

Krinik in Khurbn

קאפיטל צוויי
עם קומען די רוסן

Chapter 2, Pages 46 - 52



The Red Army Star, [Pixabay License](#)

The Russians Are Coming

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<p>Di gasn zaynen shvarts fun mentshn. bay yedn ligt a freyd oyfn ponem. di daytshn zaynen nishto. di birger-politsey ken nisht bahersh'n di ordenung.</p> <p>di arbeter zamlen zikh tsunoyf in profesyoneln fareyn un bashlisen tsu organzirn a demonstratsye. far yedn iz shoyn zikher, az bald kumen di bafrayer. plutslung hert zikh a geshray: mentshn geyt in di heyzer! daytshn kumen! un es hert zikh a geroysh fun oytos. ale loyfn. vider shrek arum. es bavayzt zikh a tsvey drey oytos, oyf velkhe es zitsn daytshn. zeyere oygn glantsn vi bay tigers. yederer loyft arayn in a hoyf. di gasn vern shnel pust. bloyz di birger-politsyantn dreyen zikh arum blase, dershrokene.</p> <p>eyn oyto blaybt shteyn oyfn mark. es shteygt oys fun im a hoykher, grober daytsh. zayn shtekheriker blik falt oyf der arumiker pustkeyt. er ruft tsu tsu zikh mit a geshray tsvey politsyantn, velkhe blaybn shteyn drey meter fun im, zey shteyen mit di hent aropgelozt, vi soldatn far a general.</p> <p>es hert zikh dos brumen fun daytsh un der opgehakter entf'er fun di politsyantn: -yavohl,yavohl.</p> <p>der daytsh geyt tsu tsum oyto un lozt zikh shnel avek, iberlozndik hinter zikh a vaysn shtoyb, vos heybt zikh iber di kep fun di politsyantn.</p>	<p>The streets are black with people whose faces are full with joy. The Germans are not here. The citizen police cannot restore order.</p> <p>The workers gather in the professional union and decide to organize a demonstration. Everyone is already lulled into a sense of security that the liberators will arrive soon. Suddenly there is a shouting: "People, go into the houses! The Germans are coming!" And we hear the sound of trucks. Everyone is running, again there is fright everywhere. Two or three trucks appear, with Germans sitting on them, their eyes shining like those of tigers. Everyone flees into a courtyard, the streets are quickly empty. Only the citizen policemen are standing around, pale and scared. A vehicle stops in the market. A tall, coarse man gets out and casts a piercing glance at the empty surroundings. Screaming around, he calls two policemen to him, who stop three meters in front of him, standing with their arms hanging down like soldiers facing their general. The German's grumbling is followed by a choppy reply from the police officers, "Yessir, yessir!"</p> <p>The German walks to the vehicle and quickly drives off, leaving behind a white cloud of dust that rises above the heads of the police officers.</p>	
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<p>in etelkhe minut arum vayst shoy n itlekher vos der daytshisher ofitsir hot geredt mit di politsyantn: keyner darf zikh nisht</p>	<p>A few minutes later, everyone already knows what the German officer was talking to the policemen: "No one is allowed to show</p>	
