercy of chance. I could not and did not want to control what those chance days brought to me; thus apparently insignificant days stand next to “more interesting” ones. I could not avoid the mundane, nor seek or even stage “significant” things. With a certain measure of excitement I began to anticipate what that “one day of the year,” as I soon called it, would bring me in the current year. Keeping the records became a sometimes enjoyable, sometimes burdensome duty. It also became an exercise against blindness to reality.

It did prove to be more difficult to capture developments in this manner. All of these individual daily records cannot, of course, claim to stand for the forty years from which they were insularly picked out. But I hoped that the punctual collection of data at regular intervals might in time result in a kind of diagnosis: an expression of my desire to see through relationships, people, but primarily myself. I made note of—often beginning on the same day, usually continuing into subsequent days—what I had experienced, thought, felt on that day, mem-

ories, associations—but also the events that captivated me, political occurrences that concerned me, the condition of the country in which I lived, taking interest in it, until 1989, and—that had not been foreseeable—the phenomena of the collapse of the German Democratic Republic and those of the transition into a different society, a different state. And of course my sometimes suddenly, but more often gradually changing attitudes toward all of those complex, complicated processes are reflected: conflicting, offensive expositions. In that sense these notes are more than simply material; they also became—even if not in the least complete—proof of my development. I had to resist the temptation to correct earlier misjudgments, unjust assessments from today's perspective.

These diary pages differ distinctly from the rest of my diary, not only in their structure but also in content and in stronger thematic constraint and limitation. But even they were not intended for publication, as, for example, those other texts were from the beginning, the ones that take the course of a day as the basis for a work of prose: *June Afternoon*, *Accident: A Day's News*, *What Remains*, *Desert Journey*—pieces of evidence for my fascination with the narrative potential to be found in almost any arbitrary day. Whereas an express decision was needed to publish these writings, in which the “I” is not a literary first-person narrator, but presents and surrenders itself unshielded—even to those glances that are not guided by understanding and sympathy.

Why do I do that? My experience is: proceeding from a certain point in time that can no longer be identified after the fact, we begin to view ourselves historically, which means: embedded in, bound to our time. A distance is created, a stronger objectivity with respect to ourselves. The self-critically examining eye learns to compare, thereby becoming not gentler, but perhaps somewhat more just. We see how much generality there is in even the most personal things and consider it to be

possible that the need of the reader to judge and pass sentence can be replaced by self-discovery and, in the most favorable case, self-perception.

Subjectivity remains the most important criterion of the diary. That is a scandal in a time when we are supposed to be buried in material objects and become material things ourselves. Even the flood of apparently subjective, shameless revelations with which the media pester us is, of course, a calmly calculated component of this world of goods. I do not know how else we could escape and confront this compulsion toward objectification that is being infiltrated right into our most intimate feelings, other than by the development and the relinquishment of our subjectivity, without regard to the effort that it may cost. The need to be known, even with our problematic traits, with errors and mistakes, underlies all literature and is also a driving motive for this book. It remains to be seen whether or not the time for such a risky venture has already come.

But the decisive reason for publishing these pages is this: I think they are a testimony of the times. I regard it as a kind of professional duty to publish them. It seems to me that our most recent history is in danger even now of being reduced to and defined in easily manageable formulae. Perhaps reports like these can contribute to keeping opinions about what has happened in flux, examining prejudices once more, dissolving bitterness, recognizing personal experiences again and gaining more confidence in them, permitting foreign conditions to come somewhat nearer . . .

I have maintained the authenticity of the texts. Slight abridgments were carried out. In some cases sentences had to be stricken for the purpose of protecting individuals.

April 2003

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1960

Halle/Saale, Amsehweg

When I first wake up, the thought: The day will again go differently than planned. I will have to go to the doctor with Tinka because of her sore foot. Outside doors slam. The children are already up and about. Gerd is still sleeping. His forehead is damp, but he no longer has a fever. He seems to have gotten over the flu.

There is life in the children's room. Tinka is reading from a picture book to a little dirty doll: The first one wanted to warm his hands; the second one wanted to warm his gloves; the other one wanted to drink tea. But there was no coal. Stupid!

She will be four years old tomorrow. Annette is worried about whether we will bake enough cake. She calculates for me that Tinka has invited eight children for coffee. I overcome a minor scare and write a note for Annette's teacher: I request that you send my daughter Annette home early at noon tomorrow. She is supposed to celebrate her little sister's birthday with her.

While I am fixing sandwiches, I try to remember how I spent the day before Tinka was born, four years ago. Again and again I am stunned at how quickly and how much I forget if I do not write everything down. On the other hand: it is not possible to record *everything*, a person would have to stop living. Four years ago it was probably warmer and I was alone. In the evening a girlfriend came to spend the night with me. We sat together for a long time. It was the last intimate conversation between us. She told me for the first time about her future husband . . .

During the night I telephoned for an ambulance.

Annette is finally ready. She is a little sloppy and disorderly, as I must have been as a child. Back then I never would have believed that I would reprimand my children the way my parents reprimanded me. Annette has misplaced her purse. I scold her with the same words that my mother would have used: We can't throw money around like that either. Just what are you thinking?

As she leaves, I take her by the head and give her a kiss. Goodbye! We wink at each other. Then down below she slams the house door shut with a loud bang.

Tinka is calling for me. I answer impatiently and try sitting down at the desk. Perhaps I can at least get an hour of work done. Tinka is singing a song to her doll at the top of her lungs, one that the children like very much lately: "In the evenings, when the moon shines, out into the town . . ." The last verse goes like this:

In the basement once quite late
They were eating from a plate
In the night one evening mild
Came the stork and brought a child . . .

When I am with her, Tinka never fails to appease me. She knows full well that the stork could not carry any babies at all; that would be outright cruelty to animals. But if you *sing* it, then it really does not matter.

She begins screaming for me again, so loudly that I rush to her at a trot. She is lying in bed and has buried her head in her arms.

Why are you screaming like that?

Well, you don't come. Then I have to scream.
I said, I'll be right there.

Then it still takes you a long time to get here here here fear fear. She has discovered that words can rhyme. I unwind the bandage from her cut foot. She screams as if on a spit. Then she flicks the tears away with her finger. At the doctor's office it will hurt me, too.

Do you intend to scream like that at the doctor's, too? The entire city will come running—Then *you* have to unwind the bandage for me—Yes, yes—Cook me some!—Yes, yes.

The foot pain seems to ease. While getting dressed she does not scratch under the tabletop with her fingernails and is ready to burst out laughing. She wipes her nose with the hem of her shirt. Hey! I shout. Who's blowing her nose in her shirt there?—She throws her head back and laughs unrestrained: Who's blowing her nose in her shirt there? Snot shirt . . .

Tomorrow is my birthday, so we can already be a little bit happy today, she says. But you've forgotten, of course, that I'm already able to get dressed by myself—Haven't forgotten it. Just thought your foot was hurting too much—She awkwardly threads her toes through her pant legs: I just do it much more carefully than you—There are tears again when the red shoe is too tight. I push one of Annette's old house slippers over the injured foot. She is enthusiastic: Now I have Annette's slipper on!

When I carry her out of the bathroom, her healthy foot strikes against the wooden box next to the door. Boom! She cries. That thumps like a bomb!—How does she know how a bomb thumps? It has been more than sixteen years since I last heard a bomb detonate. How does she know the word?

Gerd is reading in Lenin's letters to Gorky; we arrive at our old topic: art and revolution, politics and art, ideology and literature. About the impossibility of congruent thought structures for—even Marxist—politicians and artists. The "private"

world that Lenin grants Gorky (and more than grants: that he presupposes) even with all his intransigence in philosophical questions. His consideration, his tact even with all his rigidity. Two partners with equal rights work together; the one who knows everything is not confronted with the one who must be taught everything. Candid and generous mutual recognition of competencies . . . We come to the role of experience in writing and to the responsibility that we have for the *content* of our experience. Are we free, however, to have arbitrary experiences that are perhaps socially desirable, but for which our origins and personal nature make us unsuited? We can become acquainted with many things, of course. But *experience* them?—There is a dispute about the plan for my new story. Gerd presses for the further transformation of a plan that has remained too superficial until now into one that would be appropriate for me. Or do I intend to write a report? Then go ahead, in that case I could get to work immediately. I become slightly upset, but deny it as always, when in reality I sense that “there is some truth to it.”

Have I read this? A little article by Lenin entitled “A Capably Written Little Book.”²¹ The reference is to a book by a “member of the White Guard who was embittered almost to the point of mental derangement,” *A Dozen Daggers in the Back of the Revolution*, which Lenin discusses—half ironically, half seriously—certifying that it reflects “expertise and honesty” where the author describes what he knows, what he has experienced and felt. Lenin simply assumes that the workers and farmers would draw the right conclusions from the clear, expert descriptions of the old bourgeoisie, of which the author himself is not capable, and seems to believe that it is possible to print some of those stories. “We should encourage

a talent” —which, on the other hand, is irony, but also independence. That brings us to talk about the premises for independent behavior in a country where socialist society must develop under assumptions and conditions like those that we have here. About reasons and bases for provincialism in literature.

We laugh when we realize what we talk about endlessly day and night—as they do in schematic books whose heroes we would criticize as implausible.

I go to the doctor with Tinka. She talks and talks, perhaps to talk away her fear. One minute she demands that I explain a picture on the wall (“Why don’t you think it’s pretty? I think it’s nice and colorful!”), the next minute she wants to be carried because of her sore foot, and a minute later she has forgotten all the pain and is balancing on the stonework surrounding the front gardens.

Our street leads to a new apartment building that has been under construction for months. An elevator lifts carts filled with cement sacks and transports empty carts back down again. Tinka wants to know exactly how it works. She has to content herself with an approximate explanation of the technology. Her new, unshakable belief that everything that exists “is good for something” is good for something *for her*. If I am afraid for the children so often, then above all I fear the unavoidable violation of that belief.

When we go down the steps of the post office, I clamp her under my arm—Not so fast, I’ll fall!—You won’t fall!—When I’m big and you’re small, then I’ll run down the stairs that fast, too. I’m going to get bigger than you. Then I’ll jump very high. By the way, can you jump over the house? No? But I can. Over the house and over a tree. Should I?—Go ahead!—I *could* easily do it, of course, but I don’t want to—So, you don’t want to?—No—Silence. After a while: But in the sunshine I’m big—The sun is hazy, but it casts shadows. They’re

²¹ *Lenin's Collected Works*, 2nd English Edition, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965. Tr. David Skvirsky and George Hanna, Vol. 33, pp. 125-126. (Ed.)

long because the sun is still low—Big right up to the clouds, Tinka says. I look upward. Small clouds of mist hang very high in the sky.

In the waiting room, a lot of idle talk. Three older women are sitting together. The one, who speaks the Silesian dialect, bought a blue sweater yesterday for a hundred and thirteen marks. The event is illuminated from all sides. All three of them complain about the price. In a tone of superiority, a younger woman who is sitting across from the three of them finally involves herself in the inexpert discussion. It turns out that she sells textiles and that the sweater is not an "import" at all, as the Silesian woman had been assured when she purchased it. She is indignant. The saleswoman elaborates on the advantages and disadvantages of wool and synthetic wool. Synthetic wool is practical, she says, but if you want something really elegant, you take wool—A good thing will come again, says the second of the three women, and I look imploringly at Tinka, who is preparing to ask a question that would certainly be inappropriate. In the West, a sweater like that costs fifty marks, says the Silesian woman—Oh, well, the second one declares, convert it: one to three. It still amounts to a hundred and fifty marks—That's right.

There is probably no point in getting mixed up in their conversation calculations.

I got the money from my daughter, says the Silesian woman. I could not have bought it from my one-hundred-and-twenty mark pension—All three of them sigh. Then her neighbor says, I have always been for that: simple but fine—I look at her surreptitiously and cannot find anything fine about her—She, undeterred: This coat here. I bought it for myself in 1927. Gabardine. Peacetime goods. Can't be worn out—Horrified, I look at the coat. It is green, slightly iridescent, and outmoded, but there is nothing else remarkable about it. A coat really cannot be eerie. Tinka tugs at my sleeve, whispers: When is

nineteen hundred twenty-seven?—Thirty-three years ago, I say—She uses one of her father's expressions: Was I already thought of back then?—By no means, I say. I wasn't even thought of yet—Good heavens, says Tinka—The Silesian woman, still thinking about her blue sweater, comforts herself: At least I won't freeze in the winter.

The third one, a scrawny woman who has not said much previously, now comments quietly triumphant: Thank God, I don't have to worry about all that . . . Questioning look from the others. Finally: You have relatives over there?—No. That is, yes. My daughter. But she simply arranges it. There is a gentleman. I don't even know him, but he sends me what I need. He just had another inquiry sent, asking what I still lack for the winter. Pure envy in the eyes of the others. Well then! You can't have it any better than that these days.

