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Question 7

# Question 7

## Question 7

by

Robert E. A. Lee

*Adapted and illustrated from the motion picture commissioned by the Lutheran Church, written by Allan Sloane, and produced in Germany by Lothar Wolff*

Selected as the Best Motion Picture of the Year by the Exceptional Films Committee of the National Board of Review, and winner of numerous awards in the United States and abroad, the powerful film *Question 7* is based on actual incidents and on documents drawn from the Soviet Zone of Germany during the past decade. Its exciting story of the temptations and struggles of conscience behind the Iron Curtain is now admirably told in this excellent novel by Robert E. A. Lee, Executive Secretary of Lutheran Film Associates.

*(Continued on back flap)*



*(Continued from front flap)*

Re-creating all the drama, tension, and profound impact of the film, the novel depicts the experiences of Pastor Gottfried and his wife, of their young, sensitive son Peter whose talent for music is exploited to pressure him into compromise and betrayal, and of his shy girl friend who shares their anguish. It also clearly reveals the subtle tactics of Communist teachers, of the scheming Communist Party officials, and of all the cruel forces brought to bear against young people and their parents. This very timely novel speaks with urgency to every citizen, especially every young citizen, of the Free World.

*Jacket design by Jack W. Wells*



“Peter glanced over the questions casually. He tried to be detached, but as he scanned down the page, there was something about the penetrating directness of the questions that disturbed him.

- (1) What were the most significant occasions of my life?
- (2) What is my stand on the Free German Youth organization?
- (3) What is my stand on the People's Army?
- (4) What is my attitude to our socialistic society?
- (5) What problems concern me most?
- (6) What profession do I wish to enter?
- (7) What have been the predominant influences on my social development?

“Your answers,” said the teacher, “will tell us how much you have matured in socialistic understanding — whether you are worthy of the opportunities that lie open to you in the People's Republic.”

“It was only on his way home that it began to dawn on Peter what his teacher was really saying. He suddenly realized that it would be impossible for him to answer these questions honestly without getting into trouble . . . .”

A superb motion picture . . . . now an exciting novel.



*This story is based on the award-winning motion picture*

# *Question 7*

*produced and released by*

LOUIS DE ROCHEMONT ASSOCIATES

*commissioned by*

LUTHERAN FILM ASSOCIATES

*Produced by* LOTHAR WOLFF

*Directed by* STUART ROSENBERG

*Screenplay by* ALLAN SLOANE

*Music by* HANS MARTIN MAJEWSKI

*Photography:* GUNTER SENFTLEBEN

*Production Associate:* ROBERT E. A. LEE

*Production Supervisors:* DR. HENRY ENDRESS

DR. OSWALD C. J. HOFFMANN, DR. JOHANNES STUHLMACHER

DR. PAUL C. EMPJE, DR. RICHARD SOLBERG

*Featuring an international cast, including:*

*Friedrich Gottfried, pastor:* MICHAEL GWYNN

*Maria Gottfried, his wife:* MARGARETE JAHNEN

*Peter Gottfried, their son:* CHRISTIAN DE BRESSON

*Ameliese Zingler, Peter's girl friend:* ALMUT EGGERT

*Rolf Starke, schoolteacher:* ERIK SCHUMANN

*Herrmann, police inspector:* MAX BUCHSBAUM

*Herr Rettmann, party commissar:* LEO BIEBER

*Dehmert, student and youth leader:* FRITZ WEPER

*Luedike, policeman:* HELMO KINDERMANN

*Galina Laube, state youth commissar:* GALINA PROBANDT — FRANK

*Prof. Steffl, school music teacher:* MANFRED FURST

*Martin Kraus, church sexton:* JOHN RUDDOCK

*This is a contemporary story based on actual incidents and on documents out of the East Zone of Germany. It was filmed on location in the town of Moelln, five miles from the border dividing East and West Germany, and in Berlin and Hamburg. All names have been changed in this composite case history.*

DEDICATED TO THOSE WHO LIVED  
PARTS OF THIS STORY AND WHO,  
BECAUSE THEY REMAINED BEHIND  
THE WALL, LIVE IT STILL.

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1964

# 1 FAREWELL TO KRONBERG

The sun shone on the snow-white hair of the elderly Pastor as he stood before the judge who announced the verdict.

The People's Court finds you, Anton Albert Tritschler, guilty, under Article 6 of the Constitution of the state, of fomenting a rebellion of the state, and of an attempt to incite to murder. We sentence you to five years' imprisonment at hard labor."

The Pastor Tritschler from Osterstadt had just been found guilty and sentenced by the People's Council of East Germany on patently trumped-up political charges. Among other things, the prosecutor had asked, "When the defendant preached that particular sermon, what cause did he advocate toward the people's youth leaders?"

A murmur had gone through the courtroom when the answer came from the lips of the informer. "He said they ought to be killed." Then, taking a notebook from his pocket, the witness continued. "The Pastor said, 'Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea!'"

Pastor Tritschler indignantly had tried to explain, "I did not advocate violence, as you claim. I merely used the text from



*(Pastor Tritschler) stated quietly, "To interpret an open proclamation of the Gospel willfully as political subversion is neither just nor lawful. It is persecution of the Church of Christ!"*

Scripture for that Sunday to proclaim God's truth, which will stand even though heaven and earth shall pass away!"

The judge had interrupted with his gavel, "That is beside the point. Answer the question, Herr Pastor."

"The answer is that these are not my words, but the words of our Lord in the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, warning that all who lead children astray will face the judgment of God!"

He further stated quietly, "To interpret an open proclamation of the Gospel willfully as political subversion is neither just nor lawful. It is persecution of the Church of Christ!"

Soon after, Friedrich Gottfried, another pastor, was summoned before his Bishop. He sensed that it was no ordinary interview and prepared himself for something unusual.

He had never seen his Bishop quite so anxious. A short, white-haired man of great dignity, Bishop Feld was known for his sweet smile. But he was not smiling when he pointed to the green pin pointed on his map and recited the names. "Braun, Peter, Naumann, Schmidt. . . . The list of my pastors in Osterstadt grows longer and longer. And now, Tritschler! I wanted so desperately to help him — but I couldn't!" The burden was etched on the Bishop's face.

"Brother Gottfried, I am concerned about Osterstadt. St. Paul is a troubled parish. The congregation is frightened and despondent. They need a pastor desperately. I'm not ordering you to go, understand, even though I have the right to do so. Instead, I am appealing to your loyalty — and to your love. Please consider the matter carefully. I pray you come to the right decision."

When Gottfried looked wistfully back at the city of Leipzig as the train gathered speed on the last leg of their journey from Kronberg to Osterstadt. The unwinding view of rooftops and chimneys from their compartment window had no fascination for the young Peter. He was already deep in concentration in the small book his father had bought for him. Pastor Gottfried had a sheet of paper on his lap and on the top line had written *1 Timothy 1:12-15*, the text for the sermon for this coming Sunday. He must prepare for the people of Osterstadt. Two middle-aged women who shared the compartment with them were talking rapidly about a whole range of domestic problems.

What should he tell his new congregation in this important first sermon? Could he refer even by implication to his predecessor? What did the people think about the Pastor Tritschler incident? Did they still love him and respect him even though he was now in prison? Did any stand up to be counted? Had they tried to support him during his trial? And what would they expect from their new Pastor? Would they want him to

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stand firm even at all costs as Tritschler had done, or would they rather encourage him to get along, to accommodate the demands of the government for their sakes as well as his own?

Friedrich Gottfried glanced up and met the eyes of Maria, who had been watching him. Her smile spoke now, as it always did so eloquently, that she understood. Both of them looked over to Peter.

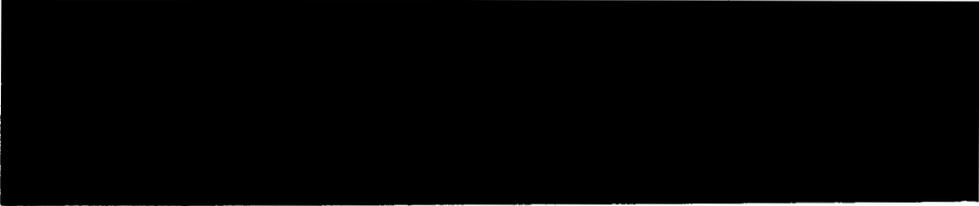
Her heart was full. Peter had become an even better pianist than she had ever dared hope for. In another year or so he would need a new teacher. She could still be his mentor for a while, but she saw ahead to the point of her own limitation as his teacher. It had troubled her during these last two years of Peter's adolescence in Kronberg that it became increasingly difficult for her to reach Peter. He did not seem to want to discuss his problems. Often she had that motherly anguish and fear of losing her boy. Her husband had reminded her, and she herself knew very well, that this was but normal teen-age independence asserting itself. Peter had never been a large child and she had worried that he might not develop physically like his classmates. Then suddenly, a year ago, he had broken loose from his boyhood and his clothes seemed embarrassingly too small for him; yet he preferred – quite naturally, she assured herself – to struggle through this stage by himself. Still, she found a common bond of communication with Peter through music. He seemed to respect his mother's soul for music and her able leadership. When they were playing duets together, or talking about a particular phrase and how it should be interpreted, or when they were listening to some great music on the phonograph or the radio, then she felt that she and her son were as close together in mind and heart as they could ever be.

In his mind Peter had removed himself from the train compartment and his parents and had escaped to Africa. His book about Albert Schweitzer in Lambarene enticed him not only by its exotic setting but by its being the adventure of a great man of music and of science who was also a man of God. Peter had left Kronberg with few regrets. It had been a rough time there for the boy, who was caught in the dreadful squeeze between



Osterstadt mulled it over. He had been afraid, he admitted  
privately. He had not wanted this assignment. He had tried  
to avoid it. There had been so much left to be done.  
But all that was now behind him.

consideration on the one hand, when the church asked that he  
give himself and his life to God, and the *Jugendweihe* on the  
other hand, wherein the regime asked that he pledge himself  
to atheism. He did not expect Osterstadt to be too



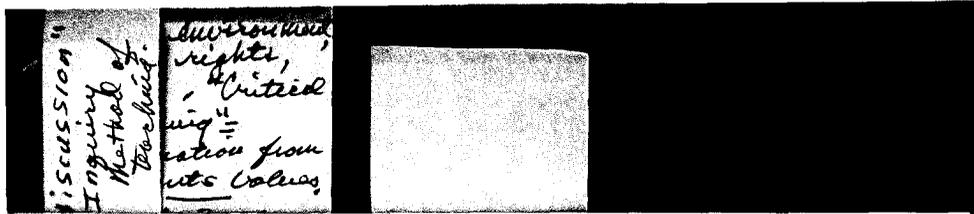
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much different. All he wanted was to stay out of trouble so that he might get a chance for a musical education at some conservatory.

From his brief case Pastor Gottfried took out his well-worn Bible and read through the verses of his sermon text several times. Bishop Feld had told him all he could about Pastor Tritschler's trial and these words from Scripture seemed to be coming from a prison cell again today even as they did when first written by the apostle Paul:

*I want you to know, brethren, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ; and most of the brethren have been made confident in the Lord because of my imprisonment, and are much more bold to speak the word of God without fear.*

Gottfried mulled it over. He *had* been afraid, he admitted to himself. He had not wanted this assignment. He had tried to avoid it. He and Maria and Peter had known some real happiness in Kronberg. His ministry there could not actually be termed successful – after all, the Church was not succeeding anywhere in East Germany today, at least as the world measures success. But he had a stimulating inner group of faithful ones who seemed to respond to his preaching and teaching in a way that was genuinely heartening. His church council had worked with him eagerly to find ways to circumvent the usual obstacles which the regime had set up to thwart the Church. At least a beginning had been made, and he had yearned to pursue his plans in Kronberg. There had been so much left to be done. But all that was now behind him.



## 2 / WELCOME TO OSTERSTADT

There were only about a half-dozen other passengers who got off the train with them at Osterstadt. The family of Pastor Gottfried looked around, wondering if someone from the church might be meeting them. Maria and Peter stood for a moment looking at the beautiful pre-Reformation architecture of the town. Gottfried put an extra cheerful tone in his voice and said, "Well, this is it – our new hometown. Welcome to Osterstadt!"

The church steeple rose high above the city. They headed in the direction of that comforting landmark.

"I hope our furniture and things have come," Peter said as he started out ahead of the others.

A small elderly man with a black cap was coming toward them. He was shuffling along rapidly, almost breaking into a run.

"Pastor Gottfried?"

"Yes."

"Welcome! My name is Kraus. I am the custodian of the church, the sexton. I had planned to be waiting at the station when your train came in. I am sorry I was late."

"That's all right, Herr Kraus. We saw the church and we knew we'd find the parsonage right across the street. Let me introduce my wife and my son Peter."

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Herr Kraus lifted his cap as he shook hands with them, and they walked together toward the parsonage.

Osterstadt was almost surrounded by water. Two lovely blue lakes embraced a peninsula on which the town had stood since the Middle Ages. Some of the buildings leaned slightly. Several houses were decorated with scriptural quotations carved into the wooden border strip at the roof line. As the Gottfried family walked behind the baggage pushcart, they looked up at the majestic stone church with its high-pitched tarnished roof. The church could be reached only by climbing one of the several sets of stone steps. Hundreds of years ago this had been the town fortress against invading enemies. Its slit windows had been used by the town's archers to defend the women and children who had fled to safety within the fortress.

Herr Kraus opened the gate to the parsonage which stood directly across the cobblestone street from the church. Frau Pastor and Peter went through, but the metal sign on the gate post caught the Pastor's eye and he examined it for a moment: *A. A. Tritschler, Pastor*. In the hall near the door they found their packing cases, books and some of their furniture. An attempt had obviously been made to locate certain items in the proper rooms. The grandfather-clock stood in the corner. Peter moved quickly from room to room and made a quick tour through the ground floor and then up the stairs, two at a time, to explore the rest of the house.

Kraus interrupted their inspection by saying, "I'm eager to show you our beautiful church, Herr Pastor. Wouldn't you like to come over right now?"

"We might as well, before we start the endless task of getting organized. First, though, Herr Kraus, I suggest we change the name plate on the gate post."

Maria stood quietly surveying her kitchen. Then she paced from the stove to the cupboards and to the pantry and pantomimed with her hands what would almost immediately become her daily routine. She opened the bare cupboards and hoped that her dishes had survived the journey.

Meanwhile, Peter was upstairs. The wallpaper in his room looked a little tired, he thought. But he would soon cover it with the pictures, maps, and other mementoes he had brought with him from Kronberg. His cuckoo clock would hang on the wall and give the room more hominess. The one small window over his desk resisted his efforts to open it. Finally he forced it apart, and it banged against the outside wall of the house. He leaned out and looked up and down the street. His father and Herr Kraus were unscrewing the old name plate. Peter decided to bring the boxes with his music and books up to his room.

He stopped halfway down the stairs at a sound from outside that puzzled him. Drums! Trumpets! They were blaring forth a martial fanfare. His mother also heard it and came from the kitchen. A parade was obviously approaching their house. Peter went to the porch which led to the garden inside a stone wall. His mother followed. They leaned over the wall to see where the sound was coming from.

It was a parade. About thirty teen-agers, carrying flags, hoes, shovels and pitchforks like guns, marched in formation behind drummers and trumpeters. A huge blue flag with the yellow shield of the FDJ identified the group as the local unit of the Free German Youth. About half of the group wore the official blue shirts with the FDJ arm patch Peter had seen so often. Now he could read the placard labeling the unit as "Lenin Brigade No. 1."

"The Communist Party machinery must be working well in this town," Peter said to his mother. "No doubt they have all volunteered today for some work project." He smiled.

Herr Kraus and Pastor Gottfried stopped to watch the parade pass.

The trumpeters finished their fanfare just before they reached the parsonage. Then, as the drum cadence continued, the group burst into song:

*We work and build for a better day —  
Free German Youth marching on!  
We march along on the socialist way —*

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*Free German youth marching on!  
We swing the sickle proudly,  
We sound the hammer tones,  
And each one stands his duty  
For the Peace, Right, and Freedom he owns . . .*

Frau Gottfried glanced at the youth by her side. His eyes were taking it all in. She noticed that his fingertips on the top of the garden wall tapped out the marching rhythm.

The sound trailed away and Gottfried stood back from the gate post to look at his name plate. For the first time he felt a sense of actually belonging to this new place.

"And now may I show you the church, Herr Pastor?"

*"We work and build for a better day – Free German Youth marching on!  
We march along the socialist way – Free German Youth marching on!"*



"By all means. Let me call my wife." He walked erectly into his house and invited Maria and Peter to join them. Peter was at the piano which stood in the middle of the living room. He was practicing the scales. The serious study of piano was the most important thing in his life.

"Peter can see the church later," his mother said. "Let's leave him alone with his piano while we go over."

Herr Kraus took them around to the main entrance and as he opened the huge doors they were greeted with dulcet organ tones. The sexton explained, "Herr Lange, our organist, is rehearsing his music for Sunday. By the way, did you know our organ is four hundred years old? Bach played here in 1705."

They moved slowly down the main aisle toward the altar. The aisle itself did not lead in a straight line to the chancel; as is often the case in medieval churches, the axis of the building was slightly askew. Their eyes were drawn from the chandelier to a huge crucifix mounted above the entrance to the altar area.

"The original church dates back to the thirteenth century. The baptismal font over there is from 1509." The pastor looked up appreciatively at the pulpit with its handsome wood carvings around the base and its crown that featured a trumpeting cherubim. Wanting to get his own private perspective of the church, he mounted the pulpit stairs and stood for a moment looking down at the empty pews. He gently touched the large pulpit Bible in front of him. He opened it and read the words on the page before him with a slight ache in his heart:

*Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him . . . .*

Frau Gottfried noticed that the sexton seemed a bit nervous. This was the second time she had seen him looking at his watch. Then he said, "We are very proud of the murals by our altar. You must come and examine them closely."

Gottfried walked from the pulpit steps for a close look at the altar and to see the delicate, somewhat fading colors of the ancient painting of the Last Supper. His wife inspected it too.

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They had not expected to find a painting so beautiful as this in their very own church. Gazing at the mural, they failed to notice the organ playing had stopped and that Herr Kraus had gone over to the door that led off the chancel.

"The sacristy here serves a double purpose," he said. "When religious training was forced out of the schools, we succeeded in having this room licensed for our classes. It now serves as our parish room. Please come in."

The sexton flung the door open and the Gottfrieds saw a room full of people who burst into a happy song of welcome. As the Pastor and his wife were ushered down the three steps and through the arched doorway into the room, they smiled broadly at the happy faces before them.

Fifteen children of varying ages were lined up at the far end of the room in choir-formation. A young teen-age girl directed the group. She turned to greet them with her sparkling eyes. Frau Pastor was especially fascinated by the words the children sang, which had been obviously composed for this very occasion, even though the melody was an old German folk song.

*Oh, welcome Pastor with this song,  
We've waited for you, waited long,  
But now you are here among us!*

As the song finished, everyone applauded and the Pastor could only say, "Thank you, thank you so much."

A short, white-haired, bespectacled woman, who seemed to be in charge, stepped out and introduced herself as Frau Zingler. "We wanted some way to tell you how happy and thankful we are to have a pastor again."

Five or six other adults were there, including a one-armed man in his fifties, who identified himself as Durfel, a member of the church council. He introduced his wife and others in the room. Frau Zingler announced, "Our children's choir has another song for you. My daughter Anneliese has been rehearsing with them. They are very proud to be able to sing it for you."

Anneliese responded with a little curtsy and turned to the children for the song. They started badly – they were all looking

*Welcome to Osterstadt*

at the Pastor, not at her – and she had to stop them so they could make a new beginning.

Friedrich and Maria Gottfried were truly touched by this welcome. They looked at the youthful faces caught up in the festive spirit of the party. Then, suddenly, the expressions changed. They stopped singing, one by one. A tension could be felt in the room and all eyes turned toward the open door of the parish room.

A short, stocky man stood there, looking in, hands behind him.

“Pastor Gottfried?”

“Yes.”

“I’m Inspector Hermann of the police.”

*Inspector Hermann made a broad gesture that included the whole room and said, “This is forbidden. Very incorrect . . . They should have obtained a special permit, Herr Pastor, that’s the rule.”*



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"Yes, Herr Inspector?" He knew he had to remain calm, even though the inspector's presence was disturbing. "Is something the matter?"

The inspector entered the room and the group noticed that a uniformed policeman was standing just outside the door. Inspector Hermann made a broad gesture that included the whole room and said, "This is forbidden. Very incorrect."

"A little party? Forbidden? Surely you can't be serious."

"Herr Kraus, you are the custodian here, you ought to know better. This room is licensed for *religious education*, not for social gatherings. This is a social gathering." He turned to the Pastor. "They should have obtained a special permit, Herr Pastor, that's the rule."

The Pastor could feel that everyone, including the children, was studying him to see what he would say or do. The inspector took out a little black notebook.

"Very well, if you say so. I'm sorry – we won't let it happen again," the Pastor volunteered quickly.