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<p>vayzn in gas. dos shtetl muz zayn farzikhert mit ru un ordenung. ver es vet aroysgeyn oyf der gas, vet dershosn vern fun di daytshn, velkhe veln bald kumen kontrolirn.</p> <p>di luft iz ongefilt mit toytkeyt. di freyd vos hot gehersht mit mit etlekhe sho tsurik iz farshvundn. vider veynen froyen un es krekhtsn alte layt. azoy zaynen ariber tsvey teg un yeder hot nor gehaltn in eyn fregn bay zikh: vu zaynen undzere bafrayer? vu zaynen di, vos veln farhitn undzer leben un farmegn? nor keyner git daroyf nisht keyn entfer.</p> <p>in neyntsentrn tog fun krig hobn di vos hern radyo dertseylt, az men kemft bay Varshe un di royte army hot shoy n farnumen Baranovitsh un Slonim un geyt in der rikhtung tsu undz. Daytshland un Rusland firn nit keyn krig. Daytshland hot geshlosn mit Rusland a pakt oyf tsen yor.</p> <p>yederer vos hert oys dem barikht fun radyo-herer vert an oyfgetsiterter un fregt bay zikh aleyn: vi azoy iz dos meglekh, az Hitler un Stalin, tsvey farbisene kegner zoln in mitn mitvokh (1) vern „gute fraynt“? vos kumt do for? vos iz geshen oyf</p>	<p>themselves on the street. There must be peace and order in the shtetl. Anyone who goes out on the street will be shot by the Germans who will soon carry out a check!" Lifelessness is in the air. The joy that reigned just a few hours ago has disappeared. The women are crying again, the old people are moaning. So two days go by and everyone keeps asking themselves whole the time: "Where are our liberators? Where are those who want to protect our lives and assets?" But no one gives an answer.</p> <p>On the 19th day of the war those who listened to the radio are reporting that fighting is going on near Warsaw; the Red Army has already taken Baranovitsh and Slonim and is now marching towards us. Germany and Russia are not at war with each other. Germany has signed a 10-year pact with Russia.</p> <p>After the radio listeners' report, everyone gets all aflutter and asks, "How is it possible that Hitler and Stalin, two bitter enemies, have become 'good friends' since Wednesday (1)? What is</p>	
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<p>der velt?- shtelt yeder di frage un keyner veyst nisht vos tsu entfernen.</p> <p>der frimorgn iz geven a kalter, farneplter, ven ikh hob aroysgekukt fun fentster zaynen nokh shvartse kroen geshtanen inmitn gas un genishtert in ferdishn mist. es hilkht op der „krakra“ fun di hungerike, shvartse kroen, velkhe flien eyner iber der tsveyter, fun boym tsu der erd un tsurik. es hert zikh laykhte trit fun a farshlofenem yidishn politsyantn, velkher geyt, haltndik di hent tif farukt in di keshenes un genetst fun tsayt tsu tsayt.</p> <p>ikh gey aroys oyf der gas. mentshn krikhn aroys fun di heyzer un zamlen zikh in grupkes oyf di rogn fun di gasn.</p> <p>der zeyger iz zibn. di daytshn zaynen nishto. fun tsayt tsu tsayt hert zikh a geroysh fun a farbayfliendikn avyon, velkhn mir zeen nisht. mit yeder minut zamlen zikh on alts mer mentshn. yeder</p>	<p>going on? What has happened in the world?" Everyone asks, but no one knows the answer.</p> <p>The early morning is cold and foggy, when I look out the window. Black crows are standing in the middle of the road, rummaging through horse droppings. The "Krakra" of hungry black crows echoes as they fly over each other, from tree to ground and back. The light footsteps of a sleepy Jewish policeman can be heard, who, while walking, keeps his hands buried deep in his pockets and sneezes from time to time.</p> <p>I go out into the street. People crawl out of their houses and gather in groups on the street corners.</p> <p>The clock shows 7 am.</p> <p>No Germans here. Every now and then, we hear the sound of a flying by airplane, but we can't see it. With each passing minute, more people gather, and everyone ...</p>	
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1) On Wednesday, 23.08.1939 the "Non-Aggression Pact" between Germany and the Soviet Union was signed.