I do not say anything. I gave up trying to read long ago. The doctor's assistant calls all three of them out of the room.

Tinka remains very quiet when the doctor presses around on the wound. She is pale. The hand that I hold becomes moist. Did it hurt? the doctor asks. She makes her impenetrable face and shakes her head. She never cries in front of strangers. Outside, when we are waiting for the bandage, she suddenly says, I'm happy that I'm having a birthday tomorrow!

The sky has clouded over. We are already looking forward eagerly to the bricklayer's elevator. Tinka would have stood there for a long time if she hadn't had to quickly find herself a little corner. Then she becomes quiet. She is thinking about the large black dog whose house we must soon pass. As always, at that place she tells me that this dog once bit a woman's finger. It must have been years ago, if it is true at all, but the legend of it has made an indelible impression on Tinka. The impact of storytelling!

The mail that I find waiting at home is disappointing, a meaningless card from a girl who says nothing. On the other

hand, motorcycles stop a couple of times in front of the house, express and telegram messengers, substitutes for the telephone. One brings the galley proofs of Gerd's book on Louis Fürnberg.²

While the food is cooking I read children's compositions on the topic of "My Most Beautiful Vacation Day," which were left in the library of the railroad car factory. A nine-year-old girl writes: "Things were wonderful in our vacation camp. We had a free day. We could go wherever we wanted to. I went into the woods. I saw a large deer there and a small one. The two of them lay there and did not move. They were so tame that I could touch them. Then I ran back quickly and got the camp leader. After all, it was not far to our camp. I told him everything and he went with me. He led the large deer on a rope, and I was permitted to carry the small deer. We had a small barn, and I put both of them in there and fed them every day. That was my most beautiful day."

I am inclined to give that girl the first prize in the competition for her improbable story.

After the meal I ride to the railroad car factory,³ to the work brigade's Party meeting. In the streetcar an older couple

searches desperately for the ten-pfennig piece that they need in order to be able to buy the tickets. They spent all of their money while shopping. I offer the woman the ten-pfennig piece. Major embarrassment: Oh no, oh no, they could also walk. Finally the man takes the coin, insisting that it is so embarrassing for him. Such a thing is probably only possible among us Germans, I think.

I have not been in the factory for a few weeks. The hall is filled with half-finished railroad cars. Apparently the production stoppage has been overcome. I rejoice too soon.

Willy does not notice me immediately. I watch how he works with his new device for preparing the press frames. He and J., his brigade leader, developed this simple but practical device and submitted it as an improvement suggestion. With it they cut the time for this process in half. There was whispering behind their backs in the factory and bad blood developed. Today I should find out what is really happening.

Willy looks up. Well, my dear? he says. He is happy. He still has things to do. I sit down in the brigade shed that they themselves call the "open cow shed." Still forty-five minutes until quitting time, but three are already sitting here waiting for the time to pass. Still not enough work? Shaking of heads. The scene in the hall was deceptive—And what are you doing with the rest of the time?—Occupation theory, they say. Iron storehouse, lumber storehouse, plank repairs—And the money?—That's right. We receive the average, of course—They are in a bad mood, resigned, angry—depending on their respective temperaments. And the worst thing is: they no longer hope for the decisive turn for the better. Lothar says: In January we'll be in a mess again, even if we kill ourselves trying to meet the final quarter plan quota. The money's being thrown away on overtime. Is that supposed to be profitable?

His money is right, but he is irritated about the fact that the factory is unprofitable. Can the factory director go to every

² Louis Fürnberg (1909-1957), lyric poet and storyteller; after emigration and exile as a Jewish communist antifascist in Palestine, returned to Prague in 1946; escaped the Stalinist Slansky trials of 1952 and was able to emigrate to the German Democratic Republic in 1954, where he lived in Weimar as the deputy director of the National Research and Memorial Sites.

Fürnberg had friendly ties with C. and G. Wolf (see: L. Fürnberg, *Briefe 1932-1957* [*Letters 1932-1957*], Berlin, 1986). G. Wolf wrote "*Der Dichter Louis Fürnberg—Leben und Wirken—Ein Versuch* (*The Poet Louis Fürnberg—Life and Work—An Essay*)," Berlin, 1961, and published his *Gesammelte Werke in 6 Bänden* (*Collected Works in 6 Volumes*), Berlin and Weimar, 1964-1972, with Lotte Fürnberg; with Rosemarie Weimann *Der Briefwechsel L. Fürnberg mit Arnold Zweig* (*The Correspondence of L. Fürnberg with Arnold Zweig*), Berlin, 1978. Fürnberg's poem "*Antonin Dvořák, Sonatine op. 100*" is found in Fürnberg's final volume of poetry, *Das wunderbare Gesetz* (*The Wonderful Law*), Berlin, 1956. (G.W.)

³ In the nationalized railroad car factory in Halle/S—A: Ammendorf, C.W. interned in a socialist workers' brigade—background for her narrative *Divided Heaven*, Halle, 1963, on which she began work in 1960. (G.W.)

work brigade and explain what is happening with the factory? No, he can't. But it should be explained, and very clearly, and if at all possible every week based on the latest production updates. Uninformed people are beginning to act irresponsibly.

Meanwhile the conversation turns to the factory party last Saturday. Jürgen tells about the trouble that he had when his wife drank too much and he had to take her home in a factory van after she had publicly slapped an obtrusive colleague. I was so angry that I got drunk again the next day, he says. He is a little afraid that his wife made him look foolish. Then the others begin telling about similar incidents with their wives, matter-of-factly, without any feeling, the way that men talk about women. I think: The obtrusive colleague undoubtedly deserved the slap . . .

Nine comrades come together in the Party leaders' meeting room. They come in their work clothes, unwashed. There is a woman among them, with cheerful, lively eyes. In the brigade I once saw her slam her fist down on the table. Here she says nothing.

Enough chitchat: Let's begin, Willy says. He is the group organizer. I know what he intends to do today, and with anticipation and respect I watch how he ruthlessly moves toward his goal. In front of him lies the report for his brigade's public rendering of accounts. I am familiar with it. But the comrades from the neighboring brigade, the competition partners, are a bit dazed in the face of the twenty-three pages about the others, who, aside from any friendship, are really their rivals. And if a person is familiar with the complicated history of the two brigades, which were actually once *one* brigade . . . The star brigade of the factory under the leadership of P., who sits across from Willy, constantly wiping off the perspiration, and feeling like he has been outwitted.

Willy begins reading rapidly and indistinctly from the

report, a carefully selected section. The hands holding the page tremble a bit. The atmosphere in the overheated room must have a soporific effect on the uninitiated.

Nobody takes quotations as seriously as Willy does. He reads aloud what Lenin said about increasing work productivity. And what is happening here with us? he asks, interrupting himself. A colleague says, Before we wanted to become a Brigade of Socialist Labor, we were always in agreement. Now there is constant grumbling—Willy raises his voice. Now he talks about their improvement suggestion: the very device that I saw in action earlier. There were enormous billows of smoke! he says and lowers the sheet of paper. He looks over the top of his wire-rimmed glasses directly at P.: A fifty-percent savings! That has never happened before—not here! Doubts were raised about the reality of the suggestion. Yes, even you, P.! Don't say anything, it's my turn. But the suggestion is real. There's nothing shaky about it. Obviously we got a bonus. Obviously the two of us will earn a lot in the next three months. It will amount to a thousand marks for me, if you want to know. And what about it? Does material incentive perhaps not count for us comrades? Everything would have been all right if the two of them had distributed their bonus and stopped up the mouths with a few bottles of beer. But that's the end of it! shouts Willy. Egalitarianism doesn't exist anymore. And at the brigade's next evening party we'll buy a round.

That gave rise in the section to the underhanded question: Are you a communist or an egoist?

And that, Willy cries out, now agitated and stammering, that we all knew. Or didn't we? And how did we comrades behave? Not in the least like comrades. How could we?! We didn't even agree amongst ourselves. More concrete! shouts someone from the neighboring brigade.

Willy, louder and louder: Certainly! As concrete as you

want! In the factory administration the two of us are recommended for designation as activists. Who speaks against it? Comrade P.! The Party leadership wants to hang our picture on the "Avenue of the Heroes of Work" on Republic Day. Who advises against it? Comrade P.! Concrete enough?

Perhaps I might be permitted to say something now, too, P. insists. Please, says Willy. Just one more thing: it's about the cause and not about whether I don't like your face or you don't like mine. Everyone here at the table is familiar with P.'s statement from the time when Willy, with his "retrogressive cadre development," was new in his brigade: He or I—that is the question here. There's not room for both of us in one brigade—On May Day P.'s picture still stood on the "Avenue of the Heroes of Work." Both of them must have forgotten and thought many things that they would not admit to themselves, so that discussion can occur at all as it does today. One must not expect the conflict to climax and be "settled" according to the rules of classical dramaturgy. It is already a lot that P. admits: Your suggestion was concrete. It's right that you receive the bonus—After that his supply of self-denial is exhausted. He evades, drags out an old story about which he holds forth verbosely. He cannot simply admit defeat that way. It goes back and forth between the two brigades. The tension sinks. Even Willy has to back down at one point, which is pretty difficult for him.

The brigade's report is still lying in front of him. In a week P.'s people are also supposed to be that far along. Suddenly they become uneasy about the work. Willy allows himself that last small triumph and everyone notices. But that is enough now. They have to come to an agreement. They discuss who should help P. If you're willing to accept an old rabble-rouser like me . . . Willy says—Old idiot! P. responds.

Somebody comes up with the idea that they should invite their wives when the brigade renders an account of itself. That

is in keeping with the times. Nobody can speak against it publicly, but it becomes clear: the suggestion has no ardent supporters. The wives, one of them says, really have enough to do with the children, especially after quitting time . . . Günter R. is happy. A man can only bring his wife if he has one.

Well, and you? Willy snaps at him. Don't you have one?—No, says Günter. Not anymore—And just what's the matter with your marriage? Don't you start slipping on me because of that sort of thing! Willy says menacingly—Günter is the youngest man at the table. He makes a dismissive gesture with his hand, but has become bright red in the face: It's nothing! Not worth talking about!

Later P. tells me: Günter had been sent to the sister factory in G. for a few weeks to give socialist assistance, and when he returned home unexpectedly one day, he met his wife's foreman coming toward him from his bedroom. Then, of course, he went to court with it the very next day. But nothing can be mended there anymore . . .

Gradually the mood has become cheerful. They tell jokes. When I claim that they all want nothing to do with culture, there is a protest. The invitations for the presentation of the report are passed around, white double cards on which the word *Imitation* is printed in ornate gold lettering. That is just distinguished enough for them. They want to invite a lot of guests, want to "be an example," as Willy says. He lets the meeting grind on loosely now, is hardly tense any longer, and looks quite satisfied. He winks at me and grins. Very sly, I say to him later. You have to be, my girl, he says. Otherwise you don't accomplish anything.

I quickly go home, agitated, with disturbed thoughts. Once again I hear what they say, and also what they do not say, what they do not even reveal in their expressions. Whoever succeeded in penetrating that almost enigmatic web of motives and opposing motives, actions and counteractions . . . Making

the life of people great who appear to be condemned to small strides . . .

At this time of year, as evening approaches it is already cold. I buy the things that I still need to bake a cake and take along a few birthday flowers. In the gardens the dahlias and asters are already wilting. I remember the enormous bouquet of roses that stood on my nightstand in the hospital back then, four years ago. I remember the doctor whom I heard say: A girl. But she already has one. Well, it probably won't matter to her . . . His relief, when I already had a name. The nurse who lectured me about how undesirable girls still are sometimes, and all the things that a person can experience in that case, especially with the fathers. They simply don't come if it's a girl again, whether you believe it or not. That's why we are not allowed to say what it is on the telephone, a boy or a girl.

Everyone wants to help bake the cake. The children get in the way. Finally I put on a fairy tale record for them in their room, "Peter and the Wolf." Afterward they scrape out the batter bowls until they are taken away from them. Annette talks about school: We learned a new song, but I don't especially like it. *Republik* [republic] is rhymed with *Sieg* [victory]—what do you think about that? I think it's boring. We have a new Russian teacher. She was amazed at how many words we already know. But do you think that she told us her name? Not at all. Yet we all had to write our names on a seating chart. I don't think she does it because she wants to be mean—They mill around restlessly and do not want to accept the fact that that they still have to sleep, even during the night before the birthday.