One of the choir girls burst into tears. The sexton nervously brushed his mustache. Frau Zingler twitched her neck and shoulders. Herr Durfel held his empty coat sleeve.

Herr Hermann closed his black book slowly. "Don't let it," he said. He put his pencil into his pocket very deliberately and closed and buttoned his coat. Then he cleared his throat and stalked out of the church, the policeman close behind.

No one said anything for a moment. Then Maria gently moved toward the children, "The Pastor and I thank you more than we can say. You made us feel very much at home. I'm sorry we cannot continue this little party that you arranged for us so thoughtfully, but I hope we'll see you all at church on Sunday."

As the children filed out, shaking hands, the sexton stepped over.

"Well, how's that for a start, Herr Pastor? Welcome to Osterstadt!"

Anneliese Zingler and her mother walked home with heavy hearts. Frau Zingler saw the incident as a personal defeat in the one area where she found pride and satisfaction – volunteer church activity. It was not easy for her in the church because she felt that everyone knew that her husband was favored in the workers' council at the factory. It was an embarrassment for her. His promotion had come as a direct result of his being a party activist. If he should hear about today, it would be very uncomfortable for her.

It *was* so that evening. Herr Zingler reported that the incident at church had spread all over town. He had heard about it at the end of his shift.

"Just suppose they had arrested all of you! It could have happened, you know! What if they had hauled all of you down to the police headquarters? Wouldn't that look nice? A foreman's wife and daughter arrested in the church!"

Anneliese and her mother brought the food to the table, as Zingler sat down and tucked a napkin into his collar.

"When are you two going to wake up?"

Anneliese, who had been very quiet while her father talked, finally spoke up.

"Father, we did nothing wrong."

"Right, wrong! Right, wrong! – that's not the point! Who is going to send you to the nursing school? The church?"

Anneliese bit her lip.

"Father, one time you say church is for women and children, and now you say . . ."

"I'm saying it's hard enough at the plant with the quotas and the speed-up and the meetings and the petitions . . . What are you trying to do, get me fired?"

"Oh, Otto, Otto," his wife protested. "We only wanted to welcome the Pastor."

"All right, that's enough." Suddenly he bowed his head and, as he had done at every evening meal for years, he spoke their standard table prayer, "Lord, we thank Thee for all Thy gifts and ask Thy blessings on this food and loving family, Amen."

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At breakfast the next morning in the parsonage the Pastor's family talked excitedly about the busy day ahead of them. Peter had found a bakery only two blocks away and had returned from fetching the breakfast rolls.

"Are you sure you have all your school records, Peter?" his father asked.

Peter nodded. "I have everything they gave me at Kronberg. What else will I need? Oh, yes, some money. I'll have to buy a couple of notebooks I suppose."

Maria poured coffee for them. "Peter," she said, "explain about your interest in music. Perhaps that'll make a difference here in Osterstadt. You may not have to march and drill so much if they realize you are serious about making a career of music."

Pastor Gottfried said, "I will have to go down to the city hall today and register all of us at the police station."

"Please be careful, Friedrich. I hope there won't be any trouble about yesterday."

"I think they may try to see how far they can push us. I really don't know where I am here until I can meet with the elders of the congregation and find out where they stand. I will have a talk with Herr Kraus first."

"I have to hurry," said Peter, gulping down his coffee and stuffing his school records in his brief case.

The young principal sat behind his desk, reading over the records of the transfer student from Kronberg. Peter stood stiffly by the desk. His eyes wandered around the room and looked at the pictures of national heroes of East Germany. On the walls were portraits of Grotewohl, Ulbricht, and Pieck, and in a glass case trophies of the school's triumphs.

"You have a very promising scholarship record, Gottfried. However, I am surprised that your school in Kronberg gave so little attention to your political orientation. We will correct that here. You will spend most of your time in Herr Starke's class. He will be your principal advisor. You will find him most pleasant and congenial. I think he is our favorite teacher here."

"I have a special interest in music, sir," Peter said quickly.

The principal smiled. "So I see. Your report here states that you are an excellent pianist. I must say that the Karl Marx School in Osterstadt can be proud of its cultural orientation. I will have you report to Professor Steffl, our music director. He will work out a good program for you."

The principal studied Peter's records again and remarked, "You will have more scientific courses here than you have had in Kronberg. Ours is an enlightened society in scientific materialism and our school must meet the challenge of the future by training its citizens with the knowledge and skills that our progressive new age requires of all of us—even musicians, Gottfried."

"Yes, sir."

"There is no mention here of your taking the German Youth pledge. I am sorry about that. Here in Osterstadt eighty-five percent of the youth have taken the pledge. Perhaps now that you are a bit older you will be more independent in your thinking. For example, I am sure you won't want to be left out of the very active FDJ chapter we have here. Talk to the student leader of the FDJ, Johannes Dehmert. He is in your class."

The Pastor walked through the market square to the city hall. Before entering, he checked his family's identification papers. He hoped there would be no problem about the police notations on his passport—several times he had been summoned for questioning in Ohlendorf and Bad Steinmitz.

In the reception area he looked around and noticed about ten persons waiting with papers and documents in their hands. There was no one at the window marked "Registry" when he went up to it. The clerk slid the window open from inside and looked up at the Pastor.

"Good morning. I am Pastor Friedrich Gottfried. Is this where new residents are supposed to report and register?"

The clerk maintained a completely blank expression and reached for the Pastor's papers. He studied them for a moment,

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then looked at the Pastor slightly superciliously, and asked, "Is this a temporary appointment, Herr Pastor?" He smiled.

"No, I expect to be here permanently."

The clerk turned back to the documents and said, "Please have a seat. I will call you." He left his cubicle and disappeared through a doorway.

The Pastor noticed that everyone in the waiting room was watching him. He smiled kindly and sat down. He had often spent hours waiting for bureaucrats, and it seemed a familiar routine. He fully expected he might have to wait an hour. But almost immediately the clerk returned and beckoned to him.

"Everything is in order. Here are your papers. And, oh, yes, Herr Rettmann would like to meet you."

"Herr Rettmann?"

"Yes, the Comrade Party Secretary. You will find him across the hall in Room 7."

The Pastor went down the hall. He had never before been given an audience with a party secretary. His skirmishes with the authorities had been with lesser functionaries. But he had noticed a certain evidence of party discipline in Osterstadt and doubtless Rettmann was the strong man of the community. It was impossible to know who else might be breathing down the neck of the party secretary. Someone held the dreadful power of the secret police. Perhaps it was Inspector Hermann.

"Come in!"

A deep resonant voice answered Pastor Gottfried's gentle knock at the door. Sitting behind a huge desk in a rather spacious room decorated with propaganda posters was the party secretary. As Herr Rettmann arose from his desk to step forward, Gottfried noticed his confident bearing. Beneath a neat crown of grey hair there was a strongly chiseled face. The party secretary smiled warmly and extended his hand.

"Ah, Herr Pastor. Welcome! So the little flock has a shepherd again. But I must apologize for what occurred yesterday."

His tone seemed rather patronizing.

"You mean the welcoming party? It did seem a bit unkind, if I may say so. . . ."

"Unkind? I prefer to say 'unfortunate'."

The Pastor took off his coat and accepted a chair.

"Well, I'm glad you see it that way," Gottfried responded. "I trust it won't happen again."

The functionary laughed slightly and raised the level of his charm to reply, "Naturally. Of course not. You handled the situation quite correctly. I might add, a protest would have been embarrassing."

It was the pastor's move. "Yes, and rather silly. There are issues between Church and State that are more important than children's parties."

"True!" Rettmann turned and walked slowly to his desk. "And my door will always be open to discuss them." He glanced for a moment at the gallery of Communist heroes on his office wall, including Marx, Lenin, Thalmann, Ulbricht, and Khrushchev and commented, "After all, when intelligent people sit down to talk, most problems can be solved reasonably well."

"That is how it should be," the Pastor said quietly.

Rettmann walked to the window and looked out at the church steeple that clearly dominated the view. With his back to the Pastor he remarked, "Your predecessor could have avoided most of the . . . uh . . . unpleasantness, had he accepted my offer to discuss matters beforehand."

The Pastor knew he had to make a move one way or the other.

"I don't expect to find myself in the same predicament."

"I certainly hope not." Rettmann replied, turning back to give a condescending smile to his guest. "After all, we have the same objectives, you and I, don't we?"

"I hardly think so, Herr Rettmann."

Rettmann smiled broadly, sat down again at his desk and leaned back. "Oh, come now, Herr Pastor. Surely you know we are both aiming at Paradise! The difference is you are content to *wait* for heaven while we build ours right *here!*"

The Pastor rose from his chair and answered, "Some problems can't wait for heaven, Herr Rettmann." Rettmann also stood up.



*"Oh, come now, Herr Pastor" (the Party Secretary said).  
"Surely you know we are both aiming at Paradise! The  
difference is you are content to wait for heaven while we  
build ours right here!"*

His face did not yet show any reaction. He merely waited. Then Gottfried said.

"I plan a meeting of the church council . . ."

Rettmann relaxed and answered lightly, "Quite proper! No questions! Church business."

The Pastor wanted to be certain. "In my home?"

"You won't be disturbed, I will see to it personally." Reassuringly, he helped the pastor into his coat and escorted him out the office and down the hall. "*Auf Wiedersehen*, Herr Pastor. Come any time, any time at all. And welcome to Osterstadt!"

Rettmann did not return directly to his office but went into the room next to his. A young man at a desk started to rise but Rettmann gestured for him to remain seated. "Let me see a copy of the new petition that came from Berlin yesterday," he said.

### 3 / AT SCHOOL

Everyone turned to look at Peter as he entered Herr Starke's classroom. Peter hated moments like this. Everyone was judging him. Two girls smiled pleasantly at him from the other side of the room. Boys in FDJ shirts exchanged glances. *What do I do – tell them who I am?* he wondered. *Or do I just sit down in some empty seat? Should I go up to the teacher and . . . .*

Herr Starke solved the problem for him. He came down from his desk to shake hands with Peter, saying, "You must be Peter Gottfried."

"Yes, sir."

"We're glad to have you in our class."

He had a wonderful smile, this teacher. He made one feel comfortable right away. He was handsome, too. He had a little grey hair around the temples and a reddish scar on his right cheek. His eyes sparkled good-naturedly.

"Thank you."

"Your seat is here next to Richard Kleiner."

Peter sat down and opened his case to take out one of the new notebooks he had bought that morning. From behind him, a textbook was passed up – *The Meaning of Socialism*, the same book he had seen on the library table in the Kronberg school.

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"We encourage and expect active participation and discussion in this class, Gottfried," Herr Starke said to him. "But because this is your first day, you can just listen — unless, of course, you have some point to share with the class. In that case, speak up. But no sermons please!" Everyone laughed. Peter was embarrassed.

The Pastor's son was prepared to isolate himself. He had trained himself to turn off his mind and shield himself against the barbs and arrows of Communist ideology. He had heard the same lines and lies repeated over and over. It was the safest way, even though it sometimes got him into difficulty when his

*... it was hard to turn off Herr Starke. He was animated, walking up and down the aisles as he lectured and suddenly calling on this student or that one . . . . Peter found he was listening in spite of himself.*



answer didn't make sense because he hadn't really heard the question.

But it was hard to turn off Herr Starke. He was animated, walking up and down the aisles as he lectured and suddenly calling on this student or that one. His pupils were enthusiastic. He would ask a question and five or six hands would immediately shoot up and a staccato of finger-snapping would continue until someone was chosen to answer. Peter found he was listening in spite of himself.

So far it hadn't been too bad.

Herr Starke took a pointer and went to a model of the city of Osterstadt on a table at the front of the classroom.

"Our town looked beautiful, even in the Middle Ages," the teacher said. "I'm not sure that this model, which Maria Kaufer and her committee made, does justice to our fair city, even though they worked hard on it and did a very good job, of course. It is not beautiful enough for Osterstadt, and yet it's much too pretty. Now, what do I mean? I mean this — you haven't shown the garbage-filled streets and the disease, the superstition and poverty behind the facades of the picturesque houses which existed in the Middle Ages."

He walked down the aisle.

"Don't forget this was the time of feudalism, which still exists in parts of the unenlightened world today. But wherever it is found, there are some outward symbols we have learned to identify. For instance, always dominating the town was . . . ?" He turned questioningly.

Fingers clicked eagerly throughout the room. Starke aimed his pointer at a boy. The lad stood up and blurted out, "The church."

"Now let's hear about the society of the time."

Again arms waved, and snapping of fingers punctuated the pleas to be recognized. "Herr Starke. Herr Starke!"

"It was composed of three classes — clergy, nobility and peasants."

Maria Kaufer, in an FDJ shirt, got an approving smile from the teacher as reward for having learned her lesson well.

*Question 7*

"And what was the function of each of these?" Herr Starke called on the boy sitting next to Peter.

The boy was taken by surprise. He rose slowly and could only stammer, "Uh . . . uh . . . ."

"You'll learn it yet, Kleiner. Pick up your book and read the second paragraph on page 127."

The boy obeyed: "The clergy was to pray, the nobility to protect, and the peasant to do the work. . . ."

"You read well, Kleiner."

The class tittered.

Herr Starke was leading up to something. He walked to the blackboard and opened the hinged doors. Peter winced as he read:

BETRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

LUTHER

FUGGER

MUNZER

Luther was naturally a hero to the son of a Lutheran pastor. The writings of the Reformer were in his home — not only the theological works, but also the hymns and the catechism which Peter had learned so well.

"The church has always been in league with the reactionary camp," Herr Starke stated. Peter, who had just been looking down at his book, raised his eyes and saw that the teacher was looking directly at him. Then Herr Starke turned to the other side of the room and asked, "Can someone give me an illustration?"

Not many hands went up.

"Dehmert?"

The boy directly behind Peter stood up. He was an intense, red-haired youth in an FDJ uniform. This was the boy the principal had said was the student leader of the local Free German Youth chapter.

"The peasant wars would be one example, sir."

"Good." The teacher took the chalk in his hand and wrote on the blackboard: 1521-1525. "Here Martin Luther allied himself with the princes, the landowners. Why?"

Peter was uncomfortable. He hardly heard the memorized answer given by a girl across the room, ". . . to betray the hopes of the down-trodden masses for freedom from the feudalistic yoke."

The class came to an end.

The students were filing out when Peter suddenly heard someone call his name.

"Gottfried! I'd like to talk to you."

Peter stopped and let the other students go by.

"So, Gottfried," Herr Starke said, looking up and clearing his throat. "I hope you'll do as well here as at your old school. But I have been looking over your records and there is one subject where we need some improvement."

"Current events?"

Herr Starke nodded. "Here we place particular importance on political studies. So let's do something about it." Peter said nothing.

"These records from Kronberg indicate that you are a very promising musician. Are you thinking ahead about the possibility of attending a conservatory?"

Peter brightened. "Oh, very much, sir. That's what I want to do."

"Then your political background is even more important! Nobody stands outside society — especially a teacher, an artist!"

Perhaps Herr Starke didn't understand his position, Peter thought. "But, sir, my father is the Pastor and . . ."

"And so? That has nothing to do with your future. That's up to you — you alone!"

"But in this course you teach us . . . you tell us things that don't agree with what we've learned before." Peter nodded at the blackboard. "What you say . . . those things up there . . . may or may not be true. But my father is the Pastor. I try to be a Christian. What my father has taught me I believe."

"Gottfried, your father has every right to his interpretations, and I'm sure that what he has taught you he thinks is true." Herr Starke stood up and walked to the window. Then he turned around and slowly folded his arms in front of him.

### Question 7

"Times are changing. When you get out in the world, in this era of the atom and sputnik, people won't ask or even care whether you know the Catechism, or the Commandments, or the fairy tales of the Bible!"

Peter looked at the floor. The teacher moved closer to him and his tone became quiet, but intense.

"People will have the right to know if you've mastered the real meaning of science and society. You'll have to face facts, my boy, and these things that bother you" — he gestured to the writing on the blackboard — "are historical facts."

Peter was late for his appointment with Professor Steffl in the music room. He had a little difficulty finding the music room on the very top floor of the building. Professor Steffl looked like a relic of a Germany of another day. He was plump and rather stodgy. His eyes drooped and his heavy mustache drooped, and this made him look perpetually sad. But Peter discovered that Herr Steffl's voice conveyed much warmth and cordiality and somehow he felt he could respond to a man like this.

"I don't know what's happening here in Osterstadt but we don't have many students who excel in the art of the piano," Professor Steffl stated. "So, when we get a new student who is rated as being a promising pianist, it makes me very happy indeed!" Professor Steffl smiled sadly at Peter.

"I enjoy music very much, sir, and I try to practice regularly, although I haven't had the chance now for a time because of the move we made from Kronberg to Osterstadt."

"Who was your teacher at Kronberg?" Professor Steffl asked.

Peter explained that he had never had any teacher other than his mother. He added that his mother was an excellent pianist and had studied in Leipzig. Professor Steffl seemed relieved because, although he himself could teach piano to beginners, he did not consider himself competent to train an advanced student.

"Would you play something for me, Gottfried?"

When Peter hesitated, the professor continued, "No, no, Gottfried, this is not a test or an examination. I just would enjoy it

very much if you would play something – just anything that comes to your mind – for me, now.”

Peter sat down and played Bach.

When he had finished, Professor Steffl sat still in his chair; his eyes were closed, as if he were savoring the sound of music that lingered in his mind. Then he got up and went over to Peter. He said, “That was very nice, very nice. I’m glad you have come to our school.”

Out in the school yard Peter went over to the bicycle rack. He laid his briefcase on the rack behind his seat and pedaled off toward home.

“Gottfried! Gottfried!” Peter looked over his shoulder to see who had interrupted his reverie. He slowed down when he saw a red-haired youth pedaling to catch up. Peter recognized Dehmert, the boy from his class. As he came alongside, Peter saw he was wearing shorts and the bright blue shirt of the FDJ. Peter saw four or five other youths on bikes behind them, drawing closer.

“Gottfried, we are having a membership drive for our Free German Youth chapter. We’d like to have you in our group. It would help our quota if you’d sign up. How about it?”

Peter didn’t want to start an argument. So he laughed nervously. “Oh, thanks, but please don’t waste your time on me. You know who I am.”

Dehmert probed just a little bit further, “Oh, come on, Gottfried, live your own life. You are missing a lot.”

Dehmert had touched a sore spot. But even though Peter longed to be able to “live his own life,” he was not tempted. He shrugged his shoulders and said, “Maybe . . .” in an attempt to dismiss the matter.

As he sped ahead, Dehmert cocked his head jauntily and his red hair gleamed in the sunlight. Peter watched him go. A moment later he became aware that he was being stalked on both sides by other FDJ boys on their bikes. Should he race ahead, he wondered, or should he turn and start a conversation with them, or should he slow down and let them pass?



*"You are Anneliese Zingler, aren't you?" He had heard her name in class and had made a special point to remember it because she was pretty and had smiled at him in such a friendly way . . . . "Don't worry about them", (she said). "They just had to initiate the new boy in town."*

He slowed down, and three or four of the cyclists zipped by and crossed in front of him, zigzagging first to his left and then to his right. Then, from behind, a large youth closed in on Peter. With a devilish gleam in his eye, he reached down and flicked Peter's brief case from the rack and sent it sailing across the street. Peter stopped his bike and stood in the middle of the street, watching them all disappear.

He did not see the two girls who had been walking along and who had witnessed the scene. One of them ran over to pick up Peter's brief case from the sidewalk. She brought it to him, and with a smile held it out to him.

"Don't worry about them. They just had to initiate the new boy in town."

"Oh, thank you very much," Peter said as he took the brief case. "You are Anneliese Zingler, aren't you?" He had heard her name in class and had made a special point to remember it because she was pretty and had smiled at him in such a friendly way.

"Yes, and this is Hildegard Marschall."

They walked together up the hill to the church and parsonage. Under other circumstances Peter might have been a little shy and slow in becoming acquainted with new girls but he realized that they had seen him in a difficult and embarrassing moment and had come to offer friendship just when it was most needed. He discovered with surprise that he was responding to them with more gaiety and enthusiasm than he usually did in such situations.

Frau Gottfried in the parsonage was intrigued by what she saw from her window. Peter was coming up the hill with two young girls. She noticed that he was more animated than usual. She could tell he was excited and this rather pleased her. In Kronberg, Peter had not been much concerned about girls. Maybe it will be different here, she thought. She realized that she was a little relieved to see her boy developing normally. At the same time she sadly realized that this would only hasten the day when he would be gone. Frau Gottfried remembered seeing the two girls at the welcoming party. The blond pretty girl had directed the choir — Anneliese, wasn't that her name? Yes, Anneliese Zingler. And the dark-haired girl? She would ask Peter.

Peter came in and called, "Mother!"

"I'm out here, Peter, on the porch."

Peter took a tea biscuit from the bread box, then came out on the porch to talk to his mother.

"Where's Father?"

"He went with Herr Kraus. They are visiting each of the councilors to arrange for his first meeting with them."