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<p>fregt alts vos hert men un vos vet zayn? un vu zaynen di bafrayer?</p> <p>plutsung bavayzt zikh a mentsh, velkher fort oyf a bitsiklet,oyf velkhn es hen(g)t a royt fendl. er fort tsu glaykh tsu der gmine un naygerike mentshn loyfn im nokh. zayn ponem iz ongegoshn mit</p>	<p>keeps asking, "What's to be heard? What will be? And where are the liberators?"</p> <p>Suddenly, a man appears riding a bicycle with a red flag hanging on it. He rides straight to the municipality, and curious people run after him.</p>	
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<p>frayd. di oygn finklen im. er iz shteyn geblibn leben dem slup, oyf velkhn men flegt in yontev teg aroytsien a fon. er nemt aroys fun buzem a groyse royte fon un viklt zi fanander. mentshn zaynen tsugelofn tsu im un gefregt: David, vos tustu?</p> <p>er entfert mit a shmeykhendik ponem: vos hot ir moyre? es kumen dokh bald di rusn. zey zaynen shoyn in Amdur. dreysik kilometer fun danen.</p> <p>der David, dos iz a poyer fun dorf velkher hot zikh genumen di dreystikeyt dos tsu ton, ven keyner hot nokh nisht gevust ven un tsi es veln tsu undz kumen di rusn, nor mit yeder minut iz alts gevaksn di tsol fun azelkhe dreyste, velkhe hobn shoyn ongeton royte bender oyf di rekhete orems un zey zaynen gevorn di politsey.</p> <p>di frierdike birger-politsyantn hobn shtil aropgenumen di bender un zaynen avek hintern oyvn. di vos trogn itst di royte bender zaynen merstns arbeter un poyerim. der poyer David, vos hot der ershter oyfgehangen di royte fon, iz gevorn komendant fun der arbeter-milits. itst zaynen di gasn iberfult mit mentshn. alt un yung. kranke mit vaklendike kerpers - ale farplaytsn di gasn fun shtetl. yeder veyst shoyn, az bald darfn kumen di bafrayer. ikh bin oykh eyner fun di, vos trogn a royt band oyfn orem un helf aynshteln ordenung.</p>	<p>His face is full of joy and his eyes sparkle. He stops next to the pole on which they raise a flag on holidays. From his chest, he takes down a big red flag and unwinds it. People run up to him, asking, "David, what are you doing?"</p> <p>He answers with a smile on his face, "What are you afraid of? The Russians are coming soon! They are already in Amdur, 30 kilometers from here!"</p> <p>David- this is a farmer from a village who had the chutzpah to do this - even before anyone knew when and if the Russians would come to us. But with every minute, the number of such daring people are growing, who already put red ribbons on their right arms - and they will become our police!</p> <p>The former citizen policemen were already quietly taking off their ribbons and hiding behind the ovens.</p> <p>Those who are wearing red ribbons now, are mostly workers and peasants. Farmer David who was the first to raise the red flag, has become commander of the workers' militia. Now the streets are crowded with people. Old and young, sick ones with frail bodies - all flood the streets of the shtetl. Everyone is aware that soon the liberators will arrive. I, too, am among those who wear a red band, helping maintain the order.</p>	
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<p>es bavayzn zikh shoyn dreystere poyerim fun di arumike derfer. zey kumen ale in yontevdike kleyder mit royte blumen in di latsn. ot zeen mir vi es fort an alter poyer mit a langer vayser bord, velkhe iz itst breyt fanandergekamt. er zitst oyf a royt ferdl. der haldz fun ferdl iz bahangen mit royte blumen. yeder loyft tsu nenter tsum altn poyer un in etlekhe minut formirt zikh a groyse makhne hinter im. di oygn shtraln far frayd. dos alte, ayngeshrumpene ponem vert yeder minut alts yinger. yeder fregt</p>	<p>More daring farmers from the surrounding villages are already showing themselves. They all come in holiday attire, with red flowers in the lapels. There we see an old farmer approaching, with a long white beard that he has combed wide apart. He sits on a reddish horse whose neck is draped with red flowers. Everyone walks closer to the old farmer, and in a few minutes a large crowd forms behind him. His eyes are shining with joy, and his old, shriveled face is getting younger every minute. Everyone asks</p>	