In the oven the cake rises over the lip of the pan. Now that it is quiet, it seems as if I can hear it rising. The pans were too full. The batter expands and drips into the oven and sends a burnt smell through the entire apartment. When I take the cake out, one side is black. I become angry and find

that I have nobody to blame but myself. And then Gerd comes and calls the cake "a little black." Then I tell him indignantly that it is because the pans were too full and because of the inadequate stove and the gas pressure that is too high. Oh, well, he says and withdraws.

Later we listen to the violin sonata, Anton Dvořák's *Opus 100*, to which Fürnberg wrote a poem. A lovely, pure piece of music. My anger dissolves. Simultaneously both of us notice that we smell of burnt cake and begin to laugh.

I must still write something, but everything disturbs me: the radio, the television set next door, the thought of the birthday hubbub tomorrow and of this fragmented day in which I accomplished nothing. Morosely I set the birthday table, arrange the wreath of lights. Gerd leafs through some little book, finds it "well written." For some reason even that disturbs me.

I look through the beginnings of manuscripts that lie stacked on my desk. The protracted nature of the process that we call writing embitters me. A few faces have already emerged from the simple brigade story, people whom I know better and have joined together in a story that, as I can clearly see, is still much too simple. A girl from the country who comes to the city for the first time in her life, to study there. First she does a practicum in a factory, in a difficult brigade. Her boyfriend is a chemist; he does not get her in the end. The third is a young foreman who, because he made a mistake, is sent on probation to work in this brigade . . . It is remarkable that these banal occurrences that have been "taken from life" intensify their banality to the point of intolerance on the pages of a manuscript. I know that the real work will not begin until I find the "higher idea" that makes the material presentable and worth telling. But it can only be found—if at all, which I seriously doubt this evening—through this long preliminary work whose futility is clear to me.

I know that neither the pages that already lie there nor the sentences that I write today will remain—not a letter of them. I write, and then cross out: As always Rita was hurled as swiftly as an arrow from her sleep and was awake without any memory of a dream. But a vision had to have been there. She wanted to hang on to it, but it faded away. Robert lay next to her.

Before I fall asleep it occurs to me that life consists of days like this. Points that in the end, if we have been fortunate, connect a line. That they can also fall apart into a meaningless pile of spent time, that only a continuous unswerving effort gives a meaning to the small units of time in which we live . . .

I am still able to observe the initial transition into images before falling asleep. A road appears. It leads to the landscape that I know so well without having ever seen it: the hill with the old tree, the slope that gently falls to a watercourse, meadows, and on the horizon the forest. That you cannot really experience the seconds before falling asleep—otherwise you would not fall asleep—is something that I will always regret.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1961

Halle/Saale, Amsehweg

Yesterday, when it was actually supposed to be that “day of the year”—a tradition that I really would like to begin—I did not think about it all day. Not until this morning, as I awoke, did it occur to me. It was not a joyful idea; I felt reluctant to dutifully remember yesterday by writing about it. Leafing through older diaries I again saw all the things that I forget if I do not write them down: almost everything. Especially the important details. So let’s write. And immediately a test as to what I still remember about yesterday, what I can capture, “save” of the things that rapidly grow pale in my memory. And push aside the question: Why save it? Just what is important about an average day in an average life? What causes me to disregard the warning: Do not view yourself as so important, which was impressed upon me early on? Conceit? But isn’t conceit, viewing oneself as important, the root of all writing?

(Noted in parentheses, since it is actually embarrassing: during the last week, since I was unfortunately ill again—the old illness: heart pains, insomnia, and weariness—I read a compilation of documents from Goethe’s life: *Truth and Fiction Relating to My Life*,¹ letters, journal pages, and I thought again: I must write things down, even if only to register every day matter-of-factly. No intention to write “beautifully.” Key words, facts, minor outpourings of the soul.)

¹The *Autobiography of Goethe: Truth and Fiction Relating to My Life* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, University Press of the Pacific, 2003. (Ed.)

scratched out the eyes of the witch in the picture in my book of fairy tales. During the summer Annette and the children from the building and the neighborhood put on "Little Red Riding Hood." As the oldest, she was the director. She took her task very seriously—just as she does every task. Before the performance in front of a neighborhood audience, she was as excited as a real director before his premiere. She has laid in a stock of favorite fairy tales that end well and that she reads again and again. What is it this morning?—Cinderella—Come on, get up—I want to finish reading it first—But you know how it ends—All the same. From her bed Tinka makes the precocious comment that you can't stop in the middle of a story. Otherwise you have to keep thinking about it. Right now she is full of worldly wisdom.

We reach a compromise. Annette comes to the breakfast table on time, spoons up her oatmeal, rolls her eyes at the cautious question of whether or not she has packed her schoolbag, and then, after she has already gone down the stairs, has to come back again because she has forgotten to pack her Russian book. I wisely refrain from making any comment, and Annette refrains from giving any sign of understanding. That way we are even.

I stand on the little oriel balcony next to Gerd's workroom and watch her go. She is wearing the dark blue jacket with the plaid lapels. Her ponytail bobs and the hollows of her knees flush. Pantyhose are still out of the question, indignantly rejected. As it does every morning, my heart tenses a little bit when she leaves. As I do every morning I ask myself if we should have insisted that she go to the other school, which is further away and to which she would have to ride the streetcar, simply because it is a Russian school where the best pupils from all of the schools in Halle are gathered together. I wait for her to turn around once more. When it is almost too late, she does it. I wave, she waves back. That exchange comforts me every morning, irrationally.

At best, it is the framework of the day, the framework of most days, which is made of harder material than the filling, which most likely constitutes actual life, which is a little different each day. The alarm clock at six-thirty, the first look out of the window at Amselweg, an overcast sky, clouds drift, but rain does not seem to be in the offing. Early autumn leaf coloring. Some bicyclists who have to go to their factories, among them surely some who are riding to the Ammendorf railroad car factory. The name is a signal that arouses a series of images within me. Certain production paths at the plant have meanwhile become fixed in my mind and I can trace them on my inner map, with a certain degree of satisfaction: I have acquired something that was unknown to me.

Silence in the children's room. In the bathroom the usual procedures and activities. Gerd is already in the kitchen and has begun to fix breakfast, goes into the bathroom. Unfortunately I must now awaken Annette. When I cautiously open the door to the children's room, it turns out that both of them are awake, sitting quiet as mice in their beds, and reading. At least Tinka calls what she is doing with the picture books that she has piled on her bed "reading," about which Annette gives me a sympathetically indulgent glance. She does not have to smear her little sister's deficiencies on bread and feed them to her. She herself is engrossed in a book of fairy tales. Sometimes, before beginning a new fairy tale, she asks whether it ends "well" or "badly." How I understand her! But what is good, what is bad? Annette is quite certain in that regard: if the good is vindicated and wins out, the fairy tale ends well. Once I tried to sow a slight doubt in her certainty: Didn't she feel sorry when the evil stepmother had to dance in glowing hot slippers at the end? Oh, no. The main thing is that Snow White is alive again and married her prince. The fates of the secondary characters are insignificant, and the evil antagonist must certainly be punished. When I was a child of Annette's age, I

Tinka has gotten partially dressed, is standing in the bathroom pretending to wash, imitates something like brushing her teeth, and looks up at me from the corner of her eye in the process. I remain serious and pretend not to notice anything.

While she puts on her stockings, with which I help her somewhat because they are new and tight, she casually explains to her shabby teddy bear, which she has generously permitted to continue sleeping in her bed, that there are unfortunately no toothbrushes for teddy bears, otherwise she would buy him one and watch every morning and evening to see that he brushed his teeth thoroughly. The teddy bear uses my deep voice to resist. He is afraid of brushing his teeth. He thinks that the toothpaste tastes horrible and brushing would hurt his teeth. Tinka has a completely different opinion about that, of course. The toothpaste tastes a little bit like raspberries, and her teeth do not notice anything about the brushing. At most they begin to hurt if you don't brush them. But the teddy bear is stubborn and unperceptive. Tinka has to argue with him, first gently, then more and more fiercely. He resists to the end and shouts after us in an impertinent tone as we leave the children's room that he will never ever brush his teeth. Tinka scolds loudly back at him. She is earnestly concerned and indignant. On the one hand, she knows exactly of course, whose voice the teddy bear used, but on the other hand she is convinced that she was speaking with *him*, and with nobody else. The two contradictory insights and opinions run alongside each other unchallenged in her mind. I wonder if becoming an adult means being able to keep reality and the world of imagination strictly separated—at least in the latitudes where we live. Primitive peoples live in a world where the animals speak and the elements are personages. If you force them to become "adult," they take refuge in alcohol. In what substitute did our ancestors take refuge when a nature that was endowed with nymphs and elves and gods was

taken from them in order to dissect it into usable components?

"Bread and honey" is the motto for every breakfast. There would be no point in offering Tinka something else. With her father she discusses the teddy bear's character in endless detail. He makes things too easy for himself with the claim that teddy bears are difficult by nature and then has a hard time backing down from his point of view after Tinka has given him a lot of evidence for her teddy bear's gentleness. Finally she is ready to put on her shoes and her parka, to shoulder her little lunch bag, and to walk to the nursery school with me. In my mind I memorize what I have to buy, but Tinka wants to discuss one more problem. In our neighborhood a young couple got married. Tinka has learned the details of the ceremony. Why does everyone get a ring when getting married? she wants to know—So that the other people see that you are married—Tinka thinks about that. Then: I see. Then a man who doesn't have a wife only looks for one without a ring—That's about it—But what if all the girls have a ring and the man still doesn't have a wife?—Then he remains alone. That happens—Can he then at least have children?—Hardly. You always need a father and a mother for that—Too bad. But then he's sad, isn't he?

I drop her off at the nursery school, which, oddly enough, is called "Free Soil." I am not permitted to give her a farewell kiss or wave to her. She goes in with her back straight.

It must have been eight-thirty, yesterday, on the day that I am describing. It is part of its framework that it is eight-thirty when I walk home from the nursery school and while doing so buy the necessities—milk, butter, apples, mince-meat—and sink into thought. Yesterday, as I have often done in recent days, I may have thought about what the two years in Halle have actually brought us to date. In any case: insight into new circumstances that were previously completely foreign to us. A city that is defined by the industry around it—in the process,

of course, also by air pollution. The contact with the railroad car builders in Ammendorf is the greatest gain. But also: more and more frequent symptoms of overstress, heart pains, sleeplessness: once again too fragmented, worn down, driven away from what is actually important. Too much trivia: little articles, meetings, publishing work, diversion, being torn back and forth between different responsibilities, none of which bring me complete fulfillment—except when I can write. The *Moscow Novella*² did create a stir as a preprint in *forum* and apparently contributed to the softening of the cultural-political atmosphere. I can actually only see it as a magazine story now. I have success with it at readings, but I intend to be careful now and forever not to take that as a yardstick. What entices me: to rework that material again, for a film, together with Konrad Wolf,³ who is interested in it and with whom we have already met at Deutsche Film-AG, the German Democratic Republic's film company. The figure of Pavel gives him the opportunity to introduce autobiographical elements. A new level, a reinforcement of the characters and their motives seems conceivable to me. And what penetrates to us from Moscow about the new Soviet films by the young filmmakers must impact the spirit and style of our films: no paths, no concession to the need for the "heroic," instead of that the quest for the behavior of the figures in everyday life. In that respect I am in total agreement with Konrad Wolf who has

² C. W.'s *Moskauer Novelle*. Halle, 1961, was printed in the Berlin student periodical *forum*. (G.W.)

³ Konrad Wolf (1925-1982), film director; 1965-1982, president of the Academy of Arts of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany); had friendly ties with C. and G. Wolf through joint projects. A jointly written screenplay for *Moskauer Novelle* could not be filmed, primarily because of objections from the Soviet authorities; in 1964 however, the film *Der geteilte Himmel* (*Divided Heaven*). A film project *Ein Mann kehrt heim* (*A Man Returns Home*) of 1964/65 was given up. G. Wolf participated as a scene editor in the production of Konrad Wolf's films *Ich war neunzehn* (*I Was Nineteen*), 1969, and *Der nackte Mann auf dem Sportplatz* (*The Naked Man on the Athletic Field*), 1974. K.W.'s film *Sonnensucher* (1958) was withdrawn after the premiere and has been shown only since 1972 on television and in art film theaters. (G.W.)

apparently been looking for a long time for material that suggests the use of those stylistic devices. It seems to suffer greatly under the prohibition of *Sun Seekers*—his film, which we haven't seen—In "our" film the present-day layer will cause the most difficulties: how to present the fact that Pavel and Vera, who meet again, between whom affection grows again, who seem made for each other, part again—but part in a manner that is not final, different from the way they parted back then, after the war ended. At that time the law of necessity, the dictates of the relationships between our two nations, governed things, today it is understanding. Features of real human freedom were achieved together. The life of a person like Vera is no longer dominated by the dully animalistic dependency on prejudices and emotions. How to portray that believably, without pointing a finger?