"Mother, I played for Professor Steffl today and he seemed very pleased. He is the music teacher, you know."

"But Peter, you are so out of practice. Did it go all right?"

### *Question 7*

"Yes, I got through it. You know the Bach invention." He sang the theme. "Perhaps I should practice now while I'm in the mood."

Peter went to the piano.

Herr Kraus had suggested that he and the Pastor visit as many of the church elders as they could. Pastor Gottfried agreed that this would be a good way to arrange for his first meeting with them and at the same time demonstrate his interest in the homes and families involved.

They went first to the apartment home of the Durfels, whom the Pastor had met at the welcoming party.

Herr Durfel, coatless, opened the door and invited them in. Gottfried was again conscious of the man's missing right arm. Durfel explained that his wife was giving a piano lesson in the next room, but that she would be finished in a few minutes.

"Frau Durfel was our church organist, you know," explained Herr Kraus.

"Yes, and I heard this created problems for you," the Pastor said to Herr Durfel.

At the word "problems" Herr Durfel suddenly seemed to be ill at ease. He looked around suspiciously and then went over to turn the radio on rather loudly. He motioned the Pastor to the hall which separated them from the next apartment.

"Big ears next door. More privacy this way."

Frau Durfel had her piano pupil continue playing while she came in to greet the Pastor and the sexton. She was a dramatic-looking woman with dark, deep-set eyes; her hair was swept up in a bun effect on the top of her head.

"You don't know what it means to have a Pastor call again! Pastor Tritschler came here quite often. Let me fix you some tea."

"Oh, that would be very nice," the Pastor responded without hesitation, recognizing the ritual greeting for a new Pastor.

"I suppose you know that I played the organ at church, Herr Pastor?"

"Yes, so I understand. What happened?"

"I had been organist in this church for eighteen years. There was no problem from our point of view at all. We were doing quite well. My husband was getting a pension and I was busy giving piano lessons. The income was not much but it kept us going. When the time came to renew my teaching license, they said, 'Either give up playing the organ in church or forfeit the license'."

The Pastor shook his head. "So now they are applying this idea to private teachers also. In Kronberg they forced all government employees to drop their church membership or lose their jobs."

"I hated to give up playing the organ, but I suppose I should consider myself lucky that they did not make me give up church altogether."

Herr Kraus suggested next that the Pastor and he bicycle out to the Kesselmaier farm, a short distance from the village. Gottfried was glad for the opportunity to see the village; he realized that Osterstadt was indeed a lovely town.

They were drawing close to a large cemetery at the edge of the village when they heard the sound of brassy music. It came from the other side of the hedge that bordered the cemetery. The Pastor and Herr Kraus walked along the hedge until they came to a place where they could easily look over and see what was going on. An instrumental brass quartet was intoning a stolid dirge. A group of mourners stood by an open grave surrounded by many flowers. Towering slightly above the others, a bearded man – looking almost like a reincarnation of Lenin himself – stood somberly with his hands folded.

The sexton saw that the Pastor was curious and explained, "They are burying Richard Neuberger. For twenty-five years he operated a lathe at the machine works."

*So they have state funerals here too*, the Pastor thought. The music stopped and the functionary started to speak.

"My dear friends and comrades! How can we best honor our departed friend? Surely not by vain hope of reunion in some

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mythical other world, but by renewed dedication in this life to the goals for which he labored.”

The Pastor closed his eyes as the speaker continued, “For there is no other place than here – no other time than now.”

Herr Kraus said, “The widow wanted you to officiate, but the shop committee from the factory wouldn’t allow it.”

The Pastor nodded.

“I understand. I’ll try to visit her very soon, maybe tomorrow.”

“Pastor Tritschler got into quite some arguments with them about this sort of thing. Not that it got him anywhere – except into trouble.”

They turned away from the funeral scene. Gottfried commented, “Unfortunately, it was not much different in Kronberg. I suppose I should be used to it by now, but I doubt that I ever will be.”

The day was rather cool but just right for cycling. Very few of the residents of Osterstadt had automobiles – they were much too expensive to buy, permits and papers were difficult to obtain, and gasoline was scarce and too costly for the average person. So there was little traffic on the highway – only a couple of motorbikes were barking and sputtering and whining their way along.

Turning into a lane that led off the main road to the Kesselmaier farm, the sexton and the Pastor heard a very loud radio blaring forth march music. *What event could be taking place near Osterstadt today? A rally? A picnic? A circus?* When they came closer, they found the source of sound right by the gate of the farm.

A truck was parked there. It carried the sign: OSTERSTADT PEOPLE’S COMMITTEE FOR FARM COLLECTIVIZATION! The truck was festooned with bright banners and huge cartoons of happy animals that pointed to the promise of the caption FOR A HAPPY FUTURE. Two large loudspeakers were on the top of the truck’s cab. A large caricature of a farmer entitled “The Foolish Farmer” stood behind the cab, while a slogan read, *He tries to set back the clock!*



*What were they trying to do with this ridiculous propaganda demonstration? The Pastor . . . couldn't recall having seen such blunt tactics being used in any other place.*

What were they trying to do with this ridiculous propaganda demonstration? The Pastor knew that the Regime had been impatient with the rate of collectivization of small farms and had decreed a speed-up. Even in Kronberg there were church members who had made sharp bureaucratic comments on the matter. But he couldn't recall having seen such blunt tactics being used in any other place.

As Herr Kraus and Pastor Gottfried made their way to the barn, they heard a persuasively intense voice pouring out of the loudspeakers:

. . . The new order of society demands total mobilization of all for the people's welfare. The most outstanding con-

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tribution to the people that the farmer can make is to join his brothers in the collective. The day of the individual farm has long since passed. Agriculture is industry. The people need production – as with coal, so with crops . . . .

Hans Kesselmaier and his wife saw the visitors and came out to greet them. Both looked wearied and haggard. Harassment had taken its toll.

“How long has this been going on?” asked the Pastor.

Hans Kesselmaier chewed on the stem of his pipe. He shook his head and his voice carried the full contempt he felt when he answered, “A week now. Day and night. Nights they turn on searchlights – scare the cows.”

They looked across the barnyard to the truck that was blaring out a military march again. The agitated cows bellowed back their own opinion. A dog barked, too, standing beneath the timbers of the barn on which was carved: *Constructed with God's Blessing by Klaus Kesselmaier: 1557.*

The Pastor inquired, “How do you get any sleep with this noise?”

“We don't,” the farmer replied with both weariness and disgust in his voice. “We don't mind that so much, though. But the thought of being told by some bureaucrat with a pad and pencil what to do and what to plant, and when, and how to farm out here where I've lived my whole life, and to end up as slaves on our own land – that's too much. They want this?” – in a sweeping gesture he included his whole farm – “Well, they can have it – over my dead body!”

Before leaving, Gottfried said to Herr Kesselmaier, “I hope to see you at the meeting tonight.”

“I'll be there,” the farmer assured him.

There was time to stop only briefly at several other homes and places of work. Herr Kraus guided his Pastor to the little apartment where white-bearded Jacob Hoerst lived. No one expected much contribution of ideas from him any more, but he was always included in the elders' meetings as senior member of the church. They stopped by the printing shop where Herr

Marschall worked. He was Hildegard's father. They also met Herr Mueller, the barber, who joked with them even though there were several customers waiting.

It had been a long day – discouraging for Gottfried in many ways. Yet, it had been heartening, too, to feel that these people were a hard core who were making some effort to resist the crude techniques of the state to subvert freedom and faith.

He heard Peter practicing as he arrived at the side door of the parsonage. Maria came to the door, wiping her hands on her apron.

"Friedrich, some visitors are waiting for you in your study."

"Who are they, Maria? Did they say what they wanted of me?"

"No, and I didn't ask. But they look like workers. Three men and one woman. One of them is wearing a party button. I hope you don't mind my allowing them to wait. They asked if they could."

Gottfried hurried in and rushed up the stairs. First it had been the police inspector, then the party secretary who had introduced themselves to him. *Perhaps Herr Rettmann had a hand in this*, he thought.

The Pastor faced a committee of four in his study. A round-faced, boyish factory worker introduced himself as Richard Meyer, spokesman for the political committee of the People's Machine Works. The Pastor met each of them in turn: Comrade Hardleben, Comrade Nageler – a not-unattractive woman in her early forties – and Comrade Zingler. *Zingler? Could this be the husband of the lady in charge of the welcoming party?* The Pastor gave Herr Zingler a closer look.

"And what can I do for you good people?"

With self-conscious ceremony, the spokesman stood up and approached the desk. "We'd like you to have the honor of being the first to sign our petition against the hydrogen bomb. It's nationwide." He proffered the petition in a black binder. The Pastor took it to the window where he could read it more easily.

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This wasn't the first time that the Pastor had been approached to sign a petition.

He looked at the delegation. Herr Zingler was studying the Pastor. The woman was listening to Peter's piano playing that carried clearly up the stairs and filled the study with sound. The spokesman was thinking of what he should say next. Finally he blurted out, so as to be heard above the piano music, "You are against the H-Bomb?"

"Certainly," the Pastor reported. He had never made a secret of his hope that nuclear warfare could be banished from the earth before it destroyed it. Peter's practicing was increasing in fervor and volume. The Pastor went over to shut the door.

"I can never get my boy to touch a note," sighed Comrade Nageler.

The Pastor continued to read the petition:

"We, the undersigned, being dedicated to peace hereby condemn the use of the hydrogen bomb as a means of modern warfare and decry the policies of the NATO countries that would pose a nuclear threat against the people's republics and would return the weapons of destruction to the fascist elements of Western capitalism. . . ."

"You'll sign it, Herr Pastor?" the spokesman asked pleadingly.

"Well, there's nothing in here I can basically oppose — perhaps I'd phrase it a little differently."

Herr Zingler spoke up for the first time. "Just a mere matter of words, Herr Pastor."

"But in my position," the Pastor added quickly, "I have to consider the source as well as the sense. This is political in origin. And as it has been repeatedly made clear by the authorities, the Church is not to involve itself in political affairs."

"But isn't the Church supposed to preach against war, death, and destruction?" asked Comrade Hardleben.

"Yes, but in its own way. I don't relish the thought of tomorrow's paper saying: 'Pastor Gottfried First To Sign New Party Petition'."

"Herr Pastor, we would do no such thing," the spokesman protested.

"I'm sure *you* wouldn't," Pastor Gottfried replied and he handed the petition back.

Herr Zingler stood up. "Sorry to have taken up your time, Herr Pastor," he said as he led the delegation out of the Pastor's study.

That night the elders came, one by one, to the parsonage. The meeting was held informally in the living room. Frau Pastor had put down the rug and had hung her favorite pictures on the wall and arranged chairs around a small table. Pastor Gottfried invited the councilors to smoke if they wished, even though he did not.

The preliminary getting-acquainted conversation was pleasant. It developed that Herr Mueller, the barber, had a witty tongue and he had them all quickly laughing and relaxed. Even Kesselmaier laughed. The printer, Herr Marschall, said that his daughter was in the same class with the Pastor's son, Peter. Herr Durfel had nothing to say, but listened intently to every word.

"I had some visitors today," the Pastor told them finally when they had come around in their conversation to church business. Then he reported the whole incident of the political committee from the factory.

"If you had signed, they'd have fainted," the barber said. "They never expected you to."

Very slowly Farmer Kesselmaier turned to the Pastor and said, "It was just Wilhelm Rettmann testing you."

"Do you think so?" commented Gottfried.

The barber laughed. "Herr Pastor, you'll soon find out that when Rettmann itches, Osterstadt scratches. He pulls all the strings."

"He certainly does," someone added.

The elders had confirmed his own opinion. He was about to tell them that he had known Moscow-trained party men like

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Rettmann before, when Peter came down the stairs, shouting, "Father, come quickly!"

The Pastor was on his feet in a second and close at Peter's heels. The elders followed. Outside, they heard footsteps. Peter looked in the direction of the sound, and then down at the sidewalk in front of the parsonage.

"Look at that. I saw some boys running down the street!" Peter exclaimed breathlessly.

They all looked. There on the sidewalk was a can of spilled paint and a brush and the crude outline of a bomb with an "H" on it, and underneath the word **WARMONGER**.

"Peter, get a pail and some rags," his father commanded quietly. Peter went inside.

The printer touched the paint can that lay on its side. "We could have used this paint nicely for the parish room."

Durfel fingered his empty sleeve and said, "I'm sure Rettmann put them up to it."

The barber shook his head. "No, he didn't have to. They've learned their lessons very well."

They all looked at the Pastor.

"In the words of our national anthem," he said ruefully, "Newly rising from the ruins springs a brave new generation' . . ."

## 4 / THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Peter entered the music room and walked to the piano. Professor Steffl had asked him to bring some music he could play well, and Peter had selected pieces by Mozart, Brahms, and Chopin. Professor Steffl appeared genuinely interested in his new student's ability and Peter was pleased that the music teacher showed such interest in him.

Peter began his warming-up exercises. In his concentration on scales, Peter failed to notice the two girls who had come to the door where they stood listening. Anneliese Zingler and Hildegard Marschall were close friends and they were fascinated by Peter. The fact that he was the Pastor's son only intensified their interest because they were both active in the church and felt a special kinship with other Christians.

Peter looked up and noticed them. He stopped playing and said, "Come in; there is no one here but me. I'm waiting for Professor Steffl."

Anneliese was a little embarrassed, but she came over to the piano. "Please play some more. It sounds wonderful."

"Oh, this is nothing. Just noise, that's all. I was warming up my fingers for the audition with Professor Steffl."

"But please go on playing — anything at all," Anneliese pleaded.

### Question 7

Peter was delighted at this evidence of interest in his piano playing. It gave him a pleasant, heady feeling to play before two admiring girls. He took a book of Mozart sonatas from the pile of music and started the A-Flat Sonata.

Then Professor Steffl appeared. Peter rounded off his playing neatly and said, "Good morning, Herr Steffl!"

"Good morning, Gottfried. Good morning, girls. Now if you two young ladies will excuse us, I have business with our new musician."

Anneliese and Hildegard left, blushing.

Professor Steffl asked Peter to show him three or four of his favorite selections. Peter took one from each composer which he felt he could play well and Professor Steffl wrote down the names in his little black notebook. He took out his stop watch and asked Peter to play each one through for him. While Peter lost himself in the music, Professor Steffl walked back and forth with the stop watch in his hand. He noted the exact timing of each composition and when Peter was through, he said, "Chopin Ballade. It's just the right length and the right type of thing. You will play that at the factory tomorrow."

"The factory? I don't understand," protested Peter.

"You certainly know about the trip to the metal works tomorrow, don't you?"

"Yes, I knew our class was going, but what has this to do with my playing Chopin?"

"It's very simple, really, my boy. The workers at the People's Metal Works are going to show us the operations of their plant tomorrow and we are going to present a program of entertainment for them. You won't be the only one performing. It's a great opportunity for you, Gottfried."

"But, sir, I really need more time to perfect this selection. I have never played it in public before."

Professor Steffl smiled, "These people aren't music critics. They are factory workers. It'll sound fine to them. Don't worry about it."

Peter felt both stimulated and frightened. He loved to play the piano, but he was confused about the circumstances sur-

*The Questionnaire*

rounding the performance tomorrow. His mother would be shocked if he told her he was playing the Chopin Ballade in public with no advance preparation. His father would want to know if there were any political implications in the program. As he reached the main corridor he saw Anneliese standing alone, reading. She had been waiting for him, hoping that he might pass this way.

"Hello!"

Anneliese looked up and smiled, "Oh, hello, how did it go?" Peter shrugged. Anneliese walked with him out the door. "I'm sure Professor Steffl was pleased, wasn't he? Your playing went all right, didn't it?"

*Peter . . . loved to play the piano, but he was confused about the circumstances surrounding the performance tomorrow . . . His Father would want to know if there were any political implications in the program.*



### Question 7

"Yes and no."

Anneliese said, "I'm not very good at riddles; I don't quite understand." Then in an effort to change the subject she asked, "Are you walking or riding home?" Peter answered, "I have my bike here; how about you?"

"I'm walking today. Well, I'll see you later, Peter."

Peter knew that this was his opportunity to talk to Anneliese. He did not want her to feel that he was trying to be mysterious. He was still a little confused by the chore given him by Professor Steffl and he wanted a chance to think it over. So he said, "If you don't have to hurry home, maybe we could find a place somewhere where we could talk . . ."

"Oh, I'd like that — I know just the place."

Anneliese led Peter to one of her favorite places. She explained that she came down to the lake whenever she wanted to get away to think or to read or just to relax. There was a large stump close to the water and for her it was a seat to contemplate nature. The lovely blue lake spread out before them. Farther back the village rested peacefully against the sky, with the church steeple standing guard like a sentinel.

Anneliese talked on about the view and how wonderful it made her feel, when suddenly it occurred to her that Peter wasn't listening. He was standing near the edge of the water aimlessly tossing pebbles.

"What's the matter, Peter?"

"Nothing," he answered, without looking up.

"You said you wanted to talk."

"Oh, why should I bother you?"

Her mood was still cheerful and she shot back, "Why not? I'm a good listener, and I am interested, Peter."

She was being nice to him, Peter thought. He turned to look at her. "Oh, it's nothing, really, just that I am playing a piano solo at the factory tomorrow."

"But I think that's wonderful, isn't it? I'm glad they asked you to play."

"Anneliese, you don't understand. It's my father. There will surely be some politics mixed up in this and father will want

## *The Questionnaire*

to know all about it and I won't be able to tell him because I don't know myself because nobody has told me. Father would never understand a thing like this. Now I don't know whether to tell him or not."

"But you have to tell him, don't you, Peter? I mean, won't he find out somehow, anyway?"

"Oh, I don't know what to do, Anneliese."

The next morning at breakfast Peter was glum. He excused himself as soon as he had finished eating and went up to his room. He took out the album of Chopin music from his brief case and lay on his bed studying the score. He often memorized his music this way, as his mother had trained him to read music as he might read a book. He found it difficult to concentrate.

*It was a gay ride to the factory . . . Peter sang, too, and for the first time since coming to Osterstadt, he experienced the stimulating spirit of good fellowship.*



### Question 7

He wished he could skip this particular day with its class excursion to the factory . . . .

Two trucks from the factory were waiting in the school yard at noon when Peter and his classmates came outside. The People's Metal Works was situated a few kilometers from the village and the excursion had been suggested through an invitation from the political committee of workers. It was a reciprocal gesture since not only would the students have the opportunity to be impressed by the workers' devotion, and zeal for Communism, but the laborers also could take note of the talent among the students and would be entertained by the program.

The first truck was soon filled with eager FDJ youth. Peter hopped into the back of the second one. He leaned over and offered his hand to Hildegard and then to Anneliese and helped them up. Dehmert and Herr Starke, who had been handing out flags and checking names, climbed up and joined them. The trucks were decorated with banners, pictures and festoons. Along one side a banner proclaimed, *People's Machine Works Welcomes Our Students*, and Lenin's portrait on a huge placard looked out incongruously from a sea of youthful faces. On the opposite side of the truck was another banner with the slogan, *The Energy of Our Youth Dedicated to the Victory of Socialism!* On the tail-gate was the large shield of the FDJ with its rising-sun symbol of a New Day's dawning.

It was a gay ride to the factory. Herr Starke led them in singing several songs, including a folk song that was traditional for such a time as this. Peter sang, too, and for the first time since coming to Osterstadt, he experienced the stimulating spirit of good fellowship.

*High on the golden coach are we –  
You, me, and all the rest.  
This is the ride where you will see  
Sights that you love the best . . . .*

A photographer was poised on the top of the factory gates when the trucks swung into the yard of the metalworks and

came to a stop. Anneliese saw her father in the welcoming delegation and pointed him out to Peter. Herr Steffl, as befitted his age and dignity, rode in the cab of the truck. Now he and Herr Starke greeted the members of the political committee while the students were herded through a doorway over which a sign proclaimed, *We are proud of you!*

The noise inside the factory was incredibly loud. High over whining drills and screaming saws, buckets of hissing molten metal were swung from the furnace to the form by a rumbling, clanging crane. For Peter, who was swept along from one demonstration to another, it was very exciting.

Finally it was time for the students to do their part. They went to the factory's Culture Room, which was appropriately decorated with hero-portraits and more slogans: *Workers of the World, Unite! Youth for Marxism! All Our Energy for Socialism!*

When Professor Steffl beckoned from across the room, Peter made his way through the workers and visiting students to the piano beside the music teacher.

"Now, we'll sit along the side of the room here so that when you are announced, you can step up to the piano with no great delay. Are you all set, my boy?"

"Yes, sir, I think so. What kind of piano is it?"

"Don't expect much. It's liable to be out of tune and one or two keys will probably stick, but don't let it upset you."

Peter suffered through a dramatic poem read by one of the girls in his class. *Goethe is coming out second best*, Peter thought.