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<p>ver iz dos far a poyer vos iz azoy gliklekh? in eynike minut arum veyst mir shoyn, az dos iz der alter Pretitski fun dorf Arkavutsh. zayn zun hot in Vilne geshosn oyf a provokator un iz farurteylt gevorn tsum toyt.</p> <p>nor adank der intervents fun der sovyetisher regirung iz di toyt-shtrof farbitn gevorn oyf lebenslenglekher tfise. un dos iz der foter fun dem heldishn zun, velkher zitst itst in Vilner turme un vart oyf der minut fun bafrayung.</p> <p>der gantser mark-plats iz ful mit mentshn. meydlekh shteyen mit buketn royte blumen un koyshn royte epl. di ponemer shtraln bay zey fun frayd. etlekhe yunge bokherim zaynen aroysgeforn oyfn Grodner shosey tsu bagegenen di royte armye.</p>	<p>who is that farmer, being so happy? After a few minutes we know that this is the old Pretitzki from the village Arkavutch. His son shot a provocateur in Vilnius and was sentenced to death.</p> <p>But thanks to an intervention of the Soviet government, the death penalty was commuted to life imprisonment. And the (old man) is the father of this heroic son who is now in Vilnius prison, waiting for the moment of his liberation.</p> <p>The whole marketplace is full of people. Girls are standing with bouquets of red flowers and baskets filled with red apples. Their faces are beaming with joy. Quite a few young lads have gone out to the Grodner highway to greet the Red Army.</p>	
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<p>di demonstrantn geyen mit royte fener arop Grodner gas tsu. in dem tumldikn arum derhert zikh a vayter, shtarker geroysh. di erd treyslt zikh unter alemens fis. mit yeder minut vert alts shtarker un shtarker der geroysh fun di tankes. mentshn dengen eyner oyfn andern. kinder veynen men zol zey nehmen oyf di hent. ot zet men vi es glitsht zikh barg-arop groyse shtolene festungen un hoybn oyf gedikhte zeyln shtoyb, vos fardekn di tsaytike kartofl fun bayde zaytn shosey.</p> <p>ot zaynen zey shoyn leben undz. shoyn dergreykht di ershte heyzer. es faln royte blumen oyf di kep fun di soldatn, velkhe shrayen bavegndik mit di hent, az men zol makhn plats. zeyere oygn shtraln far frayd. es hert zikh in groysn tuml a geshray: -khaveyrim, mir zaynen ayere brider un zaynen gekumen aykh bafrayen! a langer „Hura“ rayst zikh aroys bay yedn fun hartsn. eyner vil ibershrayen dem tsveytn. der bruk iz oysgeleygt mit royte blumen un epl. di tanken forn glaykh eyner nokh a tsveytn un muzn farklenern zeyer shnelkeyt tsulib der groyser makhne vos shtoyst zikh alts nenter un nenter.</p> <p>eyner a leytenant iz aroys fun tank. er geyt ongeton in lederne, shvartse hoyzn, a lederne kurtke un a shvarts ledern hitl mit halbe redlekh vi kishkes (1) vursht iber dem hitl. er bet zikh bay di shteyendike mentshn:</p>	<p>The demonstrators walk down to Grodner Street with red flags. In the roundabout turmoil, one hears a far reverberating, loud noise. The earth vibrates under our feet. With every minute, the sound of tanks becomes louder and louder. People are jostling one against the other. Children are crying to be taken high in the arms. There, in front, we can see large, steel "forts" sliding down the mountain, kicking up dense columns of dust that cover the early potatoes on either side of the highway.</p> <p>And now, they are already next to us, they already reach the first houses! Red flowers fall on the heads of the soldiers who, gesticulating with their hands, shout that we should make way. Their eyes shine with joy. In the great turmoil, we hear them shouting, "Comrades, we are your brothers and we have come to free you!" A long "hurrah" bursts from all our hearts. One person wants to drown out the other. The pavement is covered with red flowers and apples. The tanks drive away one after the other and have to slow down their speed, because the large crowd is pushing closer and closer.</p> <p>A lieutenant gets out of his tank. He walks dressed in leather black pants, a leather jacket and a black leather hat with half " little wheels", like " Kishkes sausage"(1), on it. He asks the people standing around:</p>	
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1) kishke(s) sausage= stuffed intestine [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kishka_\(food\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kishka_(food))