When was I at my desk yesterday? About ten, later than I wanted again anyway. The top of the desk is covered with piles of pages. The new story that has kept me occupied for more than a year. I have started at least five times. The transformations of the title already indicative: "Discoveries," "Encounter," "At the Time of Parting," perhaps not final yet. Ultimately, under the influence of my experiences in the railroad car factory, it was supposed to become a brigade story like the many that exist now. A girl from the country who intends to study pedagogy in the city does an internship in a brigade of a railroad car factory. The brigade is famous, but inside it something is rotten. A young foreman who did not notice the brigade leader's manipulations is transferred into the brigade, has a very difficult time there at first, Rita falls in love with him, the two of them find their way to each other, the brigade heals . . .

Thus a narrow story, with elements of commentary, tied to a specific purpose, utility literature, and contrived, superficial, stereotyped—a word that now, with our help, is becoming very modern. In my next conception, to which I cling for (too)

long, after her first year of study at the college of education in West Berlin, a girl meets her former boyfriend again, who fled the country almost a year earlier. She spends an afternoon with him, but is already married to another man—the foreman from the first version. So for her the whole thing is now only a farewell, albeit a more wistful one. Thus Manfred is already more of a focal point, somewhat better, because it is more problematic, but again the tiresome triangle relationship. For a long time I thought in circles until Gerd said: You ought to begin when she comes back from Berlin. So a new variation: Rita is not married yet, she comes back from the encounter in West Berlin totally disheartened, has to help out in her old brigade, the factory is in extraordinary difficulties, not least of all because of a stoppage in West German deliveries. She finishes herself again through the exertion of work—narrated in flashback. She and Ernst, the young factory director, draw closer to each other.

The young factory director with his problems should thus move more into the foreground as a positive figure. It was an intermediate step to the realization that I must write the love story of the girl Rita Seidel. A story with an unhappy ending caused by the disastrous division of Germany that breaks her boyfriend, Manfred. Manfred is driven to the point—primarily by himself—that he leaves the country. Rita stays here, although she almost perishes in the process.

I had begun to realize that conception before the 13th of August. I did not have to change it. The fact that Manfred *could* now no longer leave at all is no argument. Their love is shattered before that, not by the fact that he leaves. However, the parting now has something final about it and cuts even deeper.

One page today, handwritten, corrected on the typewriter in the afternoon and added to the pile of the latest version.

At noon boiled meatballs with caper sauce that Gerd made.

one of the few dishes of Brandenburg cuisine that he learned from me; otherwise he contributes more to our menu from his more refined Thuringian cooking. When we eat Königsberg meatballs, *Mohrpiele*n (a dish made with poppy seeds, white bread, and other ingredients), blood sausage with sauerkraut, or kale, I always see my grandmother standing at her stove (her "cooking machine") in her kitchen apron. I climb hand over hand along a chain of thoughts whose individual links seem quite logical to me, until I reach the comment that I utter: What catastrophes had to take place in order that we could become acquainted with each other—How do you arrive at that?—Through my grandmother—Gerd tries to follow my chain of thought: fascism, war, flight, a foreign place of residence as a possibility for meeting each other—Which grandmother? he asks—The one whom you know. Who before she did knitted a wool sweater for Annette. Who always called you "Yerhard"—The other grandmother, who starved to death while fleeing, does not come into the conversation.

To my surprise, what does come into the conversation is the question of what actually, very concretely, kept (and keeps) us in the German Democratic Republic, when so many have left. (That question has now, of course, also become an undertone in my story.) To answer immediately on the negative side: we know what they are playing "over there," and that we do not belong there. On the positive side: that here in our country the prerequisites for becoming human are increasing. Theoretical is quite clear. Practically: are they really increasing? Don't we often strew sand in our eyes about the "inner relationships" that "our people" have? For example: their relationship to the past. One evening when the Ammendorf brigade was at our house, things only got lively when we exchanged war memories. And it is that way with many people. It is infinitely difficult for them to be critical of themselves.

And the "political consciousness" of the workers, which is

lauded in the newspapers? Many economic successes are obviously caused by material calculations of the workers in favor of their pay envelopes, which, of course, cannot be otherwise. But in Ammendorf I have learned that something like the honor of the factory is not unimportant to the workers, and that the comrades convey something like "consciousness" in laborious daily discussions. After all, in our brigade they are now building ten windows per shift, which still seemed utopian to me a year ago. And they are proud of it, which they would never admit.

But so many whom we would never have thought capable of doing it had disappeared the next morning, toward the West. I had the feeling: the country is bleeding to death. And the functionaries who sit in their armchairs in the offices and exercise bureaucracy contribute their share to it. How long, we ask ourselves, can we continue to take comfort in Brecht's words: "We who wanted to prepare the ground for friendliness could not be friendly ourselves"? If, however, friendliness were to disappear, just what would be the sense of all this tremendous effort in this country?

Midday rest. Read in Aragon's *Holy Week*, which gives me technical stimuli, in order to be able to distance myself from the constraints of prose construction from the nineteenth century, which is regarded as realistic in our country, and take more liberties with respect to the material. Brief nap. Coffee. The one typewritten page that will remain the product of the day and which, of course, altered the handwritten text. A messenger result, I tell myself that almost every day while I walk to the nursery school to pick up Tinka. I must be there as punctually as possible at four o'clock. She is already standing at the door ready to leave. I will never forget her expression when I did not make it once and picked her up as the last one—How was it today?—Fine—What did you play?—A be-ba-boogeyman is going around in our circle—I see. What else?—I can count to

ten—You could already do that—Now I can really do it well. Tomorrow is my birthday. Do I have to go to nursery school then, too?

She has never more clearly stated that she would rather stay home. There is no point in asking her directly. She does not say anything if she does not want to—Tomorrow I'll pick you up at noon. We'll celebrate your birthday in the afternoon. A transformed, cheerful child hops along beside me, while I feel how my heart grows heavy. The children have often been sickly of late and have needed care. The doctor, who is friendly, to be sure, but whom they hate because he always prescribes sweat cures, thinks that Halle's air is affecting their bronchial tubes. He says that you have to be hardened already to be able to stand the chemical fog here. But I am sure that they also sense my silent despair when the days run away from me. Sometimes I make them suffer for it, which is not right and magnifies my despair. There really is something to the idea that if she has children a woman in "arts and sciences" cannot accomplish what it is possible for a man with the same talents to accomplish. An issue that I have often thought about, one that leaves behind a bitter residue and that makes Gerd furious. But the children are growing, and someday concentration will really *bate to* come into my life again—if I have not already unlearned it by then.

At home Tinka hands me her lunch bag and immediately slips around the corner of the building into the garden to her friend Olaf who has already been waiting longingly for her. From the kitchen balcony I see them sitting on the rickety bench by the bower, engrossed in a conversation that I would very much like to listen to. It is probably not an exaggeration to assume that Olaf is Tinka's first love. But I must endure another restless half hour before Annette comes home as well—again she did not catch the streetcar on which we expect her to arrive, again I had to imagine all the things that might

have happened to her. Perhaps she is tired, doesn't pay attention to the stops, and has too many demands placed upon her by the long school day. I am greatly relieved when she comes up the stairs. Our greeting is passionate, an entire evening and a long night lie ahead of us when we are all safely together and I do not have to worry about anyone. It is not just since the war and my flight; even when I was a child I had this fear of catastrophes, which I try to hide from Gerd, but he always senses it. He gathers the children while I make supper—yes, the children would like Königsberg meatballs—and looks at the "adult picture books" with them, a favorite activity. They most like to engross themselves in the pictures by the naïve painters.

When I enter the room to call them to supper, Tinka is just closing one of the picture volumes: Do you only have pictures of workers?—Why?—I don't want to look at them anymore—Why not?—I don't know. They're boring—But workers are very important—Important, yes, but I don't want to look at them all the time—Then what would you rather see?—Oh, other people. Or how I play with Berit in the children's room . . .

Gerd is delighted. Literary criticism on a high level, he says. The future reader makes her needs known. Take that, Madame Author. No workers if possible—I have to punch him for that. Tinka immediately takes his side and places herself protectively in front of him, while Annette, with her sense of justice, gives her opinion that Father should not have spoiled the pleasure that I take in the workers. She knows what I am writing right now.

The supper is rather turbulent. Tinka uses transparent tinb on us, one after another, trying to get out of us what kind of presents she can expect tomorrow. The three of us are an impenetrable front. Annette likes it when she finds herself among the grownups on such occasions. She is permitted to help set up the birthday table in my room, put the five candles in wet sand or

the plate, and decorate it with aster blossoms, while Tinka already lies in bed and plays the lonely, outcast child. In the end they both receive their goodnight song, preferably "*Der Mond ist aufgegangen* (The Moon Has Risen)" because it has so many verses. Each time, after the last verse, Tinka says: But fortunately we don't have a sick neighbor, do we?

We make ourselves comfortable in the room. I get around to the newspapers for which I had no time earlier and that I leaf through in ten minutes. Apparently it is a matter of portraying "Berit" as isolated following the closing of the border on August 13th: "Washington Angry About Bonn." "Only Brandt Still Favors Adenauer's Policies." "Rebuff of Brandt Course at Social Democratic Party Meeting." "The Packing of Bags in West Berlin: firms such as AEG, Siemens, and Osram have begun to move important production divisions to West Germany." "Bonn After the Election: tax burdens increase, prices rise rapidly." And then entire pages of enthusiastic letters from the public to the office of the state council on the defense law: "We are Protecting Our Republic." And in culture: "A Glorious Beginning: Felsenstein's Enchanting *Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Start of the New Season." And: "On the Trail of Gierquin and Titov: a School Observatory on Auguststrasse."

My brother calls on the telephone. He wants to know how we are doing, if the children are healthy. Superficially everything is all right. I notice that he is not in the best mood. Then he blurts out how he envies us that we both work free-lance, and that, of course, is not without justification. (He is right about that. Because the atmosphere and the unreasonable demands in the institutions weighed us down too much. We, like Gerd, withdrew from the respective organizations.) Horst: In the factories and at the university there is "no good air" — But a fresh breeze is blowing in from above now. I say:—He does not believe it. Tactics, he says. Too many cowardly people without ideas and initiatives are sitting in the chairs. We greet

each other with forced smiles at meetings and do not say what we think of each other . . . How familiar I am with that!

Horst gives a few examples from his area, in which wrong decisions that are made out of stupidity and cowardice immediately cost hundreds of thousands of marks. Bad. I could not fall asleep for a long time because of it.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1962
*Kleinmachnow, Förster-Funke-Allee*¹

I wake up in a foreign light that makes orientation difficult in what continue to be unaccustomed surroundings. After twenty days in the new apartment no habits have yet formed. However, here, too, the kitchen is to the left of the entrance, and diagonally across from it the children's room, from which a dialogue resounds that apparently demands much patience from Annette. I stand in the doorway and listen without immediately being noticed. Tinka wants to know why quite a few children in Annette's class still stutter around while reading, as she told us yesterday. They simply don't like reading, says Annette vaguely—Why is that? What do they like, then?—Being lazy and eating chocolate is easy for them—That's easy for me, too, Tinka declares vehemently. Do you think that because of that reading won't be so easy for me?—Reading will be easy for you. You already know most of the letters. But who knows if arithmetic will be easy for you?—She leaves Tinka filled with dismay.

At breakfast Annette is quiet. I try to cheer her up with cocoa and her favorite liverwurst. I know that there would be no point in asking her why she is so reticent. She is a person who has a difficult time getting used to new things, and the

¹The Wolf family moved from Halle/S. to Kleinmachnow, Förster-Funke-Allee, in early summer, both as a result of attacks in the Halle Party newspaper *Freiheit* in connection with disputes about the Twenty-Second Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and in view of a closer collaboration with the DEFA German-German workers group in Potsdam-Babelsberg on film projects. (C.W.)

fact that she has already had to change schools a second time in her four school years is not good for her. She has not made any friends yet. She says that all the girls in her class already have a friend. She cannot bring her qualities to the surface and win over the teachers immediately. It hurts me to see that she is having a hard time. I would like to help her but have to admit that I cannot. She leaves half of her sandwich lying there. When I ask her if she isn't hungry, she shrugs, and Tinka, who appears in her pajamas, declares: She says when it tastes the best you have to stop—Old tattletale, Annette jumps down her throat. I grasp the fact that the half-eaten sandwich belongs to her self-castigation program, like the chewing gum that she threw away and the movie she didn't watch on television. She wants to prove to herself how strong her will is.