*I've studied now Philosophy  
Jurisprudence and Medicine.  
And even, alas, Theology  
From end to end, with labor keen.  
Yet here I stand, with all my lore,  
A fool – no wiser than before.  
Oh, would I might the task forego  
Of saying things I do not know!*

Question 7

*Would I might find the inmost force  
Which binds the world, and guides its course  
Its origins and pow'rs explore –  
And rummage in empty words no more!*

Peter expected to be next, but instead an accordionist came up to the raised platform, followed by six girls in folk costumes. Round and round, back and forth, bow and turn, smile and curtsy. The workers loved it and applauded loudly. They were a dirty lot sitting there in their greasy and grimy work clothes. The soot and sweat on their faces gave them a weird complexion.

Then Peter saw Dehmert standing very correctly at attention before the crowd and, with a tone in his voice that suggested that he had memorized every word, he said, "Before concluding our program, allow me to express our gratitude for all we have experienced today." Applause. "And in return," Dehmert continued, "as you produce for us today, so will we grow in understanding of our socialist heritage in order to be worthy of inheriting all this tomorrow." Again applause.

Then, turning to the other side of the room where Professor Steffl was sitting with his musicians, Dehmert announced, "Now, a selection from our classmate, Peter Gottfried."

Peter looked pleadingly over to Professor Steffl, but all he got back was a reassuring nod.

Peter lowered his head and let his fingers play, firmly but softly, the opening theme statement. Almost immediately the clatter of the audience's sounds subsided and he commanded a hushed room.

Peter was emotionally in touch with his audience through his music and he knew it. It surprised and excited him. He did not notice the photographer who eased down the front row of the audience and let his view-finder frame the boy at the keyboard against the colorful backdrop of the FDJ shield and the banner *Youth for Marxism!* A flash of light and a click of the lens marked the moment.

*The Questionnaire*

The next day the moment was recreated for readers of the community newspaper, *The People's Voice*, which operated also as the local official organ of the Communist Party. The photo was featured prominently on the front page.

In the barber shop, Herr Mueller laughed on the outside but was sick at heart inside when customers noticed the picture and made little comments such as, "Well, the Pastor's son is starting out on the safe side here in Osterstadt, isn't he?"

In the print shop, Herr Marschall usually looked at newspaper photographs from the technical point of view. Did the photo engraving have the right size screen? Were the half-tones well reproduced or did the result give too much of a black-and-white contrast? But when Herr Marschall saw Peter's picture, he was not concerned about anything except the propaganda exploitation of the Pastor's son. He shook his head. His own daughter Hildegard was a friend of Peter and she understood his position, but how about all of the other youths who looked to the Church as the only remaining bulwark against the Marxist "gospel" of atheism? How would they interpret the picture?

Otto Zingler spread out the newspaper on the table before his wife and Anneliese. "Look," he said, "look at this!"

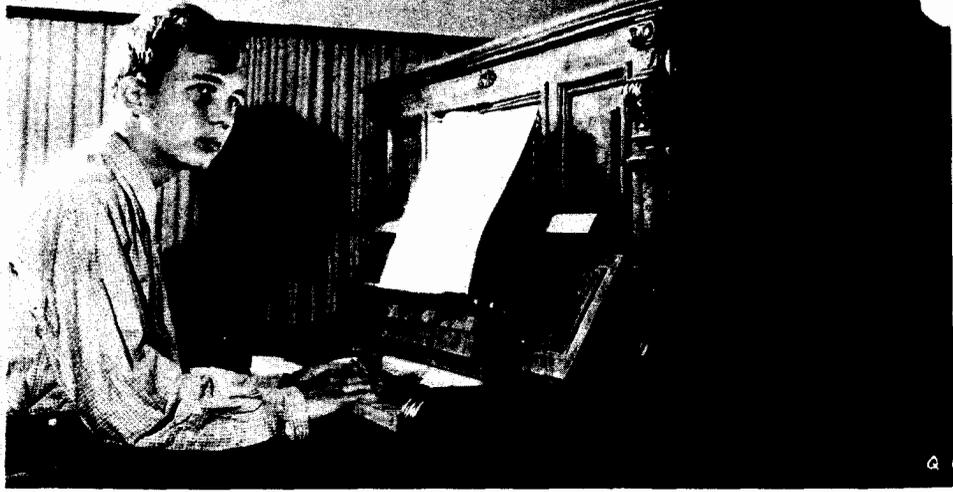
Frau Zingler studied it silently for a moment and then said softly, "What a shame . . . what a shame."

Anneliese had only one thought; the picture reminded her of her earlier conversation with Peter. Had he told his father that he was going to play, or did his father discover this after he saw his son's picture in the paper?

Nothing was said in the parsonage about the picture all during the day.

Frau Gottfried called her family for supper — Peter from his piano and the Pastor from his study. Peter first washed his hands at the kitchen sink. When he came into the dining room he immediately saw something was wrong. His father stood at the table silently. There was a hurt look in his eyes and Peter felt it.

# YOUTH FOR MARXIS



*(Peter) felt he had been tricked and trapped. "I didn't know what I was getting into . . . I didn't know they'd take my picture! I give you my word, Father."*

"Something is wrong, isn't it?" Peter asked. His father merely gestured to the newspaper that was lying flat on the table. Immediately Peter recognized himself. He grabbed the paper and saw STUDENTS SHARE TALENTS WITH FACTORY WORKERS over the three-column photo.

His father cleared his throat. "It's a little late now, but don't you think your mother and I deserve some explanation?"

It was a dreadful moment. Peter felt choked up with embarrassment, shame and regret; and yet he was angry and upset, too. He felt he had been tricked and trapped. "I didn't know what I was getting into . . . I didn't know they'd take my picture! I give you my word, Father."



*"There are always going to be times when we have to take a stand – yes or no." Peter looked up at his father and said, "Mostly it's NO!"*

Very quietly his father said to him, "Peter, I never questioned your word." The Pastor struggled to contain his real indignation. He reached for the newspaper and, tapping the picture with his finger, said, "The unfortunate thing is not what you did, but how it was used. This may easily be used to embarrass me as a pastor." He dropped the paper again and looked directly at Peter. "I just wish that you had talked it over with me first."

What could Peter say? He knew he had hurt his father. He knew now it was a mistake not to have confided in him. But what could he say? He was close to tears. "I am sorry, Father. I really am."

### Question 7

The Pastor sighed. He had been angry and irritated at the party propaganda machine and at Peter for being an unwitting tool of their clever tactics, but at this moment his fatherly heart took over and his feelings reached out tenderly to the boy.

"I am sure you are, Peter. It's difficult, I know." He smiled understandingly. "But as the Pastor's son you have greater responsibility than others. There are always going to be times when we have to take a stand — yes or no."

Peter looked up at his father and said, "Mostly it's NO!"

From the kitchen Frau Gottfried had listened to the conversation. When she sensed that the right moment had come, she picked up the tureen of soup and with a cheerful tone in her voice made her entrance in the dining room. "Now you two, I have a question to ask. Peter, how did the playing go?"

He smiled. "Well, the Chopin was pretty hard. I told Professor Steffl that I had never played it in public before, but that didn't make any difference to him. He practically ordered me to play it. I really should have worked on it for a couple of days, but I didn't make too many mistakes and I guess they liked it."

"Maybe tonight you can play it for me. You should have the chance to perfect it."

The Pastor interrupted, "All right, musicians. I, for one, am hungry." He bowed his head and spoke the familiar lines of the table grace. "O Lord God, heavenly Father, bless unto us these Thy gifts through Jesus Christ, our Lord . . ." Peter and his mother waited for the "Amen." They raised their heads slightly but the Pastor still had his head bowed. They lowered their eyes again as he continued, "And we thank Thee, Lord, for other gifts, of music and song and talent. Grant that we may always use these gifts to Thy glory, and always show our gratitude to Thee for all that we have — for all that we are. Amen".

The doorbell rang. The second ring was more insistent. They exchanged glances. The Pastor looked at his watch. Maria went to the door.

She felt a sudden constriction in her throat as the light from the hall revealed a people's policeman standing there. He

seemed nervous and troubled. He glanced furtively toward the street and back again and then asked, "Could I speak to the Pastor, please?"

Maria did not have to call her husband because his curiosity had urged him to see for himself who the visitor was. "Is anything wrong?" he asked.

"No," answered the policeman, "and it is not official. May I come in?"

"Not official?" Pastor Gottfried hesitated. A uniformed Communist policeman does not usually bring good news, and Gottfried had to make sure it was not some sort of a trap. "Well . . . to be perfectly correct, hadn't we better make it at a better hour? We are having dinner, you see."

The policeman was tenacious. "Herr Pastor, it's very important!"

The Pastor could not refuse now, and stood back to allow the policeman to enter. But he did not. The sound of footsteps on the cobblestone street brought an expression of alarm to his face. His eyes darted from the street to the inside hallway of the Pastor's house, then to the parsonage yard, and suddenly he leaped over the porch railing into the darkness.

The Pastor and his wife were shocked. *What was this?* The shadow of two approaching patrolmen sent them back inside quickly and close the door. "Unofficial business? At this hour? What do you make of that?" he asked.

Maria answered, "He seemed very upset. Shouldn't you have let him in right away?"

This same question was giving Friedrich Gottfried a twinge of conscience. "Maybe I should have . . . . But better men than I have opened their doors to trouble in this town. If it's important, he will be back," he said.

Maria looked at the Pastor searchingly. In her mind the picture of the frightened policeman remained.

"Yes, I hope he comes back," she added.

### *Question 7*

At school, Peter himself discovered what the girls of his class had earlier noticed, that he was most often found in the company of Anneliese Zingler. Peter would not admit to himself that this was anything beyond a mere pleasant companionship. He thought Anneliese was pretty, intelligent and a good listener and he enjoyed her company.

Young Dehmert stood with his back to the class and, under the watchful and approving eye of Herr Starke, unrolled a poster and displayed it to the class. The word BERLIN stood out in bold letters. The poster was the announcement of a big youth festival. Evidently the FDJ would figure prominently in the affair, for Peter recognized the FDJ shield on the poster. Dehmert turned to the class and said, "Herr Starke has asked me to pass on to you the appreciation of the political committee at the People's Machine Works for our participation in the cultural program."

Herr Starke started to applaud and this touched off a noisy round of clapping from the class. Dehmert continued, with his face fairly beaming, "I have some news which I am sure will interest you. As a direct result of our program at the factory, the committee has told us that it is considering sponsorship of our Osterstadt delegation to the Berlin Youth Festival!"

With applause all around, Dehmert stepped down and took his regular seat behind Peter.

"We will be hearing more from time to time about the Berlin Festival and how we might participate in it," Herr Starke added. "With the talent we have in our school we should be able to compete with larger cities."

He then picked up a stack of printed sheets from his desk and handed them out to the students sitting in front and asked to have them passed around. "This comes from Berlin. It's a very important document — a questionnaire. The purpose of it is to help you help yourself. Self-criticism is always encouraged in our society. These questions will assist you in examining yourself. Look at them."

Peter glanced over the questions casually. He tried to be detached, but as he scanned down the page, there was some-

thing about the penetrating directness of the questions that disturbed him.

- (1) What were the most significant occasions of my life?
- (2) What is my stand on the Free German Youth organization?
- (3) What is my stand on the People's Army?
- (4) What is my attitude to our socialist society?
- (5) What problems concern me most?
- (6) What profession do I wish to enter?
- (7) What have been the predominant influences on my social development?

"Let me say again that this is a very important document," Herr Starke said as he walked up and down the aisle watching the students' reactions while they read through the questions. "Your answers will tell us how much you have matured in socialist understanding — whether you are worthy of the opportunities that lie open to you in the People's Republic."

Maria Kaufer raised her hand. "When do we have to hand in the questionnaire, sir?"

"We are giving you plenty of time. You have until the term examinations. You see, we want the best answers you can give us. Not a hurried sentence or two but your careful evaluations. Consider this as an opportunity for you to express yourself. Your lives are full and exciting. Examine your experiences. Think carefully before you write a word, for your answers will be filed with your applications for admission to the advanced schools of your choice."

It was only on his way home that it began to dawn on Peter what Herr Starke was really saying. Peter thought he had better talk to his father. Those questions might be rather difficult for him to answer honestly. Difficult? Peter suddenly realized it would be impossible for him to write down his opinions on these subjects without getting into trouble. Maybe he had better not upset his father now. After all, the questionnaire was not due tomorrow. He could worry about it later.

*Question 7*

Anneliese and her mother were talking about the questionnaire in the kitchen when Herr Zingler returned home from the factory. He picked up the questionnaire from the table and Anneliese explained to him how important her teacher had made it seem and how difficult it would be for her to answer it.

"You can answer this with your eyes closed, Anneliese. Just take what they say in the party press and put it into your own words!"

Anneliese frowned, "It's not as easy as all that, Father."

Frau Zingler turned from the sink where she had been washing vegetables for their supper and retorted, "And it would not be what she believes!"

*"What are you trying to do?" (Frau Zingler) asked her husband angrily. "Isn't it bad enough that they teach her lies? Does she have to lie in return?"*



Herr Zingler looked at his wife sharply. "Who's telling her what to believe?" He faced his daughter and said bluntly, "You know what you are supposed to write down."

"Yes, I know, and I am not going to do it!" She lifted her chin the same stubborn way her mother always did.

Frau Zingler came to her daughter's side and they faced the man of the house together. "What are you trying to do?" she asked her husband angrily. "Isn't it bad enough that they teach her lies? Does she have to lie in return?"

Anneliese's father walked over to the kitchen sink and took a radish from among the vegetables. He brought it over and held it under Anneliese's nose. "Look, do you see this?"

Anneliese was puzzled.

"Bite it! Come on, I said bite!"

Anneliese looked at her mother, then at her father and took a bite from the radish. Her father held the bitten radish up in front of her.

"That's all I am saying. Be a radish — red — but only on the outside!"

Peter didn't mention the questionnaire to his father. But the Pastor quickly learned all about it at the church council meeting that week where one of the questionnaires was passed around so that each of the elders could read it. As the Pastor read it for the first time and the full import of each of the seven questions dawned on him, his heart went out to his son. Why hadn't Peter shared it with him? The thought bothered him.

Herr Durfel gave the impression of having a chip on his shoulder. When the Pastor had read the document, Herr Durfel took the questionnaire from him and, holding it up before the group, said, "Why so much fuss about another piece of paper? With all due respect, Herr Pastor and fellow councilors, after what happened here before, the problem now is to survive."

Marschall was angry. "Have you got children that must fill out that piece of paper? Do you have the slightest conception of how my girl can answer those questions?" He took the ques-



*"Why so much fuss about another piece of paper? With all due respect, Herr Pastor and fellow councilors, after what happened here before, the problem now is to survive."*

tionnaire from Durfel and pointed to one of the questions. "What is my stand on the Free German Youth organization? What can a youngster with any Christian conviction answer?"

From the corner of the room where he had been observing and listening, Herr Mueller, the barber, spoke up. His voice was bitter with sarcasm. "Oh, everybody knows they are the well-spring of tomorrow's fighters for socialism and peace!"

"Tomorrow's Communists," retorted Farmer Kesselmaier.

"And Atheists" said the sexton quietly.

"Just another piece of paper, huh? Blackmail, that's what I call it," exploded Herr Marschall. He was furious again, but he calmed down. Then with a deep intensity of voice he continued, "What makes you think they'll be satisfied with lip service? If

the children put down that the Free German Youth group is atheistic" – he made a throat-cutting gesture with his hand – "good-bye nursing school, university, everything! But if they hand back the party line" – mockingly he bowed low and made a sweeping gesture – "Very good! Quite correct! Now just sign here for your uniform.' Blackmail!"

"It goes deeper than that." Everyone turned to the Pastor who hadn't been arguing with them. They waited for his words. "Lie – and you buy a little more time. Tell the truth – and suffer. It is really diabolical. Every question is deliberately designed to separate the political sheep from the goats." The Pastor wondered what Peter would answer to "What is my attitude to our socialist society?"

Herr Marschall leaned over to the farmer. "How's your boy going to get around that one, with a father who's holding out against collectivization?"

Kesselmaier had recognized this as a trap when his boy had shown him the questionnaire. He looked up at Marschall and then at the Pastor and sighed. The weariness from being worn down by psychological warfare – sound trucks and searchlights and leaflets and other devious techniques for weeks had almost exhausted him. "We won't be holding out much longer, I'm afraid. It's getting unbearable. And if the pressure is too much for us, how can we expect our children to take it?"

Herr Kraus had been standing by the blackboard on which the notes from the Bible lesson still remained. The text was 1 Corinthians 13, "*If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, but have not love . . .*" He crossed over to the Pastor and asked earnestly, "Isn't there something you can do, Herr Pastor?"

The question triggered a thought in Gottfried's mind. He held it there a moment but started to waver. *It wouldn't work anyway . . . ; it's fantastic to think that . . . . But it is worth a try.* Then he answered, "Maybe there is. I don't know. But after all, a man has still got a right to speak his mind."

"Only once!" the barber said with a wry smile.

### Question 7

The next morning Friedrich Gottfried spent more time than usual in his study. Over the years he had developed the habit of beginning his work by reading from the Bible. In face of the difficulties that Christians had to endure under Communism, he found it essential to get his strength and inspiration from searching the Scriptures and in prayer.

Today his mind and soul were in turmoil. He had promised the elders that he would make an attempt to do something about the questionnaire situation. Last night this seemed to be an idea at least worth a try, but in the light of day it became rather absurd.

At the meeting Gottfried had remembered his first session with the party secretary when Herr Rettmann had gone out of his way to welcome him to Osterstadt. *"Come any time, Herr Pastor, any time at all. My door will always be open to discuss these matters."*

Did Rettmann really mean this or was it merely a part of his act in trying to appear beneficent and paternal? Gottfried wrestled with the question: *Should I go down now and see Rettmann about this questionnaire? Or would this just make matters worse?* He was disgusted with himself for vacillating, but he could not help feeling apprehensive about a discussion of the questionnaire with the man who most certainly was the authority for its being issued. *Rettmann might consider this to be a direct challenge to his authority. How can I be diplomatic and yet forthright?* Finally Gottfried decided. *I must go! I must try! After all, what can I lose?*

Once inside Rettmann's office, the meaningless amenities were disposed of quickly. The Pastor thought that Rettmann, although he never dropped his suave self-assurance for a moment, was a good deal more brusque today than during their first meeting.

Gottfried decided to be direct about the purpose of his visit. "You were kind enough, Herr Rettmann, to invite me to discuss with you any issues that might arise. That's why I have come here today. There is a problem . . ."

"Indeed; and what might it be?"

"The new questionnaire distributed by the school. I have come to ask you to withdraw it."

"Withdraw? Whatever for?"

"The questionnaire places a child in an impossible position, Herr Rettmann. Surely you must admit that a Christian student cannot in good conscience give answers which the authorities will find acceptable."

"But my dear Pastor, all we ask is the truth! Are you afraid your little Christians will lie?"

"The temptation is there," the Pastor answered. He realized that he did not have much chance of scoring in this game of wits with the Communist party secretary. But now that he had started, he had to stand his ground. "It is cruel to subject a child to such pressure. If his answers don't follow the party line, he is through with any higher education."

Rettmann stood up and walked to the window. "Herr Pastor, as a reasonable man you surely recognize that there are certain rights and obligations involved here which are beyond your competence as a churchman."

"I don't quite understand you — rights? obligations?"

"Yes. We furnish the education," Herr Rettmann continued, pointing his finger in emphasis. "Therefore we have the obligation to make certain that only those who understand our society are entitled to enjoy its advantages. And as for rights, Herr Pastor, even you must agree that we who operate the school have the right to decide what shall be taught and how it shall be taught."

"I cannot agree . . . ."

"Agree or not, the school system and its function are not within your province."

"But the conscience of the children of my church is," the Pastor said quietly but forcefully with the heaviness of a man who knows he is about to be defeated. Then he added, "That's why I have come here, Herr Rettmann. You won't recall the questionnaire?"

Rettmann shook his head. "No. Even if it had originated in this office and not in Berlin, I would not recall it."

Question 7

The Pastor knew that there was no use pursuing this any longer. He had tried. He had failed. Yet he had done what he had to do. He moved towards the door. Rettmann did not get up from his desk. Instead, he opened his desk drawer and took out a glossy photo enlargement. He slid it along the top of his desk so that it would catch the eye of the Pastor. It was the photo of Peter at the piano under the banner of *Youth for Marxism*.

"I must congratulate you, Herr Pastor, on your son. He is a fine boy. I beg you consider whether you have the right to jeopardize his future. Would you like to keep this photo?"

"Thank you, no."

The sting of defeat was welling up inside of him and he allowed his voice to be filled with contempt as he said slowly, "Good afternoon, Herr Rettmann." Just as he was opening the door, the same picture of Peter met his eyes again as a second blow. It was part of a poster display. The Pastor could easily see that the party propaganda machinery would exploit his son's picture for all it was worth.

On his way home from the city hall there were tears of anger in his eyes. As if the humiliation of losing the skirmish with Rettmann were not crushing enough, the realization that his own son was being represented as a hero of Marxist youth was bitter salt. The sight of the propaganda poster lingered in his mind as he walked. It seemed that every kiosk and shop window was plastered with propaganda posters. The figures and colors and symbols melted together through the tears in his eyes and it was almost as if Peter's face were looking back at him from every side.