Meeting in the border area (near Bialystok/Krynki) of German and Russian soldiers against the backdrop of the "Hitler-Stalin Pact" in 1939.

Photo courtesy of Tomek Wisniewski (own collection)

<p>-mentshn geyt aykh fanander, makht plats, mir muzn nokh fil shtet un derfer bafrayen; fil mentshn vartn nokh oyf undz!</p>	<p>"Folks, disperse, make way, we still have to liberate many towns and villages; many people are still waiting for us!"</p>	
<p>zayne verter virkn un yederer shtoyst zikh tsurik un es vert vider a geroysh un shteyner shpringen aroys fun unter di shvere ayzerne keytn. mit yeder minut kumen un forn avek alts mer un mer tanken, bagleyt fun eynike oytos un mototsiklistn. mentshn zaynen shoyn heyzerik gevorn fun shrayen „hura“, es feln oys blumen. di koyshn zaynen shoyn pust, men varft vider di blumen vos valgern zikh oyfn shtoybikn bruk. di roytarmeyer varfn tsurik fun di tanken tabak, tsigaretn un rusishe tsaytungen. mentshn faln eyns oyf dos andere un raysn yeder shtikl papir bazunder.</p>	<p>His words have an effect and everyone pushes back. The noise swells again, and stones pop out from under the heavy iron chains. With each moment, even more tanks pass through, accompanied by some trucks and motorcycles. People are already hoarse from shouting "hurray" and there is just a lack of flowers; the baskets are also already empty. So again, those flowers are thrown, which have already lain on the dusty pavement. The men from the Red Army throw back from the tank tobacco cigarettes and Russian newspapers. People fall on each other, and each tears off his own piece of the paper.</p>	
<p>shoyn a sho iz ariber zint di luft iz ongefilt mitn geroysh fun di mekhtike tanken un mit yeder minut kumen on alts mer un mer. ale eyln in groys tempo foroys. di shteyner zaynen aroysgeshrungen fun zeyere pletser un valgern zikh tsvishn di mentshns fis.</p>	<p>For an hour already, the air has been filled with the sound of the mighty tanks, and with every passing moment many more are still coming. All of them drive ahead at a fast pace. The paving stones have jumped out of their places and are lying now between the feet of the people.</p>	
<p>mayn bruder hengt zikh on in a tank un tsvey hent fun a soldat khapn im unter un ot iz er shoyn oybn oyfn tank un er falt arunter ineveynik</p>	<p>My brother hangs on to a tank and the two hands of a soldier grab him; already, he is on top of the tank and slides down with his face down</p>	