My God, how she resembles me, if she only knew it! A series of images from my childhood rolls past my inner eye. I see myself as an awkward child, vulnerable, which I will not admit for anything in the world, craving affection, but incapable of obtaining that affection through kindness or even by currying favor. Why can't a person pass on such experiences, at least as consolation: it will pass?—I hug Annette tightly when saying goodbye, wave to her from the kitchen window. Her child's limbs have become gangling. The transition to teenager is in the offing.

Was it selfish that we moved away from Halle almost precipitously, tearing the children away from their accustomed surroundings? But the old family doctor, who always prescribed sweat packs, said to us: If you want to avoid having your children's bronchitis become chronic, you must move away from here. Away from the chemical zone, away from the fog. Into the good air here in the vicinity of Berlin. Where I— I must admit it—feel just as foreign as the children do.

Anyway, at breakfast we now no longer read *Freiheit*, but the *Berliner Zeitung*, which I open less apprehensively than

the Halle newspaper, which accused me in several articles of a "subjective distortion of the Twenty-Second Party Congress" and of deviationist tendencies—because I had unreverently defended Alexander Tvardovsky's speech at the Twenty-Second Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,⁷ which had appeared under the caption "It Is a Matter of the Truth," while it turned out more and more that the Party—i.e. the functionaries—oriented themselves on Sholokhov's speech and demanded from every writer the avowal that he was "first a communist, then a writer." I still become miserable even now when I think of the discussions in the various committees, of the cowardice and the hypocrisy that were even worse than the dogmatism of those who at least believed what they said.

Suddenly we had to be careful what we said to whom; in official committees we had to listen to horrible insults directed at writers. I found out about negative characterizations that circulated about me in the "apparatus" and experienced physically how a person is defenseless against defamation under certain circumstances, and how a person can easily be ground up if he or she ever winds up in this abject, self-sufficient apparatus. And then the blow, that our film *Moscow Novella* was rejected by Soviet agencies; that Konrad Wolf could no longer wait for the situation to improve and turned to new material, that all of our work was thus in vain. Those were dreadful days. I could not work and we began to look around for another place of residence . . .

All of that runs as a pale film behind the articles that I am reading: "Achieving the Q for the World Market—City Coun-

⁷Alexander Tvardovsky (1910-1971), Russian poet of popular verse epics; received honors as editor-in-chief of the journal *Novy Mir* (New World) (1958-1970). At the Twenty-Second Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1962, he defended the anti-Stalinist reform course; Mikhail Sholokhov (1905-1984), Russian prose writer (Nobel Prize 1965) contradicted him. (G.W.)

colors Conferred About New Technology"—The East German news service: "One hundred and thirty-five women from the Federal Republic, with a total of 260 children, applied for admission to the German Democratic Republic during the last four weeks"—"Disturbers of the Peace Rebuffed. Bonn Ultra Pursue Front City Politics and Agitate Against the German Democratic Republic at UN Headquarters"—"Every Citizen of the Federal Republic 129 Marks in Debt."

Gerd reads aloud from *Neues Deutschland*: "Foreign bishops at the protective wall. Thanks to the border soldiers for peace watch."

It is reported that Anna Seghers' read from *Excursion of the Dead Young Girls* in the crowded cellar theater Katakomben in Frankfurt am Main. Prior to the presentation "anonymous smear sheets against the writer's appearance were distributed." At the opening of the Frankfurt Book Fair, Witsch, the chairman of the publishers' committee in the West German Association of the German Book Trade, called the publication of *The Seventh Cross* in West Germany a "misuse of freedom." The Luchterhand Publishing Company, Neuwied, confirmed, however, that it will publish "the great antifascist novel by Anna Seghers"—I can still see the old teacher's shaky handwriting on the blackboard of the school in Bad Frankenhausen, the title *The Seventh Cross*, we had to read that now. It was 1948; we read the Rowohlt rotary press edition. I try to imagine what my situation would be without that book, without the other books of Anna Seghers.

¹ Anna Seghers (pseudonym of Netty Radányi, 1900-1983) was born in Mainz, a Jewish family. In 1925 she married the Hungarian writer and sociologist László Balványi. In 1928 Seghers joined the Communist Party and the Union Proletarian and Revolutionary Writers, which marked the final break with her bourgeois origins. A poet, essayist, and short story writer, she is best remembered for her novels about the persecution of Jews and other groups in Nazi Germany. She gained international fame with *The Seventh Cross* (1942) and "Transit" (1944), a story about the fate of a group of German refugees in southern France. Seghers's major themes were social injustice and political upheavals of modern age. (Ed.)

The old question arises between us: Is there *one* German culture? In light of such reports I am almost inclined to agree with those who speak very resolutely of two German cultures and cite Lenin's definition of culture. But we all too quickly forgo our claim on literature that is created in West Germany—for example, Heinrich Böll—and do not hesitate to expand the self-sufficiency that is forced upon us and perhaps necessary in other areas to include culture. This must have disastrous consequences; we will hardly be able to get hold of West German literature anymore, and how is anyone—in the East or in the West—supposed to be able to write at least somewhat reliably about German problems? I ask. Won't we sink into provincialism? Or, over the decades, will West Germany become just another country for us, like Austria? Is a lasting, fundamental division of the nation really taking place? A horrible, enormously painful process.

Unfortunately, the symptoms of isolation with respect to the East are also obvious. I do not know which is worse. The Soviet works that were born and are being born from the intellectual discussion following the Twentieth and Twenty-Second Party Congresses are only hesitantly printed or shown here and without much publicity, and sometimes not at all—for example films like *Clear Skies* or *Peace to Him Who Enters*.⁴ Justification: we do not have to participate in their mistakes. But can you turn this process of liberation from lies and ignorance back again? Gerd does not answer. I have the impression that he is somewhat skeptically awaiting the reception of my story, which I finished writing and gave to the publisher in spite of all these other involvements in recent months. He does not express him-

⁴ Gergely Csikvári's *Chistoe nebo* (1961); aka *Clear Heaven*; aka *Clear Skies*. Alcxander Abramov and Vladimir Naumov, *Mir obhodysobornu* (1961); aka *Peace to Him Who Enters*. The film, the second of which was only available in the Russian version, stimulated the discussion about our own film creations through their critical, anti-dogmatic attitude toward the Second World War. (C.W.)

self openly, simply says *Divided Heaven* is not really a tinker that overflows with optimism, is it? Then I shut up again.

Mrs. G. comes. She is a massive person, but agile and tireless in spite of that—one of those women who like to clean which I do not understand, but I am careful not to let it show. A beautiful autumn, says Mrs. G. Although she has only been with us for a short time, she knows what needs to be done without anyone telling her and needs no guidance. I always wait somewhat fearfully for her tidings during the first few minutes. Since bad news seems to fly at her and she believes in the inevitability of vicissitudes, which we must accept stoically, she always provides us with the latest catastrophe reports. Today it is the suicide of a man whom we, however, do not know. This town is ideal for people who commit suicide, says Mrs. G. Nor is it any wonder. She thinks that the building of the wall that forms a fence through this city really might "weigh heavily on a person's mind." I ask her if she has been directly affected by it—Not directly. The fact that you can no longer go from Döppel to West Berlin on the commuter train actually should not matter to her. She would not have done that anyway. It was too arduous for her. But the fact that it is no longer possible, that does irritate her. And some people are hopping mad, of course. They had been sitting on packed bags and wanted to leave; now the trap has snapped shut.—Can the fact that Mrs. G. has two deaf-mute children contribute to her hunger for other people's misfortunes?

I go shopping. How different the mentality of the people here is from that of the people in Halle. Right from the beginning we found it odd that the Western stations come into your house in so many frequencies here; we were not accustomed to being deluged with their news broadcasts. In Halle I had felt a certain amount of relief in the railroad car factory when the border were closed, because before that we had to be afraid that the plant would be stripped of engineers and technicians. Now the

there is no longer any intervention from outside, people will finally speak plainly to each other, they said in the directorate. Now a person will once again be able to criticize openly.

I pack my bags full in the grocery store and carry them home. All the faces are strange. I do not know the code to decipher their expressions. It is eleven o'clock when I return. The editorial office of *forum* calls. Heinz Nahke speaking. They want to publish *Divided Heaven* beginning in November. A thrill of pleasure goes through me. So you like the manuscript? I ask. Nahke, in his usual placating manner, passes on a rather positive opinion.—But the publisher still does not have permission to print it! I say. Nahke says that they are not subject to that. And besides, the manuscript fits their program precisely.—Which program? I ask.—To promote the discussion of socio-political questions among the young intellectuals.—And you think you'll get away with that?—Signals from above suggest we need that very thing now.—From where "above"?—Not on the telephone, Nahke says. But now we must support the right trend. Perhaps such an opportunity will never come again—I won't stand in the way, I say.—Exactly, he says. We have to join forces.

Suddenly the world looks different. The paralysis has disappeared. There are people who are counting on me, who do not talk me among the deviationists, but among the forces that they want to "join" together. It really was good for us to move here, I say to Gerda. He is immune to exuberance. If "trends" are slipping against each other up there, it could become dangerous for those who wind up between the fronts, he says. But that does not change anything now. When a train departs, we have to jump aboard.

Meanwhile Tinka has tried to make friends with children in the neighborhood and returns with the news that they are all "candid." Nothing more can be gotten out of her. She never saw a word if she doesn't want to. In addition to that she collects the lace that announced to me even when she was a

ly that she saves the soap powder that she would use for her wash and instead hangs her things out on the line to air them out. Honestly and truly!

The mail brought invitations to different kinds of meetings. To judge by the topics, they want to start some kind of ideological offensive against the impact of the revelations of the Twenty-Second Party Congress, with which people here, of course, are only partially familiar, unless they read the *Presse der Sowjet-Union*. That is probably the other "trend" that the forum wants to undercut . . .

Wearily, as I always am in the middle of the day, I lie down. For lack of other reading material, am again reading Aragon's *Holy Week*. This genre of modern historical novels is just the right kind of thing for me to read now so that I can distance myself a little bit from the present, which really does come at me too hard, and at the same time develop a keen eye.

A few letters, mostly refusals, are the only things created on my typewriter today. At around five we leave for Gross Glancke, not without first preparing supper for the children, leaving the Schlotterbecks' telephone number with them, and checking with Mrs. P., the nice young engineer who lives below us, to make certain that she will be at home and look in on the children. They're not babies anymore, the two of them claim.

Through Stahnsdorf, Babelsberg, Potsdam, past Sanssouci, everything still new and unfamiliar. I try to see as much as possible and to impress it upon my mind. I try to count: since the end of the war I have moved nine times. Will we remain here long enough to be able to develop something like a feeling of being at home again? Do I actually miss this? It occurs to me that I have never asked myself that question before.

The Schlotterbecks' live in a simple one-family house.

Frank Schlotterbeck (1909-1979), writer, as a communist in Hitler's Germany, spent a year of anti-fascist resistance he was in concentration camps and prisons for ten years, was able to flee to Switzerland in 1944; all members of his family—mother,

toddler that she had battered down the hatches. She goes into the children's room to paint another series of princesses. In any case there are no children here that I could invite to her birthday tomorrow. That worries me. While I make Königsberg meatballs once again, Mrs. G. is busy in the kitchen. We won't be allowed to call them Königsberg meatballs anymore, she says, voicing her opinion—Why not?—Because Königsberg won't exist much longer. All that is no longer supposed to be true. They will now soon call them "Russian meatballs." Oh, no, Mrs. G.—It does not seem proper to give Mrs. G. a lesson on causes and effects in historical developments. Besides, my confidence that every person can be cured of his or her false beliefs through evidence has meanwhile significantly diminished. Oh, Mr. Brecht, I often think, people really can see an apple fall to the ground and simultaneously believe it when someone claims: It isn't falling. And there it is still the matter of more obvious natural laws!

But, I say to myself, Mrs. G. is nonetheless open-minded with regard to people with disabilities, because as deaf-mute her two children are themselves disabled. She becomes funny when speaking about rebuffs her children have experienced.

Annette comes home. The last class was cancelled. That he lifted her spirits, since it was mathematics. We discuss how we should organize Tinka's birthday without children. Go to Potsdam and eat ice cream, that much has already been decided. A bit meager, we both think. And how would it be, Annette, say if we visited a castle? Given she is so obsessed with princesses Sanssouci! I cry. A good idea! And we won't tell Tinka, but simply announce a surprise.

Lunch is good. Mrs. K., our landlady, is an inexhaustible topic for the children. That she does not like children is obvious. They get their revenge by snapping up and spreading her reports about her from sources that remain a mystery to me. Annette has learned that she is unbelievably miserly—so much

Frieder had invited us in order to initiate us a little bit in "how the rabbit runs here." We met Aenne and him for the first time only a week ago at the first meeting of the Writers Union in Potsdam, where, not least by Frieder, notes were struck—critical, even sarcastic—to which we were not accustomed in Halle. I had spoken to him about that and asked if it would not be more prudent to be a little more careful. A questioning look in response. The invitation followed.