When the Pastor came into the parsonage he heard Peter's music from the living room. He did not stop to talk to the boy but went immediately up to his own study. He took off his coat and slipped on his sweater. He tried to concentrate on his sermon for Sunday but the outline he had sketched struck him as being pitifully inadequate in the light of today's encounter with the Regime. He must force himself to work. He must try to clear his mind. He went to his shelves of books and found

several favorite commentaries that might help him in gaining insight into the Bible verses that were his sermon text for Sunday. He considered choosing a free text instead of the one which was suggested on the prepared schedule of Bible lessons arranged according to the seasons of the church year. The music from Peter's piano that filtered up from the living room below fought against the Pastor's attempts to close his mind to everything but his theological problem. Was he being fair with his son? He could not expect Peter to understand the political implications of his music. Music should be exempt from a partisan point of view. Martin Luther had said, "All music should be performed to the glory of Him who created it for us." This philosophy he considered he could endow to Peter, but Peter had not even talked to him about the questionnaire yet. Didn't he consider it important or was he afraid of his father? Was Peter really being fair? Shouldn't he face the realities of this world as much as anyone?

The Pastor decided he must have a talk with Peter. It might as well be now. He walked down to the living room and stood there while Peter finished the piece he was playing.

"You are getting better every day. I guess you know I am proud of you."

Peter glanced at his father and smiled in appreciation.

"But I am worried, Peter, because the Communists seem to be proud of you too, and that spells danger to me."

"Are you still talking about the picture in the paper? I told you, I did not know that . . ."

"It was not just in the paper. Now they are splashing it on a poster. I saw it today in the office of the party secretary in the city hall. Can you blame me for wondering what will be next?"

"But, Father, you talk as if it is all my fault. How could I have known?"

Gottfried sensed that he might have fumbled again. Perhaps he had pushed this matter too fast or too directly, because now Peter was on the defensive and the Pastor felt that another barrier was rising between them. He softened his tone and said,



*“ . . . Peter, there is one question they left out . . . ‘What kind of man do I want to be?’ – Will I buy a little more time with a handful of lies and sell a little bit of myself now, and a little bit next time, and a little bit more later . . . ?”*

“My son, you have got to be so careful. They are using you.”

“I don’t think they can,” Peter retorted. His voice had a strained pitch and a defiant tone.

“Peter, you are very young. Against them, well” – the Pastor groped for words to make himself clear to the boy – “Against them you are like the man who rode a tiger – once he got on, he

could not get off. If he did, he'd be devoured. I often wonder how long you can hold out against the kind of pressure they use."

Peter was hurt and embarrassed: he felt like fighting back angrily. "For goodness' sakes, Father, just because I play the piano doesn't mean I have gone over to their side!"

Friedrich Gottfried paced back and forth in the living room. "I wonder whether you'd even know if you had crossed the line." He stopped, turned and looked at Peter until the boy looked up at him. "What are you going to do about the questionnaire?"

Peter shook his head and looked down. His finger idly struck a couple of keys of the piano. "How can I answer a thing like that? Just one wrong answer and I end up with nothing. No conservatory, no teaching, no . . . ."

"Peter," his father interrupted, "you don't have to tell me how vicious those questions are. I have read them all through and I have discussed them pretty thoroughly with a lot of different people. I was even hoping that you and I might talk this through." He went over to him and put his hand on Peter's shoulder.

"But you know, Peter, there is one question they left out."

Peter was puzzled.

"What kind of *man* do I want to be?" — Will I buy a little more time with a handful of lies and sell a little bit of myself now, and a little bit next time, and a little bit more later . . . .?"

Peter looked up at his father and the Pastor could see that the boy was confused and frightened. "They said they wanted the truth."

Very quietly the Pastor replied, "But *their* truth, Peter. Perhaps you'd better write nothing."

"And end up as nothing?"

"And if you sell your conscience piece by piece, how else will you end up?"

Why was Peter so stubborn? The father realized that his boy refused to consider things rationally, and their communication seemed to be strained and awkward; yet he could not forfeit his responsibility as a parent under God.

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“Peter, you want to be a musician, a teacher, an artist . . . but if you trade your soul for a career – and I don’t care how well you play, or how famous you become – then *nothing* is what you will be. And what is worst of all, you will *know* it!”

## 5 /THE WORD AND SACRAMENTS

For years Pastor Gottfried had risen early on Sunday mornings. He liked to meditate without being rushed or hurried in any way.

When he felt that he was as prepared and settled in his mind as he could reasonably expect to be, he read through the text one final time and uttered a prayer that his message might carry the thoughts from God that would be most appropriate to each person who heard him. Friedrich Gottfried was happy as a pastor in spite of the trials of these days. He was really doing what he wanted to do most and he did not doubt that he had been chosen personally and directly by God for the ministry.

He checked his sermon manuscript and made sure that his Bible and hymn book were marked at the proper pages. He looked over each of the hymns he had chosen and marked on the lists he had given to Herr Lange, the organist, and to Herr Kraus, the sexton. Suddenly it occurred to him that the pulpit hymn was too weak for the sermon he had based on the text. He flipped through his hymnal and found one that fitted better. Yes, he thought, this is more in the mood of my sermon.

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*If thou but suffer God to guide thee,  
 And hope in Him through all thy ways,  
 He'll give thee strength whate'er betide thee,  
 And bear thee through the evil days . . . .  
 Sing, pray, and keep His ways unswerving;  
 In all thy labor faithful be,  
 And trust His word; though undeserving,  
 Thou yet shall find it true for thee . . . .*

He went to the door and called for Peter. Peter finished knotting his tie as he walked into his father's study.

"What is it, Father?" he asked.

"Please do an errand for me. Go over to the church and tell Herr Lange that we will sing No. 353 instead of No. 186 before the sermon." He jotted the number on a slip of paper. "Also tell Herr Kraus to change the numbers on the hymn boards. Do it right away, so that the change can be made before all the people arrive."

When Peter left, his father thought again how wonderful it would have been if Peter had chosen theology instead of music as a career to follow. Yet, he had never broached the matter in the last few years because he did not want Peter to feel under any obligation to follow his father's footsteps. If God were going to call Peter to the ministry, Peter in due time would recognize this. Meanwhile, music might still be a means of holding the boy in active church service. And if he would become a pianist, this would be the fulfillment of his mother's dream for him.

Maria came in the study just then with a cup of coffee and a smile. "Your service begins in fifteen minutes, but you will have time to drink this coffee first. How do you feel, Friedrich?"

"Oh, I feel fine, Maria! That is, as well as I ever do on Sunday morning just before church starts. I hope I can reach out and touch them with some word of hope or encouragement today."

She gave him a loving pat on his cheek and said, "I am going to put on my hat and go over to church now, unless you want me to help you in the sacristy with your gown."

"No, I'll manage fine. Thank you anyway. I will be going over in a minute myself."

Pastor Gottfried had just stepped out of his front door when the church bells started to ring. What a glorious sound! He never failed to get a lift from hearing the tones pealing forth from the church tower. As he walked across the street, he saw a few people responding to the call of the bells, but not many came.

He used the side door of the church and so had to pass the baptismal chapel on his way to the sacristy. The baptismal font with its conical cover looked like a small church steeple.

The service proceeded with the familiar liturgy and ritual which was part of the very fabric of Friedrich Gottfried's life as a minister of the Gospel. The people, too, took courage and strength from their participation in the ecclesiastical conversation between the believers and the Lord whom they came to worship. When they sang "All Glory Be to God Alone," as they did each Sunday, the people seemed buoyed by the very sound of their voices blending together.

While the pulpit hymn was being sung, after he had prayed silently and alone in the sacristy, the Pastor walked with measured steps to the pulpit. He looked down over the singing congregation while waiting for the final stanza to be finished. He let his eyes linger on different little groups. There were Maria, looking up at him proudly, and Peter, singing. On the other side he saw the lady in black whose husband had been denied a Christian burial, and Frau Zingler, holding her hymnal high, with Anneliese at her side, appearing a bit sad this morning. Printer Marschall and his daughter Hildegard sang the hymn from memory. The others were there too — the barber, the Durfels, Farmer Kesselmaier and his family; and back by the rear door, standing as the "doorkeeper in the house of the Lord," was kindly old Herr Kraus.

"When our Lord Jesus Christ saw His disciples for the last time on the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem, He said to them, 'You shall be my witnesses.' The same words are addressed to us today. But what does it mean to be His witness? It means

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that we are to speak truthfully and openly to others about our Lord – both at home and at our place of work. Certainly your bold confession will be much more noticed by those who are atheists and unbelievers than any of my preaching from the pulpit. But the evidence we give includes more than words – we witness by our deeds, too.”

Pastor Gottfried projected his warm voice gently. He was stimulated by the realization that not only was he preaching to his people, but he was also experiencing a mystical kind of rapport with them. He felt their response coming back to him. He looked down at the attentive faces before him and, with tender understanding, he said, “I know it is not easy – but was it *ever* easy for persons in any age to obey Christ’s command to witness to Him to the end of the earth?”

“Nevertheless we who sometimes think we have so little are really greatly blessed. In so much of the world today to be a Christian is customary, comfortable, and sometimes even profitable. But what those in the rest of the world take for granted is to us, here in Osterstadt, a special way of standing up for our Lord.

“Simply by coming openly to this house of worship you have taken your stand with Him. By choosing Christian baptism for your children, by choosing confirmation . . . yes, even Christian marriage and burial . . . by partaking of the Sacrament of Holy Communion – you are making a clear proclamation: ‘I belong to God!’”

Pastor Gottfried paused to glance over the page of the open Bible before him. “In today’s text from the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus tells us of a time to come when much more may be demanded of us. These words were also spoken to His disciples from His favorite place, the Mount of Olives:

“‘When you see the desolating sacrilege . . . standing in the holy place . . . , then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not go down . . . to take what is his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle . . . .’”

“‘For heaven and earth,’ says our Lord, ‘will pass away, but my words will not pass away. Take heed! Watch! For you do not know when the time will come.’”

After the service Pastor Gottfried walked up the aisle to the main door while the organ played the postlude. He glanced at the faces on either side that were turned to him. He looked to see if he could catch a glimpse of a strange visitor whom he had spotted in a rear pew, but the man had apparently left early. The people stood respectfully waiting for him to reach the doorway before they left their places. Herr Kraus already had the huge door opened and he was the first one to shake the Pastor's hand. For about ten minutes the people filed out past him and he exchanged a brief word or two with most of them. There were tears in the eyes of the recent widow. Herr Marschall and his daughter Hildegard both gave him an especially firm handshake. *These are wonderful people*, the Pastor thought, as he savored happy moments in the midst of his most faithful supporters.

Monday was a special day for Pastor Gottfried. It was his day of rest, at least theoretically. He had tried ever since his first days as a clergyman to reserve Mondays for relaxation. It was seldom possible to fulfill this wish with the various demands made upon him. Nevertheless, the special feeling of Monday was still there and Maria always tried to cooperate.

But Friedrich Gottfried couldn't seem to relax this Monday. In the morning he took a long walk along the lakeside and into the nearby woods that surrounded Osterstadt. Although it invigorated him and gave him a healthy appetite, he was still restless when he returned at noon. Maria coaxed him to take a little nap. He was glad for the opportunity, but he didn't sleep. In the afternoon he sat for a while on the sun porch, reading and listening to an excellent radio concert from Berlin.

In the evening after supper he decided to write some letters that had been put off for days. He knew the most important of these was a letter to Bishop Feld. He sat for a long time at his

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study desk thinking about the report he wanted to send the Bishop. He had to be careful what he wrote, both for his own sake and for the Bishop's. He never knew whether a letter written by him might be intercepted, or seized at some later date; and even seemingly innocent remarks could be misconstrued if the intentions to do so were there.

He heard footsteps coming up the stairs. There was a little knock on his door and it was opened right away. It was Maria. "Friedrich, you have a visitor."

He glanced at her in surprise and, as he arose from his desk, his wife ushered in a young man. It was the policeman who had come once before but now he was not wearing his uniform.

"This is Patrolman Luedtke. He came to the back door this time," Maria said as she left the study and closed the door.

The young man looked troubled and frightened. The Pastor's heart went out to him instinctively, and yet he could not erase from his mind the knowledge that this man was a member of the *Volkspolizei* — whether in uniform or out of it. For all Gottfried knew, he might even be a representative of the secret police.

"Well, young man, sit down please and tell me what's on your mind."

Herr Luedtke did not sit down. He seemed extremely nervous and just blurted out, "Pastor, I just heard something when I was going off duty. I think you ought to know that the Party Secretary told the Inspector that —"

Quickly Pastor Gottfried interrupted, "Now just a moment, please. I have been lectured lately on the *correct* relationship with the secular, and as an official you know better than to peddle rumors to me. Now what is it you really want?"

The young man began to pace back and forth. "Well, it's this way. Ever since our baby arrived I have hardly slept a wink and my wife and I have been battling in our minds ever since. I've walked past your door so often I must have worn a path in the sidewalk. There just isn't any way out . . . except this way."

"Please, please, Herr Luedtke," the Pastor demanded gently, "tell me what is troubling you."

"It is hard to be a Christian and not be able to do anything about it. I have got to play their game, you see, to hold my job." In the effort to explain, his thoughts came tumbling out, one almost on top of the other. "We tried, Helena and me, to stay in the church . . . . We were even married in the church. But they made us quit."

The Pastor studied the face of the troubled young policeman and just waited for him to come to the point of his visit.

"Believe me, Herr Pastor, all I want is to have the baby baptized!"

So this was the burden weighing upon the heart of the young Vopo patrolman who had come by night like a Nicodemus! Gottfried knew that his visitor was not acting. "I believe you, my friend." The Pastor smiled at him sympathetically and flipped through the pages of his date book.

He was about to suggest the next Sunday when he heard the doorbell ring. He waited and listened. His wife was hurrying up the stairs. She burst into the room.

"Friedrich! The police inspector!" She hurried out and down the stairs again.

With alarm, the pastor jumped up and faced Luedkte. "Did you have anything to do with this?" the Pastor demanded in a low voice.

The policeman was on the verge of panic. He grabbed the Pastor's arms tightly, and in a whisper said, "I tried to tell you . . . . I tried to tell you! You've got to get me out!"

The Pastor heard his wife speaking to the inspector in the downstairs hallway. He knew he had to do something immediately or expose the policeman to the eyes of Inspector Hermann. Had this been planned as some trap for the Pastor? Was each of these representatives of the police enacting his own special role, according to the carefully prepared instructions of some master script-writer? There was no time to weigh alternatives. There was only one place for Luedtke to hide — the balcony! The Pastor almost pushed him out onto it. There was no time to close the door. He could hear the inspector coming up the

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stairs. He had just returned to his desk and was trying to appear calm when he heard the inspector's greeting.

"Good evening, Herr Pastor."

The Pastor managed a slight smile and said, "Good evening, Herr Inspector. No surprise parties tonight, as you see."

"May I talk with you a minute, Herr Pastor?"

"Come in," the Pastor offered his visitor a chair but the inspector declined with a slight gesture of his hand.

"I bring you Herr Rettmann's respects. The Party Secretary asks if you would drop in to speak with him at the city hall tomorrow."

"Ah, at what time?"

"At the Pastor's convenience."

"Very well, thank you." The Inspector smiled correctly and turned to leave. Gottfried held him with an added question. "Would you . . . by any chance, would you care to give me an idea what it's about?"

The inspector looked around the room. "Well, Herr Pastor, I don't know, but —" He looked the Pastor directly in the eye. "If Herr Rettmann invited me I would accept the invitation, and prepare myself for some questions! Good evening, Herr Pastor."

Pastor Gottfried waited in his study until he was certain Inspector Hermann was out of the house. He then went to the balcony door and motioned for Herr Luedtke to come in again.

The patrolman looked at the Pastor, nodded his head. "I tried to tell you — that's what I meant. I want you to know that —"

The Pastor held up his hand.

"Please!" He had to clear his mind from confusion and doubts and concentrate on his immediate pastoral duty.

"Now about the baptism. Every child has the right to be baptized, no matter what they say."

The patrolman could not hold back his great relief at having this heavy burden lifted from his heart. "Thank you, Herr Pastor, thank you."

"Now then, when shall it be?"



*The Inspector . . . looked the pastor directly in the eye. "If Herr Rettmann invited me I would accept the invitation, and prepare myself for some questions!"*

The smile suddenly vanished and, in an almost apologetic tone, Luedtke said, "They have scheduled the 'Name-Giving' at the state registry for the day after tomorrow. Could it be before that?"

Gottfried was stopped in his thoughts. Not only had the Regime invaded the province of the Christian Church in wedding and funeral ceremonies, not only had it tried to substitute the Youth Pledge for the rite of confirmation, but the state also invented the insidious ritual of "Name-Giving" and

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was enticing parents to have their children brought to a ceremony of dedication-to-socialism rather than to the Church for the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

"My job, you know, Herr Pastor," Luedtke added pleadingly. "The baptism will have to be secret."

"Really, Herr Pastor, we are not Sunday school children!" The man who was speaking had been introduced by Herr Rettmann as the state prosecutor. The setting was the office of the party secretary, which the Pastor had visited twice previously. Herr Rettmann was again the host but this time he was not smiling. His back was turned and he stood looking out of the window while the prosecutor took charge of the questioning.

Pointing his finger at the Pastor, who alone was seated, the prosecutor barked, "Herr Pastor, do you know the penalty for desertion from the German Democratic Republic?"

"I assume the penalty is prison."

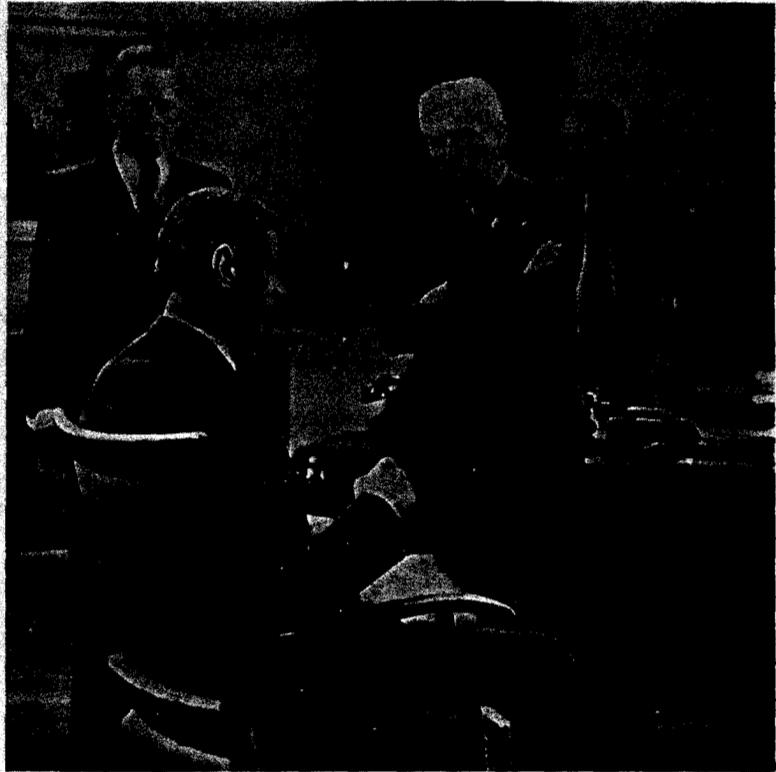
"Fifteen years," the prosecutor snapped, "but inciting to desertion is equally punishable, Herr Pastor."

The prosecutor snapped his fingers as a cue to a man in a corner of the room. Gottfried turned to look. He had a queer feeling that he had seen this man recently somewhere . . . there was some strange connection with this person . . . but where . . . when?

The man in the corner had a long, sad-looking face with large expressive eyes. He began obediently to read from his little notebook: "When you see the desolating sacrilege . . . standing in the holy place . . . then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who -"

The prosecutor turned back to the Pastor and said in an icy voice, "Isn't that rather obvious, Herr Pastor?"

Gottfried felt anger rising within him and he retorted sharply, "But you are taking the words out of context! You must view them in light of the entire passage. These are words from Scripture referring to the coming of the Son of Man with glory - the Day of Judgment - to which we must all come to answer



*Gottfried felt anger rising within him . . . He looked about him at the prosecutor, at Inspector Hermann, at the informer, at Rettmann, and said slowly and deliberately, "But why am I required to answer to you for my preaching of the Word of God?"*

to God—"Gottfried stopped. He looked about him at the prosecutor, at Inspector Hermann, at the informer, at Rettmann, and said slowly and deliberately, "But why am I required to answer to you for my preaching of the Word of God?"

At this question Rettmann turned around to face the Pastor for the first time, "For the same reason your predecessor had to, Herr Pastor."

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The prosecutor added, "Using your pulpit for political purposes!"

Gottfried was stunned. "Political purposes? This is madness!"