<p>mitn ponem arop un tsvey hent bavegn zikh tsu undz un er fort avek tsuzamen mit der yogndiker royter army biz Sokolke.</p> <p>fir sho on ophaltn hobn zikh gekayklt shtolene keytn iber di gasn fun shtetl. der arum iz ayngetunken in royte fener. bay alemen shtraln di oygn fun frayd. di gasn un der mark vern nisht leydik fun mentshn, nor farkert- es kumen yede minut on alts mer poyerim fun arum. yeder iz yontevdik ongeton. oyf tsvey slupes fun der elektrisher baleykhtung, leben Mair-Kheykls moyer, hengt a groyser transparent mit rusishe oyfshriftn.</p> <p>di tanken zaynen adurkhgeforn un itst kumen oytos mit soldatn. zey makhn mit di hent un shrayen un shpringen eyner oyfn andern far frayd. vider blumen un epl faln iber zeyere kep, vi a groyser regn.</p> <p>fun 10 inderfri biz 5 in ovnt iz dos shtetl geven bahersht fun loyfdike tanken, oytos un mototsikletn. di mentshn zaynen ale heyzerik un mid. di milits loyft arum</p>	<p>inside. (His) two hands wave at us, and he drives away together with the chasing Red Army to Sokolka.</p> <p>For four hours already, the steel chains roll over the streets of our shtetl. The surroundings are immersed in red flags. Everyone's eyes are shining with joy. The streets and the market do not become empty of people, but, on the contrary: constantly more and more farmers from the surrounding area arrive. Everyone is dressed in holiday attire. On two poles for electric lighting, next to Mair-Cheikl's stone house, is hanging a large banner with Russian inscriptions.</p> <p>After the tanks have passed, trucks come with soldiers. They wave their hands, shout and jump one on top of the other in joy. Again, flowers and apples are flying over their heads, like a big rain.</p> <p>From 10 o'clock in the morning to 5 o'clock in the evening, the cityscape is dominated by moving tanks, trucks and motorcycles. People are all hoarse and tired. The</p>	
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<p>iber di gasn mit royte bender oyf di oremes. eynike trogn shoyn gever. der komendant fun shtetl iz <i>Moyshhe(he)l - Meyshl Stamdler</i> un fun der milits- <i>David, der poyer</i>, vos hot der ershter oyfgehangen di royte fon.</p>	<p>militia walks the streets with red ribbons on their arms. Some are already carrying rifles. The commander of the shtetl is <i>Moyshel - Meishel Stamdler</i>, and that of the militia is <i>David, the farmer</i> who first hung the red flag.</p>	
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<p>glaykh in dem ershtn tog kumen for arestn fun poylishe magistrat-baamte un andere. zey zitsn itst in der nayer turme, vos zey hobn aleyh geboyt...far zikh.</p> <p>ikh krig oykh a biks un halt vakh bay der turme. yeder sho vert di vakh gebitn. di rusn zaynen in shtot nishto. es loyft fun tsayt tsu tsayt farbay an oyto-alts in der zelber rikhtung. di makht gehert tsu di arbeter.</p> <p>azoy geyen farbay tsvey teg. di kromen zaynen nokh geshlosn. di fabrikn arbetn nokh nisht. dos leben iz ingantsn ogeshtelt.</p> <p>oyfn tsveytn tog brengen poyerim fun di arumike derfer dem <i>shteyghoyfer prits</i>, vos iz letstns bashtimt gevorn metsad der regirung als birgermayster fun shtetl. zey brengen im gebundn mit shtekhik drot, unter di oygn shvartse flekn, on shikh un in eyn hemt.</p> <p>der gevezener birgermayster, velkher flegt yedn tog aroyfleygn naye tsores oyfn shtetl loyft itst iber di gas nun alemens blikn faln oyf im.</p> <p>men brengt im in milits un dort bakumt er zayn portsye. a vaklendikn firt men im op in turme. di gantse bafelkerung, say yidn, say kristn, hot getrogn a shtarke sine oyfn gevezenem birgermayster, velkher hot gehersht bloyz eyn yor, ober yeder hot im itst gehat tsu batsoln far bagangene khatoem.</p>	<p>On the very first day, there are arrests of Polish magistrate officials and others. They are now sitting in the new prison, which they had built themselves - for themselves!</p> <p>I also get a rifle and stand guard outside the prison. Every hour, the guard is changed. The Russians themselves are not in the city. From time to time a vehicle drives by - always in the same direction. Now the workers are in power. That's how two days go by. The stores are still closed, the factories are not yet in operation, and public life as a whole is suspended.</p> <p>On the second day, farmers from neighboring villages are bringing the '<i>Steigho(i)fer landowner</i>', who was recently appointed mayor by the government. He is bound with barbed wire and shows black spots under his eyes. He is wearing no shoes and just a shirt.</p> <p>So the former mayor of the shtetl, who used to cause new grief to its residents every day, is now walking across the street, and everyone is looking at him.</p> <p>He is taken to the militia, and there he gets what is coming to him. Staggering, he is led away to prison. The whole population, both Jews and Christians, felt a strong hatred towards this former mayor, who was in power for only one year. But he now has to pay for his sins against everyone.</p>	
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<p>azoy zaynen ariber finf teg un di arbeter hobn gehaltn di makht. oyfn zekstn tog iz gekumen a rusishe komendantur un ongehoybn araynbrengen ordenung arum. glaykh zaynen oyfgeefnt gevorn di kromen. di fabrikn hobn ongehoybn arbetn, alts vi frier. ale militsyantn zaynen opgezogt gevorn. es zaynen geblibn bloyz etlekhe. naye farordenungen zaynen nisht gekumen. di makht hot farordnt men zol leben oyfn zelbn</p>	<p>So five days have passed, and the workers remain in power. On the sixth day, a Russian commandant's office arrives, beginning to impose widespread order. Immediately, the stores are reopened, the factories resume their activities, and everything is becoming as before. All but a few of the militias have been withdrawn. There are no new regulations. The "power" decrees that everything should be the same</p>	
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<p>shteyger vi frier. di fabrikantn zoln vider aroysgebn produktsye di fabrikn gehern tsu zey. yeder hot geshtoynt, vos di arbeter-makht lozt vayter di zelbe ordenung vi frier. der entfer fun der makht iz geven: alts kumt in zayn tsayt...un shpeter iz der tsuzog derfilt gevorn.</p>	<p>way as before. The factory owners should produce again, the factories still belong to them. Everyone was amazed that the labor power allowed the same system as before. The answer of the "power" is: "Everything comes in its time!" And later this pledge will get fulfilled...</p>	
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Drawing courtesy of the painter, Zdzislaw Nitka