For a little while we are still able to sit on the open wooden veranda behind the house. The day remains mild into the evening. In addition to Aenne and Frieder, Wilfriede, their daughter, and their little grandson Aram, who can obviously wrap his grandparents around his finger, are present. Tomatoes are lying on the table, which Frieder grew himself, and apples from the garden. At six on the dot he appears with a tray in which five filled champagne glasses stand. They always begin the evening at this time with a glass of champagne. So, Aenne says to good neighborly relations! We drink. She adds: Every evening

father, sister, brother, fiancée—were executed while they were confined and accused of being jointly liable for his political crimes. Schlotterbeck immigrated to East Germany in 1948 with his wife, Aenne Schlotterbeck (1902-1972). In the German Democratic Republic, during the course of Stalinist trials they were again sentenced to prison.

A key figure for the charges in the Prague Slansky trial against the so-called "advisive conspiracy center" and resulting subsequent trials in the German Democratic Republic was the US citizen Noel Field (1904-1972), who was the director of the American refugee aid program (USC) in Switzerland during the Second World War. In all of the show trials he was named as the central US agent; was sentenced to prison in Hungary and remained in Hungary after his release from prison. C. and G. Wolf were friends with the Schlotterbecks until their deaths. G. Wolf published a new edition (Halle, 1969) of Friedrich Schlotterbeck's report about his experience during the Nazi era, *Je dunkler die Sterne* (The Darker the Night, the Brighter the Stars) (first edition, 1945), and was the publisher's reader for his book *Im Rosengarten von Sanssouci* (In the Rose Garden of Sanssouci), Halle, 1967. C. W. gave the eulogy at Friedrich Schlotterbeck's funeral and remembered him in the "Rede auf Schiller" (Address on Schiller) on the occasion of her receiving the Friedrich Schiller Memorial Prize in Stuttgart in 1983 (C. W.'s *Werke in 12 Bänden*, Vol. VIII, pp. 379ff.); for a West German new edition of "Je dunkler die Sterne . . ." Stuttgart, 1983, she wrote the afterword "Erinnerung an Friedrich Schlotterbeck" (In Memory of Friedrich Schlotterbeck), (*Werke*, Vol. VIII, pp. 439ff.) (G.W.)

with the first mouthful of champagne I think about the many thousands who would be mad as hell if they could see that we live and that we enjoy ourselves. And about those who know and are mad as hell that they can no longer do anything to us.

And why can't they do anything anymore?—Kruschev, says Frieder. Times are changing—And Aenne: Don't rejoice too soon—Aram insists, and sips a little champagne, too.

I help Frieder carry the glasses into the kitchen, which is beautifully and practically arranged, like apparently everything in this house, and apparently frequently used. Frieder lifts the cover from the large pot where something is simmering. Potatoes, he says. I'm the cook here. He tastes it, adds spices from different small containers until he is satisfied, lifts the pot from the burner, and puts it on the table in the dining niche in the large room. I bring dishes and spoons, bread is cut and placed next to it, the others are called in, and the soup is served and eaten with something approaching reverence. Such a delicacy has never been served to us before under the name potato soup. Frieder puts on his roguish expression. Yeah, it's a Swabian recipe—I notice his Swabian dialect today more clearly than before. While he enumerates the ingredients for the potato soup and Gerd makes an effort to remember all of them, I imagine Frieder, with his almost bald, oval peasant's head, as a Swabian fighter in the peasant wars or as an ill-fated monk or priest, perhaps even as a member of the Swabian school of poets, a friend of Hölderlin. He fits into many clothes: he does not fit into fine robes. Where was his home in Swabia?—Stuttgart-Untertürkheim, he says. A work-er's settlement. My whole family worked for Daimler. I was a carpenter—In the meantime we have learned some things about the fate of his family: that the Nazis exterminated them. We do not ask more questions—Yeah, says Frieder, his name is common in the area around Stuttgart. By the way, since we were supposed to know literature: we surely knew that one of

the robbers in Karl Moor's band in Schiller's *The Robbers* or named Schlotterbeck?—We did not know it, to Frieder's satisfaction.

Wilfriede says goodbye. Aram must go to bed; she lives in Berlin and still has an hour's ride ahead of her. After she has gone, Aenne says: To call a child *Wilfriede* in Germany in 1944—that also took courage for her mother—So is Aenne not Wilfriede's mother? Frieder not her father?—We do not ask Frieder: Wilfriede is the daughter of my sister Gertrud whom they killed. And, almost without a transition: Oh, by the way, you're sitting in the chairs of Dresden's Nazi district leader Mutschmann! They are ostentatious brown leather armchairs into which you sink. They were given to them in 1940 when they moved from the West to East Germany, to Dresden, and of course had nothing, and certainly no furniture. The were administrative staff members of the Red Cross and brought a Red Cross supplies train with them, and that had also been quite a prank—Frieder seems to still be glib about that, even now.

Of course we want to know more, everything possible about them, without questioning them all too obtrusively. And they notice that and give us the bits of information that press themselves, always casually, without emphasis. Primarily they actually want to talk with us about "the situation," about the power relationships in the district. The fact that in the Worker Union the "reasonable people" are in the majority—we had already noticed that. We could imagine how this does not necessarily please the functionaries "in the district." Varnishing the truth is not dead, says Aenne. They are being put under a lot of pressure by Berlin to finally bring us to our senses—But then you talk so intimately and openly with them? I ask—Frieder says: I've already noticed that it disturbs you. But first of all: they are also human beings and receptive to human conversation. Second: don't think that the Twenty-Second Party

Congress didn't shake them to the core, too. And third: with respect to us they have a guilty conscience, and I simply exploit that shamelessly.

Aenne reins him in and tells him that he had better not dare to give us one of his political lectures. Nor did the conscience of the comrades really seem to be all that guilty. Otherwise they would long since have given them back their old Party books with the correct date of entry—That's another story—How so? says Aenne—Now we do want to know what they are talking about—Oh, when they were let out of the socialist prison, after a time they were rehabilitated, to be sure—they had been locked up "because of false accusations"—but in their new Party books they had entered a new, incorrect entry date, and since then Frieder had been fighting to have his correct entry date in his Party book, specifically the one from the 1930s. He has been in the Party much longer than all of the youngsters and armchair farts, says Aenne. And he wants that documented. There he's as stubborn as an old jackass—Frieder grins at that.

But what did the false accusations consist of? we now want to know. Oh, that's a broad subject. Just a few intimations. Does the name Noel Field mean anything to us?—Didn't he play a role in the Slansky trial in Prague?⁶—Right, as an "enemy agent." And their trial had been a weak offshoot of the trials in the socialist sister nations. But while in exile in Switzerland, as a staff member of the Red Cross, Aenne had met Noel Field, who also arranged help for victims of the Nazis, and she had led to their downfall. To be sure, after Stalin's death they had silently dropped the charge of "enemy agent activity" and replaced it with other absurd accusations. In any case, the

⁶ Slansky and 1951 (see also footnote 5); Stalinist trials with anti-Semitic tendencies against leading members of the Communist Party in the USSR under General Secretary Nikita Khrushchev, with numerous death sentences or long prison terms; the concerned people were not "rehabilitated" until 1965. (G.W.)

two of them had sat—she two, he three years—in Bützow-Bützow?—In Mecklenburg. A prison for men and women. We can go there some time if you want. Frieder almost died there, rupture of a stomach ulcer.—To be locked up by your own people, Frieder says almost apologetically. That takes an awful lot out of you, of course.

We say nothing, but they can guess our thoughts. Well, of course you sometimes get fed up with the nonsense, says Frieder and you want to give up. But then everything that you did before would have been in vain; then all of that Nazi shit would have won after all. The price was too high. We just have to pull ourselves from the swamp with our own hands. And go on.

And if the swamp is stronger?

You mustn't even think that, says Frieder.

When we say goodbye outside, standing before the first door, he puts his arm around my shoulder: You always have to rattle the bars of the corral, girl, he says. Otherwise the walls will close in on you and smash you in the end.

On the way home we have no desire to speak. It is dark. A bizarre moon accompanies us. At home we look into the children's room, the children are asleep. As agreed, Annette has put a large dish of fine sand on the table and laid a note next to it: Don't forget to set up the candles. I press six birthday candles and a larger "life light" into the damp sand and decorate the table as always with aster blossoms. It is not yet midnight and we are in bed. Gerd hands the open Hermlin book over to me. Read, he says. It's fitting. When he wrote that, he was as old as we are now. I read:

⁷ Stephan Hermlin (1915-1997): G. Wolf edited *Gedichte Stephan Hermlin (Stephan Hermlin's Poems)* for Reclam in Leipzig in 1963 and wrote the essay on Hermlin in *Eratur der DDR in Einzeldarstellungen (Literature of the GDR in Individual Statements)*; C.W. remembers Hermlin's poem in her obituary on the poet "Der erste Wunden bluten heute nur nach innen (Today the Wounds of the World Only Bleed Inwardly)" (*Werke*, Vol. XII, pp. 674ff.). On the friendship with Hermlin in the years standing see also the contribution "Nicht beendetes Gespräch (Unfinished Conversation)," Berlin, *Freizeit*, 63/1995. (G.W.)

The time of wonders has gone by. Beyond the blocks
The arc lamp suns have now gone down and out of sight.
And when they strike, we're startled by the faulty clocks,
And now the cats are gray again in fading light.

For merchants and for heroes evening falls across the
streets.

The heartbeat falters like this line, something chokes the
city.

The wall inscriptions and the flocks of birds advise:

Our youth is gone. The time of wonders has gone by.

and it ends:

The wounds of words are now still bleeding inwardly.

The time of wonders perished. The wasted years are gone.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1963
Kleimmachnow, Förster-Funke-Allee

I begin. It is the "middle of the day" when I sit down at my desk—finally! It is already 10:50—and I begin with a statement by Anna Seghers that I just read in an essay written last year on the occasion of Nazim Hikmet's birthday . . . She quotes Hikmet:

"Unlike most writers he often needs more time for a poem than for a stage play. That clarifies his life for us, which is in part driven, in part paralyzed. And divided into individual harsh acts.

Thus have I freed myself
 From all big words,
 From all question marks.
 Sedately I entered the ranks
 Of the great struggle.

In this way, we gather around him, close, sedate, freed from big words."¹

In that one sentence a person can unfurl the entire debate in which we have been involved since the end of last year—and I

¹ Nazim Hikmet (1902-1963), Turkish communist poet, often forced into exile, he also occasionally resided in the German Democratic Republic; friends with Anna Seghers; in the German Democratic Republic numerous volumes of his poetry appeared in German. Anna Seghers quotes from Hikmet's poem "Die Welt, Freund und Feind, Du und die Erde (The World, Friend and Enemy, You and the Earth)" (N. Hikmet, *Gedächtnis [Poems]*, Berlin, 1959, pp. 68ff.). (G.W.)

especially in recent weeks. It becomes more and more clear to me that it is not a matter of a chance collision, of misunderstandings (at first I myself still wanted to take it that way for fear of the consequences); it is a basic difference of opinion *not* on questions of literature, but on political, "general human" questions. Last night on the telephone Konrad Wolf said: "You are probably aware that we live in a time of the class struggle, especially the ideological class struggle . . ."—I: "But surely not of class struggle within the Party!" He: "Why not? If that stops, we don't need the Party anymore!" I: "But will you permit me to forgo shouting hallelujah about that?" He: "Nobody asks that of you."

Of course, calling it class struggle is not correct. It is even more complicated. It is actually a matter of replacing an old generation of communists with a new one, which will always bring conflicts, of course, but is now enormously critical because of the simultaneous necessity to deal with the cult of personality (which has very little to do with individuals anymore). To step down, to see your own limitations, must be enormously difficult. In addition to that: specifically in the area of ideology and pedagogy, during the last decade and a half the most unpleasant characters have systematically pushed their way to the top and now hold important positions (also people, by the way, who do not understand much about the field, which gives their struggle for their seat a tragi-comic element). In the Czech Soviet Socialist Republic they have now reorganized the entire government—an act that certainly would not be advisable here. But the slow process of "reorganization" brings problems, of course . . . For example, Walter Ulbricht² has difficulties getting a youth

² Walter Ulbricht (1893-1973) was a German communist politician. As First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party from 1950 to 1971, he held arguably the most central role in the early development and establishment of the German Democratic Republic. (Ed.)

communicé' with the sharpness that he would like accepted in the politburo. It is being attacked (or watered down) by the same people who are attacking *Divided Heaven* in Halle and elsewhere. The attack is not so dangerous because they usually hide the true reasons for their opinions and build a structure out of suppositions, distortions, and suspicions, which cannot stand up, of course. ("Decadent lifestyle" is the least of their accusations against me.)