"We shall see," said the prosecutor slyly as he came closer. "Immediately after your highly emotional sermon, Herr Pastor, one of your closest associates took the Sunday afternoon train to Berlin. He and his daughter were reported checking into a so-called refugee camp in the western sector of the city."

As the Pastor listened, his mind raced, trying to think who they might be. The inspector promptly supplied the information.

"It was Herr Marschall, the printer, Herr Pastor. One of your councilors! He didn't report for work at the print shop and his daughter Hildegard is still absent from school."

Thoughts tumbled into the Pastor's mind as he received this information. *So Marschall and Hildegard went over to the West! What will this mean in my congregation? What will it mean for this poor man and his daughter? What will it mean to me — here, in the witness chair, being questioned by the State . . . a procedure clearly intended to produce evidence or an admission that I encouraged — "incited" was the word they used — these persons to desert?*

"Do you really accuse me of being responsible for these tortured souls' action?" The Pastor looked directly into the eyes of the prosecutor, whose countenance was imperturbable. "Very well — I accept the responsibility!"

The prosecutor raised his eyebrow ever so slightly in registering a curious surprise. The inspector allowed a flash of triumph to cross his face as he turned to share the moment with Herr Rettmann, but the Pastor's next words stopped him.

"Not as you imply — that I secretly counseled escape." The Pastor looked down for a moment and said softly, "What I mean is I clearly failed them as a pastor." He looked up again at his adversaries and a tone of indignation began to creep into his voice as he said, "But to charge me with using my pulpit, my cloth, to influence this man and his daughter to violate the law —"

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## The Word and Sacraments

At this point Herr Rettmann turned and went to his desk. "Pastor Gottfried, you are entitled to all the evidence." He picked up a folder from the corner of his desk and from it extracted a paper.

"Of course you are familiar with the school questionnaire, Herr Pastor. The inspector found this in the girl's room." He walked over to the chair where the Pastor was sitting in the middle of the room and handed him the questionnaire. Gottfried recognized it. He had read it carefully when it was passed around at the elders' meeting in church and he had also noticed a copy recently on Peter's desk.

Rettmann continued, "Would you be so kind as to read her answers to Question 7?"

*"What have been the predominant influences on my social development?"*

The Pastor read aloud the answer in the girl's neat and deliberate handwriting: *"My family, my faith, my pastors."*

"Now what do you have to say, Herr Pastor?" asked the prosecutor.

"Nothing I could possibly say would change your point of view."

Herr Rettmann smiled officiously at this point and assumed command of the session. He condescendingly informed the prosecutor that he was sure that Pastor Gottfried was "sincere" and that his connection with the "criminals" was only natural for a man in his position. Then he whirled around to the Pastor and said sharply, "Your sermon was most indiscreet! We have had discussions of this kind before. Let's make certain this is the last!"

The Pastor was excused. As he made his way out of the office, down the corridor and out through the front door of the city hall, he felt indignation and disgust. He was confused and humiliated and angry and sad, and he felt drained of his emotional and spiritual vitality.

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Helena Luedtke laid out the baby's things on the bed and checked them again. She held up the long baptismal dress her mother-in-law had sent them. Helena was glad that little Hans could wear the same dress that his father had worn thirty years ago. She had cried the night that Erich, her patrolman husband, had come home from the visit with the Pastor. Tears of joy! Perhaps they would counterbalance a little the tears of anguish that were shed when it had become clear that they would have to bring the child to the registry for the state ceremony of "Name-Giving."

Erich should be coming home soon. It was almost time to wake baby Hans and dress him for the baptism. If only they could bring their baby to church on Sunday morning and have the ceremony during a service of worship, as it should be! The idea of having to come secretly to the church at night made her sad.

The people's policeman ran up the back stairs to the two-room flat where his wife and baby son were waiting. Inspector Herrmann had asked him to stay late to work on some reports Herr Rettmann wanted for tomorrow. Of all times! He quickly explained this to Helena and they both knew they had to hurry now. He changed from his uniform to civilian clothes while Helena gently waked the baby and dressed him in his father's baptismal gown.

"Shall we take the carriage for the baby?" Helena asked her husband.

"No, I'll carry him. Get a blanket. I'm ready. Are you?"

No one saw the young *Volkspolizei* officer as he carried his baby son and led his wife through the darkened back streets to the church on the hill. They tried the side door. It was open. They looked both ways and made sure there was no one about; then they slipped into the darkened sanctuary.

The baby stirred and the sound of his cry inside the empty church seemed overloud. Then a warm reassuring voice came from the darkness and said, "Good evening. Everything is ready."

The pastor lit a match and touched it to the candle which Herr Kraus was holding. Frau Gottfried was there also and



*... the child ... was murmuring slightly. Maria looked at him and for a moment the soft warm touch of the baby and the delicate fragrance surrounding the infant recalled the precious sensation of holding her own child almost fifteen years ago.*

came to greet Frau Luedtke. Peter stood silently by his father.

"There'll be a patrol coming by here soon," Herr Luedtke said, looking at his watch. "Perhaps we should wait until it has passed."

Peter offered to watch at the window for the patrol and the others prepared the ceremony in the dim light of a single candle. The Pastor's wife suggested that she and Frau Luedtke take

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the baby into the sacristy. The sexton pulled a heavy chain and the cone-shaped cover of the font lifted slowly. The font itself was an artistic masterpiece, a huge vatlike basin deep enough so that a child could be immersed in the water. That had been the custom for baptism in this church centuries ago, but now a shallower brass basin rested on the top of the font and Herr Kraus had warm water ready to pour in. Surrounding the font was a carved circular railing with a gate.

"All clear," Peter called from his perch by the side window. The Pastor opened the gate to the font. Herr Kraus lit several more candles. It was agreed that Frau Gottfried would hold the child and so she stood to the Pastor's left. On the other side of the semi-circle Erich and Helena Luedtke stood tensely watching and waiting.

Pastor Gottfried opened his book and began to read the service. But he knew the words so well by heart that he only held the book and addressed himself to those about him. His voice was soft and gentle, yet it carried all of the dignity which the occasion required.

"Our Lord Jesus Christ has said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.' In obedience to our Lord's command, we bring this Hans Erich Luedtke to be baptized in His name."

Helena and Erich looked over to the child who was murmuring slightly. Maria looked at him and for a moment the soft warm touch of the baby and the delicate fragrance surrounding the infant recalled the precious sensation of holding her own child almost fifteen years ago.

"Is it your desire that this child be baptized in the Christian faith?" The Pastor addressed the question to the parents as well as to Maria, who was sponsor and godmother for the child. "If so, answer 'Yes'."

"Yes!" They all spoke together firmly and proudly.

The Pastor gestured to his wife. She held the child over the font, supporting his head with the back of her hand. The Pastor cupped his hand and dipped it into the basin.

“Hans Erich, I baptize thee in the name of the Father . . .” — again he dipped his hand and let the water drip on the baby’s silken hair — “. . . and of the Son” — the droplets of water falling back into the font made a sound that echoed through the church — “. . . and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

“Hans Erich Luedtke, in the name of the National Committee for Socialist Name-Giving of the German Democratic Republic, I present this little token —”

The same child. The same mother, but now sitting with the infant in her lap. The same father, but now wearing the uniform of the *Volkspolizei*. The setting, however, was different. This was the council room of the city hall, festively decorated with flowers, garlands, flags and red banners with the white dove of peace and the slogan *Peace and Progress through Socialism*. The person officiating was different also. A large man with a distinguished-looking grey beard, this orator was well rehearsed in the various functions which the people’s democracy had instituted as a travesty of the very Christian ceremonies which had for generations accompanied a person from his cradle to his grave.

“I present this little token — a savings account for one hundred marks — as a start in life.”

This was the signal for an applause from the “faithful” ones who had assembled — a delegation with flag-bearers from the FDJ; a *Volkspolizei* contingent; Inspector Hermann, smiling broadly; various committee chairmen from the factory, the school, and the collectives.

Herr Luedtke knew the applause meant that he should step up and receive the gift from the bearded man. Without a smile on his face, he returned to his front-row seat beside his wife and son.

*Question 7*

“Dear parents,” the orator continued, “you have not just given your son his name. You have dedicated him to the ranks of the world’s fighters for peace, progress, and socialism!”

## 6 /THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 1

The Karl Marx School in Osterstadt was only a ten-minute walk from the parsonage. Nevertheless, Peter left home a half-hour before the beginning of school so that he could stop by the Zingler home and pick up Anneliese. Most of the fellows his age were in the FDJ group and he hesitated to establish too close a friendship with any of them. He liked Anneliese. Not only was she pretty and charming and fun, but she was sweet and thoughtful. She seemed to understand Peter's special problem in Osterstadt and he was thankful for her friendship. The fact that she was also active in the church made it possible for them to be together quite often.

"Good morning, Peter," Anneliese said, as she greeted him at her door. "Look at this in the paper! It's all about the Youth Festival in Berlin."

With their emphasis on the development of politically conscious youth, the Communists made much of this nation-wide festival – an opportunity for their best talent to be "recognized and dedicated to the glory of socialism." The newspaper article indicated that Osterstadt was going to participate this year in every phase of the festival.

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"See this? A special part of the festival is devoted to instrumental music," Anneliese said. "It might be an opportunity for you, Peter. After all, you are one of the best musicians this town has."

Peter looked at Anneliese with a wry smile. "This Berlin business is not for me. Too political, I'm afraid."

As they walked along the street, they noticed posters promoting the Berlin festival on kiosks, billboards and in shop windows. A special window display caught their eye as they passed the town's Communist "H.O." store.

Peter recalled that his father had predicted a couple of days ago that a new propaganda build-up was in preparation. There had been no posters or signs for a few days. The Pastor had observed that whenever the signs disappeared it invariably meant that a new campaign was soon to be launched.

When Peter and Anneliese entered the school they immediately noticed that the halls and corridors were festively decorated. "Is something special happening today?" asked Peter. Anneliese only shrugged.

They saw at the other end of the corridor a group of officials coming toward them. They could tell by the way the students and teachers deferred to this group that some very important person must be visiting the school.

"Let's go this way," Peter said, as he took Anneliese's hand and turned down another corridor.

That morning a special assembly program was announced for the entire student body. The teachers, students and the important visitors gathered in the auditorium. Professor Steffi was called upon to lead in group singing. FDJ boys passed out the official blue *Songbook for German Youth* and they began singing the National Anthem of the German Democratic Republic. This was followed by *The Internationale*, the rallying song of world Communism.

It seemed to Peter that for some reason the music was more political than ever today.

Herr Starke announced that they were going to see a film, which brought a murmur of anticipation from the crowd. Peter



*Peter was surprised to see that the distinguished political visitor was not a dowdy old bureaucrat, but an attractive young woman, smartly dressed.*

and Anneliese enjoyed the movie. It showed scenes from the youth festivals from other years.

When he saw what a great and wonderful time the delegations at the youth festival were having, Peter could not help being intrigued by the thought that maybe, just maybe, he *could* go to the Berlin festival – but even as he thought it, he realized that it could never be. Still, he took particular interest in that part of the film that showed the music contests which culminated in the presentation of the medals to the winners by Herr Ulbricht himself.

As soon as the film was over, a smiling grey-haired man came striding down the aisle to the flower-bedecked rostrum in front. Anneliese poked Peter and whispered, “That’s Herr Rettmann.” Peter looked carefully because he had heard at home several times of how his father had matched wits with this very powerful party secretary.

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"Students, I have a very special honor today. We have a distinguished visitor who has come from Berlin to discuss with us this year's youth festival. It gives me great pleasure to present to you the Youth Commissar of the Central Committee, Comrade Laube."

Peter was surprised to see that the distinguished political visitor was not a dowdy old bureaucrat, but an attractive young woman, smartly dressed. She was gracious and poised as she stood smiling before the audience that was still heartily applauding. She leaned over to accept a bouquet of flowers presented by one of the younger girl students.

"My young friends," she began, "I hope you have enjoyed the film about the festivals of other years. Those of you who may have attended one of these certainly were reminded of the great excitement and dedication you felt when you were part of the festival. And I hope that those of you who have never been to a festival before will now make a special effort to see whether this might not be your year of opportunity. I have enjoyed my visit to Osterstadt today and am very impressed with the progressive spirit in your town and in your school. I would be very disappointed if Osterstadt did not come through with a large delegation. I am sure that you will want to work hard so that your delegation will be a credit to your leaders and also to the workers of Osterstadt – particularly those at the People's Metal Works, whose shop committee, I am pleased to announce, has decided to sponsor your delegation to the festival."

Later, as they left the auditorium and returned to their various classrooms, Peter felt frustrated. On the one hand he had a natural curiosity and fascination for an exciting festival like this; on the other hand he was sure it was definitely not possible for him. Just before turning into Herr Starke's class, he glanced up at the bulletin board in the corridor. He gulped! His picture again! Now it was framed as the main visual thrust of a propaganda poster, *Youth for Marxism!*

In the classroom Herr Starke picked up the same refrain and said, "Well, we are off to a good start for the festival. The Youth

Commissar, Frau Laube, showed us by coming here that even a small town like ours is of importance.”

Herr Starke moved over to his desk and picked up a pile of papers. Everyone in the class knew that these were the familiar questionnaire forms. The teacher looked up and, with a little twinkle in his eye, stood there studying the faces of his students. “I have already received some questionnaires and I must say that the answers thus far are most gratifying. There is encouraging evidence that our Osterstadt youth have political and social maturity.”

Peter could almost be sure which of his classmates had already submitted their completed questionnaires. Several of the FDJ fellows were beaming proudly.

“Even so, I must say I have had a few inquiries from some students who were not quite sure what to write or how to express themselves. Now I am a little surprised that there should be any problems. The answers seem self-evident. Take question one: *What were the most significant occasions of my life?*”

He put the questionnaire down firmly on his desk and started to walk back and forth across the front of the room in a relaxed and casual manner.

“If I had been asked that question at your age, I would have had serious problems answering it. For my youth was spent under the Nazi dictatorship and during a frightful war. The only event I remember with pleasure – outside of a few family occasions – was the arrival of the troops of our Russian friends which liberated us from the nightmare. Need I say that you today are much more fortunate? After all, you are growing up in an era of hope, promise and achievement. In front of your own eyes a new social order is developing whose goal is peace and prosperity for everyone.”

The words had a familiar ring, Peter thought. He realized that the party line was imbedded in everything his teacher said. At the same time, Herr Starke was so personable in his manner, so genuine and sincere, that Peter could not help but be a little bit impressed by his testimony.

Herr Starke chose one questionnaire from the table.

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"Perhaps you would like to hear what one of your classmates wrote. Dehmert, would you mind sharing with the class your answer to Question 1?"

"The most significant dates of my life," Dehmert said as he began reading from his questionnaire in a voice full of confidence, "are the following: My sixth birthday, when I became eligible to be a Young Pioneer; my fourteenth birthday, when I made my Youth Pledge and was chosen as the youngest member of the school football squad; my fifteenth birthday, when I was accepted into the comradeship of the Free German Youth. Also I might add —"

Herr Starke signaled for Dehmert to stop and took the questionnaire back.

"Well, that will give you an idea. Thank you, Dehmert, for sharing your interesting answers with us. Today we have been made aware of the very important youth festival coming soon in Berlin. I think it would be splendid if we could all have our questionnaires turned in before the time of the festival. How about it?"

Peter was solemn as he walked home alone after school and thought about the festival and the questionnaire. *It just is not fair*, he thought; *it just is not fair to have to be on the outside all the time. If only we lived in the West, then I could be free to prepare myself in music without any threats if I didn't do this or that just the way the authorities wanted. It must be wonderful over there.* Peter had listened to radio programs from West Germany often, although he was careful not to have the volume up. He had been intrigued by Western television also, and once at Anneliese's house he had watched a news program from West Germany, but Anneliese's father had scolded her for having her friends in to watch this program with her. He had explained that the law prohibited any person to invite others to his home to watch TV programs that originated outside of East Germany.

Peter dreamed a bit of what it must be like to be free to say whatever you pleased and to do whatever you wanted and to read and see whatever you chose without fear.

Before he reached the parsonage, he heard organ music from the church. He looked up and saw an elderly woman coming out of the main entrance. Peter realized that his father must be there. Every Thursday his father had a devotional service. This took the place of the social gathering for the women of the parish, who had had an organization of their own before the authorities made them disband it. Peter saw his father at the church door and decided to go and tell him about his day at school.

"How did things go?" his father asked.

"All right, I guess, but they are really bearing down on us about answering the questionnaire. They want them turned in before the big Berlin festival." Peter explained to his father about the visit of the commissar and the film of the festivals and the testimony of Dehmert. "You should have heard Dehmert tell about the most significant occasions of his life. He went right down the line, giving exactly what they wanted: Young Pioneers, Youth Pledge, Free German Youth – but maybe to him these *were* the most significant."

The Pastor smiled knowingly. "I don't suppose it would go over very well if you would write Baptism and Confirmation!"

Peter smiled wanly. He felt himself in that terrible squeeze again between the pressures of school and state on the one hand and the pressures of home and church on the other.

"But what can you expect from a pastor's son?"

Like a knife the question pierced the Pastor. Of course he knew what Peter was up against and he could reassure himself that this was a normal reaction for a boy like Peter. Gottfried realized that he would have to help his son get a better viewpoint – but how could he do it? A thought came to his mind which he was tempted to put aside, but instead he decided he would try this new approach anyway.

"Peter, do you remember Uncle Emil?"

Peter nodded. "Yes, I think so. He had whiskers, didn't he? They tickled, I remember; and, oh, yes, he always smelled like cough drops."



*The Pastor felt that communication between him and his son was becoming strained. He knew he should not lose his temper but it was difficult. "Peter, this is not the first time that the young have had to make a choice between evasively telling a lie and boldly confessing the truth."*

Gottfried smiled to himself at Peter's remembering these things about an uncle he had not seen for years.

"Shortly before he died, Emil was forced to resign from the university. His students were officially told that no Christians could become public schoolteachers. Well, as a professor, Emil could not keep silent. Not that he was a particularly churchgoing man, but just the same, on this question he felt he had to take an open stand."

Friedrich Gottfried had always liked his brother. Emil had been older by many years and had been almost like a father to him. He missed him very much, especially the stimulating conversations and philosophizing they had shared.

“Forty years a professor! And you know what he said to me just before he left the university? ‘Freidrich,’ he said, ‘the way things are going, I am afraid that prison is going to be the only proper place for a Christian.’ Now, Peter, here was a man —”

“Who’d *had* his life!” Peter snapped. “I am sorry, Father, but Uncle Emil was sixty-five and I am fifteen! He could afford to be brave! I’m only starting my life and I’ve already been told to put down my own prison sentence in writing!”

The Pastor felt that communication between him and his son was becoming strained. He knew he should not lose his temper but it was difficult. Gently he put his hand on Peter’s shoulders.

“Peter, you are not the only one, even now, and this is not the first time that the young have had to make a choice between evasively telling a lie and boldly confessing the truth. You know, the Hitler period was not easy for us young fellows who wanted to be pastors. In those days it was popular to strut about in a uniform, to act tough, to be arrogant, and even irreligious. Students of theology were looked upon as weaklings and almost as traitors.” He had never talked about these things with his son before.

“And then came this new kind of dictatorship. It’s hard to tell which is worse — that time or this. Peter, I know just how it feels for a young fellow to feel sort of left out —”

“But you did what you wanted to do!” Peter interrupted, “and if I answer what you expect me to answer —”

“What *I* expect you to answer?” Gottfried was shocked. “I only expect you to tell the *truth*, Peter!”

“The truth? But I know that one piece of paper can wreck my whole future — and that is the truth too!”

Peter turned and ran down the steps and away from the church garden. Pastor Gottfried watched him go with double fear — that of a father and that of a Christian.

## 7 / THE ROAD TO BERLIN

The party secretary paced back and forth in his office in the city hall. A little group was gathered in one corner of the room. They watched Herr Rettmann very carefully. Obviously something was brewing, since the party secretary had summoned the chairman of the political committee of the factory, the principal of the Karl Marx School, the editor of *The People's Voice*, and his own assistant-for-propaganda to this meeting.

"I had a long telephone conversation with Berlin this morning," Herr Rettmann declared. "It was again pointed out to me how important it will be for Osterstadt to make a good showing at the Berlin Festival."

He did not tell them that he had been given to understand by Commissar Laube on the phone that his own position in the party might well be decided on the basis of his delivering good material for this year's festival so that it would be a truly outstanding cultural event.

"Your article and the picture in this morning's paper were all right as a beginning," Rettmann said to the editor, "but make sure that you plan the rest of the promotion so that the whole community may become involved."

"The teachers have been wondering just how we should organize the participation," the school principal said, explaining

that he had already called them together at an initial meeting. The basic qualifying rules had been pretty much agreed upon. He offered to read the rules to the group in Rettmann's office; but Rettmann asked that the principal furnish each person with a copy in writing.

"And what is your committee at the factory doing to prepare for the festival? After all, your group has to do something to merit the title of sponsor." There was a bit of sarcasm in Rettmann's voice as he directed this question to the delegate from the political committee at the metal works. The idea of having the Osterstadt delegation sponsored by the factory had been Commissar Laube's idea, not his.

"Well, one idea we have is to have a voluntary collection from the workers so that the kids from Osterstadt will have a little pocket money for their trip and will enjoy their visit to the big city in a special way. Someone suggested that this would remind the students of the good wishes of the factory workers back home whenever they would buy a bottle of soda or a bratwurst."

After he had seen the youth festival film, Herr Wueppermann, the marching director, knew he would have to perfect the marching style of his students. So he had them step along briskly to the band music, in close formation, and, at a given signal, made them swing their arms up high and clap their hands in tempo to the marching with eyes facing right toward some imaginary reviewing stand.

Meanwhile, Fraulein Hemsing, who was in charge of the girls' athletic program, was also training her girls in exercises with hoops and clubs and flags. Professor Steffl had to choose the musicians.

Everyone who signed for the contest was given an audition by Professor Steffl and his committee. He had been proud of the progress made by Helga Weissberg with her cello, but by no stretch of the imagination did he expect that she would be ready for Berlin. Anton Roemer was developing some promise

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and skill on the piano, but he didn't have Peter Gottfried's spark for music.

Peter Gottfried? How could a student be forced to enter a contest? Peter had avoided even talking about it with Professor Steffl and the teacher knew very well that it would be an impossible position both from the boy's point of view as a pastor's son and from the party's point of view if the boy should win. What made matters worse was that Professor Steffl knew that Peter Gottfried had the talent and the ability to win this contest.

Herr Rettmann asked Professor Steffl to give a report on the music candidates at a special meeting of the teachers. Professor Steffl could have assured Rettmann that all was in order and that there would be no problem, but he knew that this would only delay the revelation of the bitter truth.

"I don't mean to be offering excuses, Herr Rettmann, but in all honesty I must say that we are lacking the most important ingredient for a satisfactory showing from Osterstadt in the music division."

Rettmann looked at him. He did not quite know what Professor Steffl meant.

"You see, sir, we need talent. There is precious little of it here in our school. That is, talent that is available."

"What do you mean — *available*?" Rettmann demanded.

Professor Steffl was standing at the window. He motioned to Rettmann to come over and look. Pointing at the school yard to a group of boys that were playing football, the music teacher said, "Do you see that fellow kicking the ball right now? Well, if he were playing the piano in our contest, our problems would be over."

"Well, why not?" Rettmann asked flatly.

"You expect *me* to take the responsibility for sending the Pastor's son to Berlin?" Professor Steffl retorted.

The party secretary stood still for a moment, looking out of the window. Then he turned back to face the teachers. He did not say anything but merely paced back and forth. When he stopped, first he looked at Steffl, then at the principal. "I'll take

the responsibility," he said finally. He moved slowly over to Herr Starke. "Peter Gottfried is in your class, isn't he?"

Herr Starke nodded affirmatively.

"Get him to sign."

Herr Starke had been a party member long enough to recognize an unequivocal order when he heard one. When the party secretary went out of the room, followed by the principal, Herr Starke began to think. He would have to plan his strategy carefully; this time he must not fail.

The air was brisk and invigorating as Peter and his classmates wandered along a country lane on this welcome excursion with their teacher. One of the boys who played the accordion acceptably had brought it with him and provided music for the group's singing well-known hiking songs. Singing "To Wander Is the Miller's Joy" made them all feel the radiant, good fellowship of the occasion.

Peter was glad to have this chance to get away from school and the tug-of-war between the forces he felt from all sides. The hike was a chance for him to relax. He had a good talk with Dehmert who seemed to be less of a puppet out here in the country than in class. Peter and Anneliese walked together for quite a while. Anneliese had not recovered from the shock of losing her closest friend, Hildegard. The printer's daughter had not mentioned anything to Anneliese about the possibility of going with her father to the West. Several days later, however, Anneliese had discovered a little note in her apron pocket saying good-bye, and wishing that they would see each other again someday.

Peter also was pleased when Herr Starke walked by him and seemed very friendly. When they passed a pump near an abandoned farmhouse, Herr Starke asked Peter if he would not like a drink of cold water. They stopped to enjoy the refreshing coolness.

"How is your questionnaire coming along, Gottfried?" Starke asked him very casually.

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Peter didn't quite know how to answer. "Well, I have tried it, sir, but I guess I'm not getting very far."

"Have you discussed it with your father?"

"Yes . . ." Peter said weakly. "His advice is to tell the truth."

Starke smiled. "Well, I can see that your father and I agree on that! But before you can answer those questions you really have to know the whole truth! You have never really learned it, you know."

"There are no doors closed to you, Gottfried, that you can't open yourself. Try to think of the questionnaire as being just one of the keys. Your life in our society is yours to shape with your own two hands."

Peter observed that they were dropping quite a bit behind the others who were now singing another song.

"Think, my boy, think. Is it we who lock you out, or is it somebody else who doesn't let you enter?"

"I always seem to be in the middle," Peter answered glumly.

"In the middle, yes – caught between outworn ideas and the new."

Peter didn't answer. They just walked along silently for a while and the gap between them and the others became smaller. Finally Herr Starke said, "How is your piano practicing coming, Gottfried?"

Peter shrugged.

"I have only heard you play once, you know, and I am eager to hear you again. You will be trying out for the Berlin Festival, won't you?"

Peter looked at Herr Starke quickly. "I don't think I could get very far in that contest, sir."

Herr Starke smiled. "Why not? I think you play very well."

"Well, it is just like you said, I feel caught in the middle. I am just the boy in between."

"I'm not a musician, Gottfried, but I enjoy music and I think I understand something about music that you haven't learned yet."

"I have a lot to learn – I know that."

Herr Starke put his arm around Peter's shoulders. "I am not



*Herr Starke asked Peter if he would not like a drink of cold water . . . . "There are no doors closed to you, Gottfried, that you can't open yourself. Try to think of the questionnaire as being just one of the keys."*

talking about talent. Your music teacher has done a good job in developing your skill at the keyboard. But hasn't anyone ever taught you that we need music as well as we need bread and coal and houses – that you as a musician have as important a place in society as the worker, the farmer, the professional?"

Somehow when Herr Starke talked this way it seemed to Peter to make good sense. He was thinking of this as his teacher continued. "Try out for the Berlin Festival and see if anybody shuts you out because you are the Pastor's son."

Maria Gottfried said nothing, but she was troubled as she listened from the kitchen while Peter practiced before supper. Something was wrong. She could tell as much about Peter's

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mood from his playing as she could from his conversation. He attacked certain passages frantically and other sections, which he should have played with confidence, were full of disturbing mistakes. She knew Peter was bothered and she sensed that it would not be wise for her to intrude.

At supper Friedrich Gottfried dominated the conversation. He told his family the full story of how Hans Kesselmaier had finally decided to capitulate and let his farm be collectivized. The pastor had visited the Kesselmaiers in their town apartment during the afternoon and was upset by the defeatist attitude of the farmer and his wife. The pastor cited case after case that he had heard about. He was deeply worried.

Peter said nothing. As soon as the meal was over, he excused himself from the table, explaining that he had a lot of schoolwork to do, and went to his room.

Peter knew he had to face the questionnaire tonight. He opened it. He scanned the questions for the hundredth time . . . the problem raced through his mind.

*"A very important document! Examine your experiences!"*

WHAT PROBLEMS CONCERN ME MOST? *This questionnaire and how to answer it — that concerns me most. And the Berlin Festival.*

WHAT IS MY STAND ON THE FDJ? WHAT IS MY STAND ON THE PEOPLE'S ARMY? *I must tell the truth — I must tell the truth! The truth about the FDJ — "The whole truth, Peter!" The FDJ stands against everything my father stands for . . . My father stands against everything the FDJ stands for! For — against, for — against, for — against . . .*

WHAT IS MY ATTITUDE TO OUR SOCIALIST SOCIETY? *Your answers will tell us how much you have matured . . . whether you are worthy . . . your lives are full and exciting . . . think carefully before you write a word . . . your answers will be filed with your application for admission to advanced schools . . ."*

WHAT PROFESSION DO I WISH TO ENTER? *The questionnaire is one of the keys . . . We need music as we need coal and bread and houses . . . Try out for the Berlin Festival*

*and see if anybody shuts you out because you are the Pastor's son!" What can you expect from the Pastor's son?*

*"What's your father going to say?"*

*"You have to be careful, Peter! As a pastor's son you have greater responsibilities than the others."*

*"But you see, sir, my father is the Pastor!"*

*"Your father is entitled to his interpretations . . . . Try out for the Berlin Festival! See if anybody shuts you out."*

*"Ladies and Gentlemen, the first prize of the All-German Youth Festival goes to Peter Gottfried, pianist!"*

*"The questionnaire is one of the keys . . . ."*

*The door is open the door is closed! Who closed the door who locked the door who'll open the door? Where is the key who has the key? Give me the key give me the attitude give me the stand! The key to the FDJ the key to the People's Army the key to the profession I wish to enter the key to our socialist society the key to the Berlin Festival the key the key the key the key. He finally dropped off to sleep from sheer exhaustion.*

*"I finally decided, Anneliese."*

She raised her eyebrows. He had asked her to come down to the lakeside with him after school. But he had hardly said a word all the way. Now he walked back and forth and she merely waited for him to say whatever was bothering him.

"I was up all night with that questionnaire. It's driving me crazy. But now I've decided. I want to enter that contest. Think what it would mean – to play at Berlin!"

She became alarmed. She had never really thought he'd go that far.

"Peter Gottfried, what are you saying?"

"Just that I'm signing up for the contest. I want to play in Berlin. It's my great opportunity. I'm going to practice harder than I've ever practiced before."

Anneliese was confused. She felt almost like crying. "But why, Peter? Why?"

"To win, that's why! I want to prove that I can win."

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"Is it worth it?"

He didn't hear her. His thoughts were already in Berlin.

"I mean, don't you care about . . . well, about your parents?"

His voice was near hysteria as he shot back, "I'm not going to sell my soul, Anneliese! I just want to play the piano!"

She felt deeply sorry for Peter. She knew he didn't want to do this, and yet she knew he couldn't say No either. She reminded him about the questionnaire. He would have to answer it.

"I'll stall as long as I can."

"Sooner or later you'll have to answer it."

Peter hadn't wanted to admit this to himself. "I'll face it then," he said.

The Pastor's son *did* sign up. And he *did* play. And he *did* win the local contest. And no one at school was surprised when it was announced that Peter Gottfried would represent Osterstadt in the instrumental music division of the Berlin Festival. Herr Steffl told the principal, who phoned Rettmann. He came to the school and congratulated Starke. All of them together went to the music room to compliment the boy who didn't know whether he was happy or sad.

Herr Starke said, "Don't worry about the questionnaire for the moment, Peter. I talked to Herr Rettmann about it and he agrees with me that you'll be much better prepared to express yourself on these questions after a trip to Berlin!" Peter wondered if it mattered now. There was a more immediate question in his mind.

Peter walked into the house and listened. *Is Father upstairs in his study? No, his coat is gone. Maybe he's out visiting. I hope he doesn't hear about me from someone else. But how can I tell him?* Peter heard his mother moving about on the sun porch. He walked out and sat down.

"Mother . . ." Peter said, and his mother caught the quiver in his voice. "What would you say if I had a chance to play in Berlin?"

She picked up another pack of seeds she was sorting for her new garden project. She chose her words carefully. "How do you want me to answer — as your piano teacher or as your mother?"

"Maybe you'd better answer as the Pastor's wife," Peter said soberly.

"Peter — tell me. What is this? What's wrong?"

"Mother, can't you understand? I know Father will think I'm crazy, but you understand, don't you?"

"I used to. But how do you expect me to accept the fact that suddenly you are letting yourself be used as a tool in the hands of those who would want the Church to fail?"

"I guess I can't explain it," he said. "But you have to know that I haven't changed. Music is music. How can Chopin or Bach be political? Is Bach a tool — their tool — just because his music is played at a Berlin festival?"

His mother asked quietly, "Talk to your father about it?"

"I can't!" he said. "I would only hurt him!"

The train went through the night carrying some soldiers and assorted travelers. In compartment 12, sitting at the window and staring out at the dark woods rushing by, was the Pastor from Osterstadt.

He was on his way to see Bishop Feld. After Peter had gone to bed, Maria had broken the news about Peter to him as gently as she could, but the bald facts were nevertheless the same. He knew he had to act quickly. He had telephoned the Bishop and asked for an appointment for the next day.

The next morning the Bishop's words were direct.

"You knew the answer before you asked. He who leaves his church forfeits his ministry. The shepherd must stay with the sheep." The Bishop had told this to others. It was painful for him — but necessary. He was very gentle and looked at Gottfried with understanding eyes.

"But I'm losing the boy! We've got to get out!" Gottfried did not hide his desperation.

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"Impossible."

"But can't you get Peter out, at least?"

The Bishop shook his head slowly. "You know better than that, too."

Gottfried knew, yes, but he still hoped for a solution. "But Herr Bishop, thousands cross over to the West every week!"

"And the Church is there when they arrive. That help we can give. But what do they cross over to?"

The Pastor sighed. He looked out the window wistfully, then answered, "Freedom."

"Freedom?" The Bishop walked from his desk and moved toward the troubled man. "Brother Gottfried, *we* are free! You and I, and all who believe in Christ. Because freedom is not where the world allows this or forbids that – but within ourselves, where we are given a choice, and through faith alone, choose!"

The Bishop was a pastor to pastors – perhaps the most important part of his calling.

"We choose to welcome for Christ's sake the little sorrows today – in gratitude for the great Cross He chose for us. And, Brother Gottfried, exactly because we seem imprisoned, we know where freedom is – only in our faith."

Friedrich Gottfried knew all this. His mind refused to acknowledge the truth the Bishop spoke. He had a broken heart.

"So I tell you what I tell all the others who have sat there and asked to get out. Your people take their strength from God through you. What happens to them if you break? You will not break! You will hold on. This is what you are called to."

"And lose my son," Gottfried said with tears filling his eyes.

The Bishop put his hands on Gottfried's shoulders. "Dear Brother Gottfried, let me say something you yourself have told many and many a soul in deeper torment than yours. It is all I can say and all that has to be said. You, and I, and Peter – all of us – comprehend it or not, even believe it or not – we are in God's hands. His will be done!"

It was late when the Pastor turned the key in the parsonage door and slipped in quietly. Maria met him on the stairs. He kissed her and held her tightly.

"Tell me, Friedrich. Tell me about it. I'll fix you some warm chocolate."

"All right, all right, Maria, but first I want to look in on Peter."

"Don't wake him," she whispered as she went toward the kitchen. "He has a big day ahead of him, poor boy."

Quietly, he opened the boy's bedroom door. He tiptoed silently over to the bed. *My son! Peter.* His hands went up to the boy's hair. He wanted to caress him, but he knew he must not wake him. He tucked the covers around his neck and then looked around the room for a moment. He saw the record player and the records Peter enjoyed. He saw the confirmation motto pinned to the wall. "*Be Thou Faithful Unto Death and I will Give Thee a Crown of Life.*"

Tomorrow Peter would go to Berlin. The father ached to talk to Peter about this and even to talk him out of going, if there still were time, but perhaps the damage had already been done. Gottfried's first reaction to the Berlin news had been anger. And then he had thought of escaping with his family. This had compelled him to seek advice from his Bishop. But now Friedrich Gottfried felt only love for his boy.

*J. S. Bach.* Peter's music for Berlin was laid out on the table. He would take it with him to the contest.

The clock on the wall kept count of the moments while he stood there. Peter must take his father's prayers with him to Berlin also.

## 8 /THE PEOPLE'S ARTIST

The day of the Osterstadt delegation's departure for Berlin dawned brightly. Several buses drove into the town square near the church. They were gaily decorated for the important event. The yellow and blue FDJ shield was prominently displayed on them. Banners proclaimed that the buses were headed for the Berlin Youth Festival carrying the delegation from the town of Osterstadt.

The first official to arrive in the square was Rettmann's assistant who gave instructions to the bus drivers and designated the places where the musicians would stand. The send-off to Berlin had to be the best Osterstadt could do.

Peter was lying on his bed thinking. He was all dressed and had his satchel packed with a clean shirt, his toothbrush, and the minimum essentials for a two-day excursion to Berlin. He wished that he could be more excited and happy about taking this trip and playing in the festival contest. He was uneasy about the whole thing, knowing full well that his parents simply did not want him to go. The awareness that he was flaunting their beliefs in this defiant way left him with a feeling of emptiness.

His mother came in with the jacket she had pressed for him. When she saw him lying there on the bed she gasped, "Peter, have you changed your mind?"

Peter swung himself off the bed and stood up to fix his tie. He slipped into the jacket his mother held out for him. "No, I am going and I guess I'll have to leave now because it's time."

His mother did not know what to say but felt she must say something. "You know how your father and I feel about your going . . . ."

"Yes, Mother, I know, but it's all been decided now." He made one last check of his satchel and made sure his music was included; then he started down the stairs. His mother followed.

Maria kissed him. "Play well, Peter," she said gently.

This brought a little smile to Peter's eyes and he said, "I will play even better if you promise to listen to the broadcast."

She brightened. "The broadcast! Oh, of course I will listen, and so will Father."

"Did Father get back?" Peter asked.

"Yes, he came in late last night. He is over in the church now."

Peter kissed his mother. "I'll go see him," he said.

In front of the parsonage Peter could hear excited voices coming from the near-by square. He looked up at the church. He knew he must go to see his father. He knew he must at least say good-bye, and so he crossed the street, climbed the stone stairs and entered the side door of the church.

The Pastor heard the door open. He felt Peter's presence in the church. He turned to look at his son. Father and son both looked at one another for a long moment. The Pastor saw his only son before him and realized that he could not hold himself back any longer. But words were hard to find.

"Do you have everything you need? Music and all?"

"Yes, I guess so, everything . . . that is, everything except your blessing."

The Pastor had to struggle to retain his composure. The last thirty-six hours had been a nightmare for him. He had descended into the depth of despair and had prayed and hoped that in some way, somehow, God would allow the bond to be restored between them. He went over to his boy and stroked his hair gently. "I have always known that you didn't wish to hurt me,

### *Question 7*

my son. And I don't want anything to hurt you." He put his arm around the boy's shoulders and they walked slowly up the center aisle, toward the main door.

"Peter, do you remember your confirmation motto, the special blessing that is yours?"

"Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life."

Yes, Peter remembered. He had the motto on the wall of his room and the words often came to his mind.

"That is God's promise. Remember it. Now, Peter, do your best, be happy — don't get lost, and come back safe." His father smiled.

This was the moment when Peter knew he must go. He started out ahead of his father, but the Pastor had dropped behind a few steps.

"Peter . . . ?"

Peter stopped and turned slightly. He heard his father say, softly, "Remember, I love you very much."

These words burned in Peter's heart and he rushed into his father's arms. They held the embrace for a moment, peaceful and secure.

"Good-bye, Father," Peter said, smiling bravely. "And don't worry. I'm not afraid of the tiger."

The square was crowded with FDJ youth and others from the school. Some of the teachers were there, too, including Herr Starke and Professor Steffl who would be accompanying them to Berlin. Herr Rettmann was on hand to witness the send-off and to assure the delegation he would meet them later in the day in Berlin. More eager excited young people came running with their satchels and suitcases. A crowd of onlookers had gathered, including parents and friends and children who wanted to cheer the Osterstadt delegation on to Berlin.

Trumpeters and drummers sounded out a flourish as the group boarded the buses and slowly left the square amid the excited cheers of the townfolk.

But up on the hill by the church a tall man, looking down at the departure, did not cheer. Nor did a sober boy on one of the buses.

The uniqueness of Berlin had always fascinated Peter. He knew of its strange status as a divided city and his parents often talked about it. Nevertheless, Peter found it difficult to believe that there were really two cities of Berlin, one of them the capital of the East and the other seemingly a part of the West, like an island within the East Zone. He realized that many, many people had left East Germany merely by walking over from the east to the west sector of Berlin and going from there by air a hundred miles to West Germany. It was only a few weeks ago that Hildegard Marschall and her father had gone this way. Peter had studied the map of Berlin carefully and he knew the geography well enough to realize that there were only a few places where people could cross from one part of the divided city to the other. But he didn't think of this now when the bus stopped at the great concert hall.

As the excited youths piled out of the coaches and swarmed into the street, Herr Starke shouted instructions.

Professor Steffl handed out a pass to each student. "Don't lose this," he said. "It is your ticket of admission to any of the festival events listed on the back." When he came to Peter he said, "Gottfried, here is your pass. When you get to the Music Hall, go around to the stage entrance and ask for the rehearsal room where the instrumental contestants are to gather. You have to be there by 2:30 at the latest. Do you understand?" Peter said he did and put his pass into his inside jacket pocket.