To be sure, we have different opinions about life, about what is true and false, genuine and counterfeit, positive and negative. But I think that it is too early to conduct that discussion openly. So it proceeds on the level of appearances: I am forced to reject human baseness and am able to involve myself relatively little in the matter. In recent weeks I have swallowed quite a bit. At times, I was really down (I saw what lies ahead of us!), and I was especially hurt by the disappointing behavior of some people. On the other hand: they are not succeeding. The book is mentioned (in spite of violent opposition) in the youth communiqué. A lot of people, even leading comrades, maintain their opinion. Just now a card from Kurella⁴ in which the man as a whole is visible:

"Dear Christa! I just read your 'Terra incognita' (an article in *forum*) with great pleasure!⁵ What you wrote about the elec-

tion and about literature is—a commentary on the youth communiqué! And an excellent one! Isn't that a good, satisfying realization for you yourself? You mustn't take the peculiar series of articles (so as not to call them something else) appearing in *Freiheit* too much to heart. This is no way to eat!—Gettings, A. K."

The same A. K. who came up to me at Ulbricht's birthday reception with Dr. Thiessen,⁶ introduced me to him, and said: "Unfortunately also married. But probably not above the norm?" . . . The fact that I *do* take the people in Halle to heart is *also* a part of the "deal," but of my own personal deal, which, one way or another, has to be brought into harmony with things in general . . .

Another letter: from DILIA, the literary agency in Prague. They write to me that a Czech women's magazine wants to print *Divided Heaven* as a serial. I am very happy about that!

The most unpleasant thing about these sudden unfounded attacks against a book or against a person is that the process of self-criticism is slowed down. You stiffen against it. You hunger more for praise than you did before. You take it more seriously.

That must not happen to me under any circumstances!

This morning—now I am writing retrospectively—I rolled around lazily in bed with Tinka for a long time. School didn't start today until late. She exploits her position as the littlest girl, stretches herself, and encircles me with her charm. She still smells good. I cuddled with her and was reminded of how she lay next to me as a baby, as a warm little clump. Enthusiastically she grasped the association and demanded "baby sto-

³ Youth Communiqué: Resolution of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party, initiated by Walter Ulbricht: "Der Jugend Verantwortung und Vertrauen (To the Youth, Responsibility and Trust)" for the modernization of the youth, cultural, and scientific policies of the Socialist Unity Party; directed against Erich Honecker, who condemned this policy as a "false orientation" and "revisionism" (see also: Second Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party, 1966). (G.W.)

⁴ Alfred Kurella (1895-1975), writer, cultural functionary, as a communist, emigrated to the USSR; 1957-1963 in the politburo of the Socialist Unity Party and after 1963 a member of the ideology committee of the politburo; significantly involved in the cultural politics of the Socialist Unity Party. (G.W.)

⁵ C.W.'s essay, "Wo liegt unsere 'terra incognita'?" (Where Does Our 'Terra Incognita' Lie?), which contains a quote from the diary of Max Frisch from January of 1948 (Frisch, *Gesammelte Werke (Collected Works)*, Vol. II, p. 554), appeared in *Forum*, 18/1963. (G.W.)

⁶ Prof. Peter Adolf Thiessen (1899-1990), professor of physical chemistry, 1935-1945 director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physical Chemistry in Berlin; 1945-1956 a specialist for atomic research in the USSR; in the German Democratic Republic 1957-1965 chairman of the Research Council of the German Democratic Republic and member of the State Council. (G.W.)

ries." Father warned her: Mom is just thinking aloud. After all, she's a writer!—I protested: Invention is not my strength!

It was stormy today. Sunshine alternated with dense clouds. The loose window next to me rattled. Actually we should already be turning on the heat. I am now often weary during the few days between our "tours" through the Republic. Today I have "aches" in my left shoulder for the first time. Hopefully they will go away!

Later Baldauf came from the Deutschland station and brought the newest product by Günter Grass: *Dog Years*, for me to review. In the process we became conscious of how little we actually know about intellectual developments over there. There is almost no discussion anymore. We no longer see the background before which such a book appears at all. Recently, during a discussion with students someone said: For me West Germany is a country like any other—like France or Italy—only German is spoken there.

No isolated opinion among twenty-year-olds. So the two parts of Germany are inexorably moving apart?

Tinka says: "Now I'm going to close my eyes. Then I'll see myself as a baby. And you?" I saw her, too, and saw myself as well: young, cheerful (which surely is not true at all), unburdened by so much. I often yearn to be young, but not to be naïve. Can we long to know less about everything than we know? The process of disillusionment, a background theme of my story, continues unceasingly. Sometimes we become alarmed (as I am doing right now). But Seghers said it very well: "Sedate, liberated from big words."

Of course: this also entails a new freedom . . .

In the afternoon: Tinka has just come in, thoughtlessly opening the door. I am startled and get upset with her. She says: "Are you jumpy?" Yes, I am. Sometimes at night I wake up with a start and scream. That never happened to me in the past.

Gerd says he found a piece of paper in one of Fümberg's

diaries, with a real prayer on it, a plea for protection for himself and his family, addressed to God. From the time of the Slansky trials . . . I ask myself: What must be happening inside a person who is a communist to his last breath to make him cling to the mystical as a final way out?

Tinka is just now straightening up her school case—she has a hard time with careful treatment of the books and notebooks. She still does not take school very seriously. So far she has not had any problems to solve.

An afternoon program "for the older generation" is being broadcast on Free Berlin Radio. In a nutshell: cheese for the soul. "They sure know all about it!" says Gerd.

The pain in my shoulder becomes annoying. Am I going to have to have my tonsils removed after all?

Today at noon, while I was shoving the shish kebab onto the skewers, I said to Gerd: In Prague they want to publish *Divided Heaven* in a women's magazine. See, he said. The Czechs really are the best!—Mrs. G. laughed and said: But they are not very clean!—I gave my opinion on that point. She: All that may be true, but the refugees who came from there in '45 were rather dirty. I: We also came as displaced persons, dirty. If you don't have anything, it is easy to get dirty. Mrs. G. remains unconvinced. A few days ago, when we were eating garlic, she said: Now we'll stink like the Jews!

Last week in Weimar I had the experience of seeing a seven-year-old boy call after a Negro on the street: "Look at how dirty he is! He never washes!" When put on the spot, he evades and then backs away with a shyly cunning look on his face. He knew exactly what I wanted from him. . . . continuously engendering evil must give birth . . .

The day is almost over. I am already bringing it to a close because I know how it will proceed: supper, putting the children to bed, two hours with newspapers and a book, while getting more and more tired, and then to bed.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1964
Kleinmachnow, Förster-Funke-Allee

This time the "one day a year" fell on a Sunday. But even then I did not have time to write. I will probably have to make a "week of the year" out of it. For my daily routine hardly says anything about me anymore. It is forced upon me. I am afflicted by gloomy reflections about the extent to which the writer (and of course other people especially) may be manipulated in our society. When, after a book, the number of invitations to readings rises to seven hundred, they become one of the seven Egyptian plagues. When many of them are clearly a matter of routine, a matter of striving, with the help of the author, to check off an item on the cultural agenda, you feel miserable enough. Then, even a national prize is not worth rejoicing about anymore. On the contrary: it burdens me. It is extremely difficult to draw a line under all of these public demands. They are electing me to PEN. I can do nothing about it. They shove me onto the advisory board of the presidium: I am not asked and I am not even there. Every newspaper wants an interview with me, or a picture. Every West German or foreign journalist is supposed to visit the monument to the fallen soldier at Treptow, and me. Of course, this is also an opportunity to remove someone from the field of battle. I am again quite nervous. I can hardly take an afternoon nap anymore. Whether I want to or not, I am in danger of seeing everything from the point of view of my own ego. There are signs of that with me, which Gerd signals. Now and then there is a small, insignificant collision that would be unthinkable under "nor-

mal" circumstances. Perhaps I am beginning to become too self-important. Gerd says: You don't enjoy life at all anymore. There is something to that. I am becoming wry, a bit tense, and pigheaded. I begin to think that it is improper for me to have all that money. I urgently want to produce something new. But aside from the fact that I am not able to work without interruption, I am also not to that point. I have not worked exactly and hard enough. That is the worst thing.

The new plan came into existence in the following way: on the telephone, after he had attended an international film symposium in Moscow, Dieter indicated that our film had virtually failed. Two days earlier, following an Academy discussion, an article had appeared in *Neues Deutschland*, under the title: "Motion Picture Art's Lucky Hour." Quick as a flash and very clearly I grasped the weakness of the film: its artificiality. In the same moment I thought: I must write about that. What I mean is: about the process of finding the truth in two respects: First, as a "simple" process of the ever better (or just beginning) recognition of the dialectic nature of reality and its artistic representation, and second the achieving of distance from that truth, which actually again proves to be one-sided, limited. The pains experienced in doing so, and the satisfaction. The influence of the environment on it—very often negative. How we are hindered in seeing or saying the truth. How they want to push art aside as a decorative embellishment and not view it as one of society's vital organs.

Is that an artistic topic at all? It should be clothed in a report about the day of a film producer. A day when he receives a prize and simultaneously recognizes how inadequate his work has been. The conflicts to which artists in particular have been subjected in recent years should intersect in that man.

I was horribly in doubt. Not only that my own national prize makes the treatment of such material excessively difficult for me—(first I thought: Now I cannot write that anymore at all)—even in itself. Is that a topic?

On a recent evening I discussed it with Konni,¹ who is busy preparing his Goya. He says that the most important thing for him about this material, next to the problem of the artist, is the topic of intellectual inquisition. I asked, Do you think that a person can only deal with this topic right now within the context of historical material? He: Yes! Otherwise you never get to the principal level.

That is how it is. I now see before me already how I will constantly have to cut off the threads at the top, so that the whole thing does not go too far. It is very difficult, perhaps impossible, to write in a way that in the process you do not think of an audience. That you only write "for yourself." That would be the right way to write.

Sometimes I think that for our generation the intrusion of reality comes almost too late, in any case at the very last moment, and processing it demands extreme effort.

Konni said: *The topic, one that has not yet been touched at all, is, "Germany today."* That had become clear to him again during a birthday party for Christel's grandma ("Grandma's birthday"), where West and East met together and everything was represented, from soldier anecdotes to socialist agitation.

That means, I said, a great, multi-level novel of the society, like the kind Tolstoy wrote? Yes, he said. Or: small stories in which the entire spectrum of problems of recent years is reflected indirectly. That is more or less how he saw my material, but it seems to me that it is more direct and has essayistic elements. (Is that really appropriate material?)

Konni told about his recent encounters with Michail Romm,² who was in Berlin to collect material for his film

¹ Konrad "Konni" Wolf. (Ed.)

² Michail Romm (1901-1971), Soviet film director; master of the classical revolution film *Lenin im Oktober (Lenin in October)* (1937); *Neun Tage eines Jahres (Nine Days of One Year)* (1961); *Klarer Himmel* (1961); an initial dispute with Stalinism, *Gewöhnlicher Faschismus (Ordinary Fascism)* (1965). (G.W.)

about fascism, *Triumph Over Violence*.³ (At home he has a finished scenario for it, but one that he cannot film. It treats the conflict between the generations, which, of course, officially does not exist.) While there, he also found new documents about the 1939 pact between Hitler and Stalin. For example: two days after the attack on the USSR, oil and iron ore were still being delivered to Hitler's Germany! Romm thinks it is possible to conclude that between dictators, no matter of what social order, there is or there arises a certain affinity.

Angel Wagenstein⁴ compared the situation after the Twenty-Second Party Congress to a champagne cork that has popped out of the bottle and can no longer be stuffed back into it for anything in the world. Romm counters it with his image of the two flies sitting on the wheel of a one-horse cart that at times ploughs through mud, and at other times moves over dry terrain. The flies cheer when they're high and dry and "on top," and curse when they are drawn through the mud. So they become angry about the independent movement of the wheel. But they forget to ask where the whole cart is actually going. And that in particular, Romm thinks, would be the most important thing today . . .

He also told Konni about the prohibition of the second part of the Eisenstein film *Ivan the Terrible*, whose separate phases he experienced. One day they were all invited to the Central Committee. Eisenstein was also there. The film was shown.

³ *Obyektivnennyi fashizm* (1965), aka *A Night of Thoughts*; aka *Echo of the Jackboot* (UK); aka *Ordinary Fascism*; aka *Triumph Over Violence* (USA); aka *Triumps Over Violence* (USA). (Ed.)

⁴ Angel Wagenstein (b. 1922), Jewish Bulgarian film scenario writer who wrote screenplays for numerous films of the DEFA German film workers' group; friends with Konrad Wolf since their studies together at the Moscow All Union Institute for Cinematography. Wrote the screenplays for Wolf's films *Sterne (Stars)* (1959) and *Goya* (1971); *Pentateuch oder Die fünf Bücher Isaaks (Pentateuch or the Five Books of Isaac)*, Berlin, 1999. (G.W.)

They all had a distinct feeling: a film against Stalin. Nobody could say that aloud. They beat around the bush. Romm said that he should finish the third part first. Perhaps then they would be able to see things more clearly. Pudovkin⁵ wanted to know what he had actually intended to say with the film. Eisenstein responded: "What I intended to say, I said."—In any case, nobody came out and said it. Meanwhile Eisenstein had a heart attack, lay in the hospital, and the film was shown at high levels. Adamant rejection. Romm is assigned to convey that to Eisenstein. He makes it cool and brief. Eisenstein remains calm. He asks: "What is the reason for the rejection?" Romm answers with the sentence that was officially communicated to him: "In the film there are distortions of historical events." Eisenstein responds: "Well, if you have nothing else . . ."

While ever we do not write about such things, we remain superficial. One serious question is: does this problem actually interest "the nation," the masses of people? Isn't it a typical intellectual problem formulation (yesterday during a film discussion in the National People's Army we noticed that many people are not willing to pursue such questions)? It has to be dealt with in spite of that. After all, it is a determining factor in life everywhere! Recently in the executive committee of the Writers' Union (that also lies temporarily within this week of the year!) the secretariat itself, apparently under pressure from below, brought up for discussion the problem that many writers (I believe, all of them) think that they themselves and their union are powerless. Certain phrases were used, like: "The powerlessness of the author vis-à-vis the institutions," which is now generally accepted as fact. A result of that is the lack of contribution by the union members to the life of the union. Many feel that they are a "democratic façade," "dues payers," and see the union as a "debating club." All of that is correct.

⁵ Vsevolod Pudovkin (1893-1953), Soviet film director, best known for Russian silent films and his influential theories of montage. (Ed.)

Walter Kaufmann,⁶ who traveled for several weeks between the German Democratic Republic, Finland, and Sweden on a small coastal motor ship with a small crew (fifteen men), told us how bitter most of those very capable and politically "clean" young people are toward the political instructors and toward the administration of the shipping office. How they make comparisons between the accomplishments of our ships and analogous West German ships—not in order to run away to the West, but in order to improve our methods. They, and the young captain, are punished severely if they try to act rationally. He refused to bring an old ship from Egypt back to the German Democratic Republic with a lading that was too heavy for it. He was relieved of his command, demoted for refusing to follow orders, and sentenced to land duty. With a new captain, quick to volunteer, the ship broke in two not far from Rostock. That captain was punished. The first captain now commands a small ship, but has no intention of climbing any higher. (Similar reaction, although for different reasons, on the part of the Ammendorf plant director, who also does not want to climb up the ladder.)

A typical story here in our country: the man who was punished for common sense and now quietly contents himself with a position that insufficiently challenges him.

I must look for other stories like that. The Meternagel story of the man who always had to do things that went beyond his abilities is also such a story, but seemingly a contrasting one.

The day before yesterday, in the Potsdam Cecilienhof PEN Club: discussion. Historical room of the Potsdam Accord. An abomination! Ernst Schumacher said as he entered: "No won-

⁶ Walter Kaufmann (b. 1924), writer of Jewish origin; General Secretary of PEN (German Democratic Republic) 1985-1993; took up residency in the German Democratic Republic in 1956 following exile in Australia; reportages and novels, a. o. *Wobin der Mensch gehört* (*Where the Human Being Belongs*), Berlin, 1957, *Die Zeit berühren—Mosaik eines Lebens* (*Touching Time—Mosaic of a Life*), Berlin, 1992 (see also: C.W., *Aktenstisch*, Hamburg, 1993, pp. 152ff.). (G.W.)

der—here they were incapable of thinking up anything better!” Gloomy wooden paneling halfway up the wall and a penetrating moth stench. High windows. The flags of the four powers in small format and a picture in which the four main signers are visible. For the first time the sacred round table was desecrated by profane activity, even though school classes were steadily led past and stared at everything. I asked myself: What do they think of the illustrious circle that is gathered here?

A discussion about German literature after the two world wars was planned. Günther Cwojdrak⁷ opened the session, cautiously. One of his ideas proved fruitful: Why isn't there this comprehensive portrayal, *the* great novel, after the Second World War, as there was after the First? At the beginning Arnold Zweig⁸ told a few anecdotes, reported about the genesis of his *The Case of Sergeant Grischka*, which developed from a piece that supposedly nobody wanted to print because of the expressionist trend. No publisher would even accept the book—at least not Ullstein. They did not want any more war books. Zweig called that the “suppression of the war.” Afterward Ludwig Renn⁹ told of similar experiences. Zweig's novel and Renn's book were then first published in *Die Frankfurter Allgemeine*.

Anna Seghers spoke on the problem of distance. Back then, after all, the writers had written from direct experience, without distancing themselves (Barbusse). Why isn't that possible for the young generation? Seghers said: Because they used their time to become “opponents of themselves.” Franz

⁷ Günther Cwojdrak (1923-1991), literary critic, publicist; with Willi Breidel and FC. Weiskopf a joint founder of the journal *Neue Deutsche Literatur*, 1952-1957 its editor (G.W.)

⁸ Arnold Zweig (1887-1968), German writer and an active pacifist. (Ed.)

⁹ Ludwig Renn (1889-1979), pseudonym of Arnold Friedrich Vieth von Golssenau. German novelist; best known for *Krieg* (1928), a novel based on his First World War battle experiences, the narrator and principal character of which was named Ludwig Renn. The stark simplicity of the novel emphasizes the uncompromising brutality of combat. (Ed.)

Fühmann¹⁰ joined in and confirmed that. During the entire time, I had the feeling that the topic has not even been touched yet, at least not in its current variation. Then Ernst Schumacher was the first one to talk about the consequences of the Cold War. Hermlin interjected that Soviet literature is actually just now really beginning to grasp the Second World War artistically. That the strong signs of degeneration recent books so quickly exhibit have to do with the cult of personality and the Cold War, with their impact on the thoughts and feelings of the people, including the writers—That is where we should have started talking. The fact that the Third World War would be a nuclear war, and that this weapon must also influence and change the way to fight against its use was not at all a matter for debate.

Yesterday, after a film presentation, an evening of discussion with the National People's Army in Potsdam-Eiche. Afterward, a brief get-together with the officers. They talked—thoroughly congenially—about their difficulties in training the troops. There is no positive attitude toward compulsory military service. Most of them come unwillingly—and the best ones in particular!—due to the unproductive period that they have to spend in the National People's Army. Some say: Then I'd rather work for eighty marks in an agricultural commune for eighteen months; then at least you know what you have done. In the army they do only what is necessary, always getting by, just short of punishment, just not wanting to stand out, etc. The officers spoke about political discussions, which must apparently be quite open, at least in part. For example, that we let the retired people go to the West because we want to be rid of them. Nor is there, said the officer gloomily, any convincing political argumentation about it yet. Or: there are debates

¹⁰ Franz Fühmann (1922-1984), story writer, autobiographer, essayist, children's writer, poet. (Ed.)

about theory and practice in socialist economic management (all come from factories, of course!). There the officers suffer from their relatively long isolation in military barracks. Then, on maneuvers, they say, the soldiers stand their ground, even when they get nothing to eat for thirty hours under order. (By the way, it is said that there are isolated cases of conscientious objectors who are sentenced and locked up.) The officers longed very much for "pre-military training."

That is only a fraction of this week's problems.

In a review of the *Coriolan*¹¹ performance by the Berlin Ensemble, Brecht is cited: "That the individual is apparently irreplaceable will continue to be an enormous topic for a long time." The actual topics are of *this* kind.

So, historical themes are the only ones to be dealt with?

Several evenings back, Walter Kaufmann conducted a test with me. Which milieu, which city, which streets do I know so well that stories occur to me when the name is mentioned? For him Melbourne was still the source of material, and lately the USA. For me, Landsberg. My flight. The village of Gammelin. The tuberculosis sanatorium. Frankenhausen. The university (in a limited sense). Later it becomes more difficult. Or is the production of literature a "topic"? From a certain time on I no longer see milieus, but individual people or a general atmosphere in front of me.

My plan up to 1970:

Fräulein Schmetterling (*Miss Butterfly*) (1964), screenplay

Das Preisgericht (*The Jury*) (1965), novel

Seghers piece (1965), essay

My book about 1945 (1966)

The novel (up through and including 1970)¹²

¹¹ 1952-1955 adaptation of Shakespeare's play by Bertolt Brecht. (Ed.)

¹² *Fräulein Schmetterling* (*Miss Butterfly*), film by C. and G. Wolf, 1965, prohibited (see: "Kahlschlag—Das II. Plenum des ZK der SED 1965. *Studien und Dokumente* [Clear-Cut—The Second Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Socialist

I still forgot to write that on that evening we discussed the problem of cynicism with Konni, which is closely related to the so often visible phenomenon of the "second face" under the mask. *The Jury* will specifically portray how a man who is unconsciously on the edge of cynicism is saved from crossing that boundary by a powerful self-critical shock. Günter Görlich¹³ interjected the question of whether or not that is also the problem of so-called "simple" people. Konni gave examples from the brigade: how the "second face" becomes visible very quickly under the influence of alcohol.

Finally, I want to write down my curriculum for the last week and a half:

23 Sept.: in the afternoon: state ceremony, memorial service for Grotewohl

in the evening: at Konrad Wolf's

24 Sept.: executive committee meeting Berlin

25+26 Sept.: scrubbing after the painters at home

in the evening at Kaufmann's

27 Sept.: Mrs. Krause here in the afternoon

28 Sept.: Tinka's birthday with nine guests

29 Sept.: in the afternoon: PEN

in the evening: PEN reception

30 Sept.: in the evening with the National People's Army in Potsdam-Eiche

1 Oct.: in the evening "social gathering," with the German Writers' Union, Potsdam

Unity Party 1965. Studies and Documents], Berlin, 2000.

Preisgericht (*Jury*): Unfinished manuscript (C.W. Archive Foundation, Academy of Arts, Berlin).

Seghers piece: never developed beyond preliminary notes.

My book about 1945: plan in regard to *Patterns of Childhood*, Berlin, 1976.

The novel: plan not carried out. (G.W.)

¹³ Günter Görlich (b. 1928), writer of novels and books for young people in the German Democratic Republic. (Ed.)

- 2 Oct.: nothing
 3 Oct. discussion of the factory collective contract in the IHT¹⁴

So now I have not written anything at all about my impressions at the state ceremony in connection with Grotewohl's funeral, which in my opinion was hollow, depressing in the old style. The Soviet delegate used the same unbelievable phrases that he would have used on a similar occasion ten years ago.

Nor have I yet written about Michail Romm's evaluation of Soviet cultural policy today: not yes and not no. They had recognized that "after it" (after the Twentieth Party Congress) they had still gone "too far," and even Ilyitschov does not know how to proceed from here.¹⁵ The initial impact of explosive excitement after the Twentieth Party Congress has stopped, the trend is moving backward. They are all sitting there waiting to see what will happen.

I have not yet described how Konrad Wolf, on the night when he wanted to drive me to my obscure hotel, came to his new Fiat and found that the back window had been smashed in with a rock that lay on the back seat, and how he then noticed that his nylon raincoat, which had lain there, was missing. A new hooliganism is developing around Alexanderplatz.

Or yesterday evening: young Potsdam poets read poems aloud. A stupid brew of autumn and love poetry from the twenties. And what have I written this week? An open letter for *Pravda*.¹⁶ These diary notes. Coming up today: a miniature

¹⁴ IHT Stahnsdorf: Institute for Semiconductor Technology of the Academy of Sciences of the German Democratic Republic in Stahnsdorf. (G.W.)

¹⁵ Ilyitschov (b. 1905): Secretary for Cultural Politics in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. (Ed.)

¹⁶ C. W.'s letter for *Pravda*, not locatable. (G.W.)

speech on the fifteenth anniversary of the German Democratic Republic in Potsdam.¹⁷ An article for the magazine *Sowjet-Frau*.¹⁸ All that is impossible. I must now employ the tactic of having them say that I am not home, or else really go away . . . A small apartment on Alexanderplatz in Berlin would be nice.

¹⁷ Miniature speech: see "Eine Rede (A speech)," C.W., *Werke*, Vol. IV, pp. 54ff. (G.W.)

¹⁸ Article for *Sowjetfrau*: under the title "Fünfundsanzwanzig Jahre ('Twenty-five Years)" in C.W., *Lesen und Schreiben (The Reader and the Writer)*, Berlin, 1971. (G.W.)