Dehmert came over to Peter and said, "How would it be if you and I stick together during the parade? We'll be able to see everything and I can go with you to the Music Hall. I'd like to hear you play." Peter was not sure whether he wanted to be in Dehmert's company all day, but he walked along with him.

In a few moments they were swept into the wild mass of singing, marching, flag-waving youth who converged from all

### Question 7

directions on the Marx-Engels Platz – a broad parade ground where no trace remained of the magnificent palace that once stood there. The Osterstadt group found itself pushed into a parade formation and Peter was surprised to discover that he and Dehmert were marching along in front of high bleachers on which thousands and thousands of cheering persons were watching the parade. They approached a reviewing stand and the marchers in front of Peter lifted their hands over their heads and applauded in tempo to the march music with eyes looking to the side in a salute to the dignitaries and officials.

Dehmert whispered to Peter, "That man in the middle – that's Comrade Ulbricht." Peter looked and got a glimpse of the man whose picture had smiled at him from dozens of places in Osterstadt.

When the parade unit finally disbanded, Peter and Dehmert made their way to the Music Hall. Another large crowd of people was milling in front of the entrance above which a sign announced: MUSIC FINALISTS IN CONCERT TODAY.

Dehmert said that he had promised to meet the others from Osterstadt at the Music Hall ticket office. When Peter went around to the stage entrance he saw that Dehmert had already found Starke, Steffi, and others.

Before Peter went into the rehearsal room assigned to the contestants, he peeked into the great auditorium. The size of it almost took his breath away. The decorations of flags and garlands and banners created a festive mood. For backdrop the stage was decorated with the biggest photo enlargements Peter had ever seen – tremendous portraits of Grotewohl, Ulbricht, and Pieck gazed into the audience.

Peter found the rehearsal room a chaotic place, full of noise, chatter, and the sound of musicians tuning their instruments. He looked around and realized that everyone was waiting for someone else to tell him what to do.

The official-in-charge soon appeared. He was a highly nervous, intense, and brittle man. "Quiet! Quiet, please!" he shouted in a nasal voice. Only partly succeeding in quieting the group, the man proceeded to call the roll of contestants. He placed

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them in chairs according to the order of their appearance. Peter was told to sit next to a girl violinist from Brunnenbau. He took up his station at the piano. To his left was a boy cellist from Leipzig. The official explained that it was important for each person to be ready for his appearance immediately after the completion of the preceding selection. He said that the program was being broadcast and the performers would get their signal to begin from the announcement by the master of ceremonies. He also explained that they must remain in this room before going on stage but they could hear the entire program over the loud-speaker above the piano.

*"Ladies and gentlemen, we are speaking to you from Berlin Music Hall where today finalists for the All-German Music Festival will be heard in competition . . . ." The size of it almost took (Peter's) breath away . . . the stage was decorated with the biggest photo enlargements Peter had ever seen; tremendous portraits of Grotewohl, Ulbricht, and Pieck . . . .*



### Question 7

"Ladies and gentlemen, we are speaking to you from Berlin Music Hall, where today finalists for the All-German Music Festival will be heard in competition . . . ." The announcer's voice quieted the people as they tried to listen.

Out in the audience, Rettmann and his assistants had seats in the fourth row from the front. Rettmann appeared confident and pleased as he listened to the Master of Ceremonies, who continued, "You will shortly hear the flower of our young musical talent. From among the young people who will perform for you today will surely come, I promise you, the people's artists of tomorrow." Rettmann led the applause that roared through the auditorium.

Peter took his music out of his satchel and placed it on the music rack in front of him. He decided to study the Bach prelude he had chosen. He opened the book and — how did it get here? — his eyes fell upon something very familiar. Between the pages was the little motto from the wall of his bedroom: "*Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.*" Peter looked around to see if anybody had noticed. He quickly closed his music book.

"Before introducing each of the contestants, may I mention something about them. From Brunnenbau, Dorothea Knittel, violinist."

Peter looked over to the girl sitting next to him and smiled. She flushed a little as the speaker continued: "Dorothea is the daughter of a foreman at the local textile mill which has exceeded its production quota by *seven percent*." This announcement was followed by thunderous applause.

"From Osterstadt, Peter Gottfried, pianist."

Peter looked up at the loudspeaker and listened. Meanwhile, back in his hometown the same voice came by radio into the barber shop, into the city hall, into the Zingler household and into the parsonage.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we all know of the vicious slander propagated against our republic by the reactionary forces of the imperialist West, who would divide us.

"We all know that the fascist warmonger camp has deliberately spread rumors that religious youth is denied opportunity in the People's Farmer-Worker State . . . ."

Rettmann raised his eyebrows slightly and smiled.

The barber shook his head.

Anneliese looked at her mother.

Pastor Gottfried put his head in his hands.

Peter felt himself getting feverish and hot. It was like being caught in a bad dream. That voice from the stage was talking about him! Another voice from somewhere else seemed to be whispering to him, "*Be thou faithful . . . be thou faithful . . . be thou faithful . . .*"

"The contestant who represents Osterstadt today is the answer to these lies. Peter Gottfried is a pastor's son — the pastor of St. Jacobi Church in Osterstadt."

In this moment of horror it became clear to Peter that everything his father had warned him about had come true. He knew that this very second his father and mother were listening to this same voice and he knew that each word was cutting deeply into their hearts. It was too late now. He wished for all the world he could run back into the church to the safety of his father's arms. But it was too late now. *This man is talking about me!* he thought.

Peter looked down at his fingers on the keys. *Maybe it's not too late, maybe . . . .*

In a split-second impulse he grabbed the cover of the piano keyboard and slammed it down on his fingers!

"Yeow!" he screamed, "My hand! It's my hand!"

An official came rushing over to him. "Let me see, let me see."

Peter held his fingers together tightly and groaned, "The lid, it came down! It hurts, it hurts."

The official called a girl from among the musicians who had crowded around and told her to take him down to the first-aid room on the floor below. The girl rushed out with Peter and they ran down the stairs. Halfway down Peter said to her, "Oh, my music! I forgot it. Would you go and get it for me, please?"

### Question 7

"All right, all right – oh, what a pity," she said as she turned back up to the rehearsal room.

This was Peter's opportunity! The corridor was completely empty. No one was around. He ran as fast as he could the full length of the passageway and down the other stairs to the stage door where earlier he had entered the building.

Just as he reached the doorway a voice called to him, "Hey, there! Not so fast."

Peter slowed down, turned and saw the doorman. The old fellow was smiling.

"All finished, sonny?"

Peter tried hard to be casual. He nodded and said, "Yes, yes, I am all finished."

"How did you make out?"

Peter looked down at his fingers. They were bruised and stinging but not permanently damaged. Peter flexed his fingers slightly and looked at the doorman and smiled.

"Better than I expected!"

Once outside the Music Hall, Peter breathed deeply. He now knew that he was *not* going to play for *them*. He had done what he had to do. But was it too late?

An automobile horn made him suddenly realize that he was walking across the street. He was almost hit. He came back to reality and started running. He had not yet planned it out in his mind, but he knew he had to get away from this place. He had to escape! He remembered the Brandenburg Gate at the far end of the street. Maybe he could get through! He'd *have* to try!

While the violinist from Brunnenbau commanded the center of the Music Hall stage, confusion reigned behind the scenes. The girl escort came back from the first-aid room and announced that the pianist never got there. A search was immediately begun but Peter Gottfried was nowhere to be found.

"Go all through the building and look for Gottfried," the official demanded of three of the youngsters from the room. "Look everywhere, first aid, toilet, lobby, basement."

Would the lad be able to play with damaged fingers? The official went over to the Master of Ceremonies who was waiting in the wings and whispered something. The speaker agreed that he would stall and announce the cellist instead. The official then decided he'd have to report exactly what had happened.

"Ladies and gentlemen, before we hear the next contestant I have been asked to . . . uh, there has been a slight rearrangement in the sequence of the program . . . ."

Rettmann's assistant came into the auditorium and hurried up to the fourth row to motion to his chief to step out.

At the parsonage in Osterstadt, Friedrich and Maria Gottfried listened carefully and heard the announcer on the radio say, "Peter Gottfried, the contestant from Osterstadt, will be heard a little later in the program. In his place at this time will be Helmut Wolf-Gerbig, cellist, representing the city of Leipzig."

"Friedrich, what is going on?" Maria asked anxiously.

The Pastor was anxious too, but he tried not to show it. "Don't worry, it probably doesn't mean anything."

As Peter came near the Marx-Engels Platz, he saw the parade groups still passing in review. People lined the streets, watching the new units approach. He forced his way through the crowds and continued on and on in the direction of the Brandenburg Gate.

He was almost breaking into a run when suddenly he saw two policemen walking toward him. *Will they recognize me? Could they possibly know that I am supposed to be at the Music Hall?* He thought he'd better slow down and appear nonchalant. He looked for a moment at the parading formation in the street and paused while the policemen walked by without noticing him. Then he started walking rapidly again and headed straight west.

He didn't stop until he came to the Brandenburg Gate. *But how do I get through the guards?* He saw that they were checking passports. *Will they let me by?* He had his small identification folder with his picture on it, like everybody else in East Germany. *Maybe, if I just show it to them in a matter-of-fact way they'll let me through!*

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“May I see your papers, please?” the guard said as Peter stepped before him. Peter reached into his jacket pocket and his hand first touched his confirmation motto card. The wrong pocket! He found his identification and showed it to the *Volks-polizei* officer. At that moment another group of students walked up with their identification papers already in their hands. The guard merely glanced at Peter’s folder quickly and handed it back to him. Peter walked on, through the Brandenburg Gate.

He was now in the west sector of Berlin. Still he didn’t feel safe. He didn’t know yet exactly what he was going to do but he was much too close to the incident in the Music Hall to relax for a second. After he had hurried along for a few hundred feet, he found himself by the Russian War Memorial. Without

*Peter felt trapped. He was frightened, angry, desperate . . . then suddenly, . . . he ran and ran and ran . . .*



pausing he looked up at the grim black statue of the Russian soldier on top of the monument and at the two green tanks mounted on pedestals that flanked the entrance to the Memorial Square.

"Peter, Peter Gottfried! What are you doing here?"

Peter stopped. He turned and saw three of his classmates from Osterstadt coming down the steps toward him from the Soviet Memorial. They were smiling at him in a friendly surprise.

"Did you already finish playing?"

Peter didn't know what to say. He just nodded nervously.

"What's the matter, Gottfried, didn't we win?"

Peter felt trapped. He was frightened, angry, desperate. His three classmates came closer to him. It looked to him as if they were surrounding him. Peter stepped back — and then, suddenly, he pushed them aside and ran and ran and ran . . . .

## 9 / *WEIGHT OF GLORY*

Friedrich and Maria Gottfried sat by their radio and waited. When the cellist finished his selection, they held their breath, expecting the announcer to say that Peter would play next. After the applause there was another pause. A long pause, it seemed to them, and then, without any explanation whatsoever about Peter, the announcer introduced a flutist from Rostock.

"We'll have to wait, Maria; we'll have to wait," Friedrich said. But waiting was very difficult. The Pastor could not sit still. His mind was on Peter.

Maria nervously listened to the radio.

When the flutist had finished, a clarinetist was introduced. The couple looked at each other and exchanged glances of obvious worry. The Pastor kept walking back and forth; then he turned and said, "Maria, I'm going over to the church. You understand, don't you?"

The look in her eyes told him she understood.

"Keep the radio on, please, and let me know if Peter plays. Somehow I don't think he will." The Pastor walked slowly out of the house and into the church . . . .

The backstage office of the manager of the Music Hall was occupied for the moment by Youth Commissar Frau Laube. She stood at one end of the room with her arms folded. She looked at Comrade Rettmann, then at Professor Steffl, then at the official in charge of the contestants. There was a knock at the door and she snapped, "Come in!"

A bewildered old man in a uniform was ushered in by Rettmann's assistant. "This is the doorman, Comrade Laube. He thinks he may have talked to the boy."

"Well?" she demanded. "What can you tell us?"

"Somebody said you were looking for one of the boys who was in the contest and they asked me if I had seen anybody leave the building. I said that there was a boy who left early but he said he had played already."

Rettmann interrupted, "Did he have light hair? Was he wearing a grey suit? Was he —?"

Frau Laube held up her hand to indicate to Rettmann that she was in charge.

"Tell us about the conversation," she ordered the doorman.

"Well, I asked him how he did in the show and he said, 'Better than I expected'."

The commissar snapped her fingers. "All right, that's enough! Out!" She gestured to the others in the room, "And the rest of you, too. Everyone except Herr Rettmann and the boy's musical advisor."

As the group shuffled out of the office, Herr Starke looked in and asked, "Is Herr Rettmann here?" When he spotted the party secretary, he turned to those following him and said, "In here, boys, in here."

"Excuse me, Herr Rettmann, could I speak to you for a moment?" Starke asked urgently.

The commissar interrupted, "Have you seen Gottfried?"

"Yes," one of the FDJ boys burst out. "We were at the Soviet Memorial — in the western sector, you know . . ."

"Yes, yes, we know," Rettmann interjected, trying to recapture some of his authority. "What were you doing over there?"

Starke spoke up. "I gave them permission, sir."

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Comrade Laube looked at the boys and at their teacher. "Get to Gottfried! What happened?"

The trio's spokesman was flustered. He gulped, looked at Starke, and explained, "Well, Commissar Frau Laube, we saw him, you see, and we spoke to him, and he just ran off — like that!" The boy flung out his arms. "You never saw anyone run like that!"

Rettmann took a step toward them. "You mean you didn't try to stop him?"

Frau Laube held up her hand again. "That's enough!" She looked at the boys and said, "Wait outside."

Professor Steffl decided this would also be the time for him to leave. "I was afraid something like this would happen," he said.

The commissar just glared. Starke said, "This is my responsibility, Comrade Laube; I apologize for what happened. I misjudged the boy. I thought he was coming around." He looked at Rettmann and said, "Sometimes I wonder if we expect too much."

When the two teachers had gone, Rettmann was alone with the commissar.

"Well! Isn't that lovely! How am I going to explain this to the Central Committee?"

She walked toward the window with her arms folded and asked, "Do you have any more suggestions, Comrade?"

"Indeed I do. Please allow me to handle it."

Frau Laube turned to see him walk to the telephone.

In the Osterstadt police station Patrolman Luedtke answered the ringing telephone, and then spoke to an aide. "It's Berlin. They want Inspector Hermann. He's upstairs taking a nap. Go wake him."

The sleepy inspector hurried into the room and took the phone.

"Here is Inspector Hermann. Good afternoon, Herr Rettmann. How is everything in Berlin today?"

Patrolman Luedtke and the other policeman saw the inspector's eyes widen in surprise.

"I understand. Yes, immediately." He wrote down a number. "Yes, we will call you there. Yes. And if . . . ."

He turned to Luedtke. "I won't need you any longer this afternoon, Luedtke, but please stand by at home in case anything special develops. I will stroll over to have a little chat with the Pastor."

At the word "Pastor" Luedtke looked up curiously. The inspector did not keep him in suspense very long.

"It seems that the Pastor's piano-playing pride and joy has skipped over to the West. There is going to be hell to pay around here on Monday."

He took his hat and opened the door.

"And when there is a new face in the Party Secretary's office, you can say Uncle Hermann told you so!"

The inspector rang the doorbell of the parsonage. When Maria opened it, her face froze.

"Good afternoon, Frau Pastor, may I speak to your husband, please?"

"You'll find my husband in the church."

There were many favorite corners for the Pastor in the church. He liked to come into the sanctuary alone to meditate.

He heard the main door of the church open and footsteps approaching.

"Herr Pastor?"

"Yes?"

"May I ask you a few questions?"

"Here?"

"It's as good a place as any. For the record, Herr Pastor, when did you last speak with your son?"

"This morning — just before he left for Berlin. Why do you ask?"

"Where was this conversation held, Herr Pastor?"

"Right here, but why —?"

"Anyone else present?"

The Pastor shook his head.

"Have you spoken to him since? By phone, for instance?"

"In Berlin? Of course not!"

"Do you have any idea where he might be?"

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The Pastor stood up. His voice was regaining its strength and he demanded, "I have been hoping you would tell me. In God's name, what has happened to my son?"

The inspector looked at the Pastor searchingly. He said, "Your son has deserted to the West."

He noticed the look of shock on Gottfried's face.

"You didn't know this before? You are sure? Are you willing to sign a statement to that effect?"

The Pastor answered automatically, "At the proper place and the proper time."

The inspector closed his notebook and put it in his pocket.

"You will be notified as to both the place and the time, Herr Pastor. In the meantime, my instructions are that you remain in the parsonage until further notice."

"House arrest?" he asked the inspector.

"I'm afraid so."

Frau Luedtke pushed the baby carriage along the street and stopped in front of the barber shop. She tried to attract the attention of the barber because she knew he was one of the church elders. He came out to greet her. He leaned over the carriage to admire the baby. As he playfully teased the baby under the chin, he heard the policeman's wife say in a hushed voice, "I have a message for you. Peter Gottfried has gone to the West. The Pastor is in trouble. My husband says he is under house arrest."

The barber heard every word, but his expression did not change. Instead, he merely responded with a tone of jollity in his voice. "A couple more months and I will be cutting his hair." Then he walked slowly into his shop again. He pulled down the shade on the door to indicate that his shop had closed for the day. He went into the back room and announced, "The Pastor is under house arrest."

A sigh went through the small group of men assembled there — Durfel, Kesselmaier, Kraus, and old, white-bearded Jacob Hoerst. No one said anything for a while. Herr Durfel finally

broke the silence with the comment, "It is possible that he did not know anything about the boy's plans."

"All right, let's even assume that," the barber said, "but can you imagine convincing *them* of that?"

"They will find a way to prove that he was involved . . . and we know what that means," Kesselmaier added.

The barber held out his hands in a gesture of defeat. "Yes, we will have to look for another pastor."

Herr Kraus spoke for the first time. "And tomorrow is Sunday," he sighed.

Herr Durfel walked slowly around the circle of elders and said, "I wish there was *something* we could do!"

Maria Gottfried tried hard to control herself. It was a cruel evening. She tried not to think.

In their mutual anguish, the two sat without talking, stunned and confused at Peter's disappearance.

Then the doorbell rang. The Pastor went to the door. His hand rested for a moment on the door handle before he opened; then he looked into the face of Herr Zingler.

"Good evening, Herr Pastor. May I come in, please?"

"Good evening, Herr Zingler. Yes, please come in. And what can I do for you?"

Herr Zingler took off his cap.

"You are in trouble, Herr Pastor. It's all over town. I can get you and your wife out. You can be with your son tomorrow."

In the living room Maria moved toward the door to the hallway.

"You?" the Pastor asked. "I don't understand."

Herr Zingler was obviously under considerable tension, yet he tried to be as casual as possible.

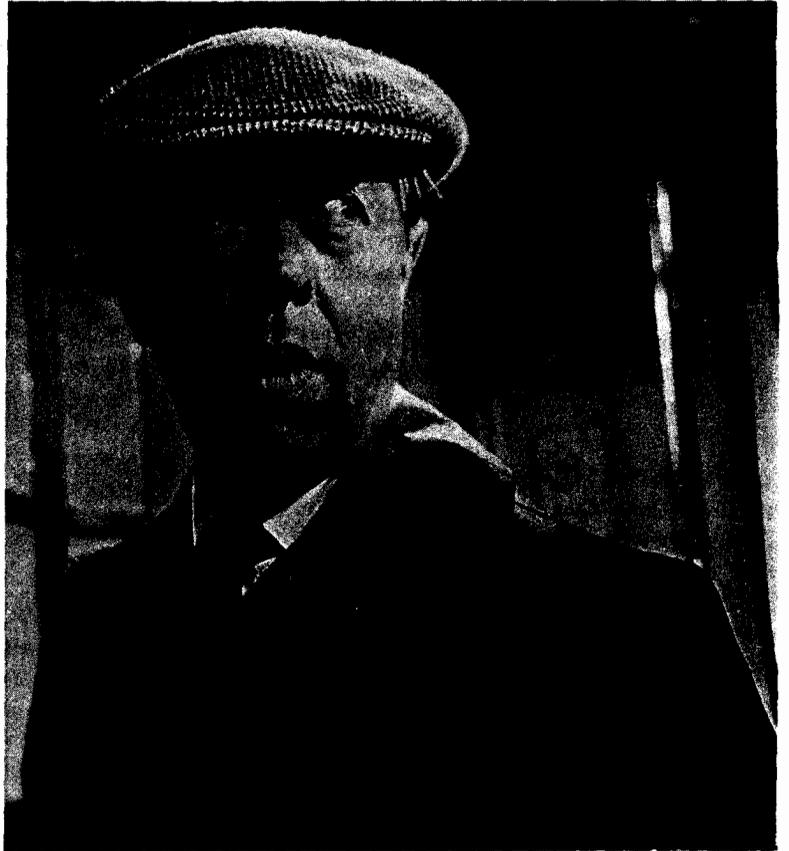
"The less you know, the better." He looked at his watch. "It is ten o'clock now. Be ready in one hour. A car will pass —"

The Pastor interrupted, "You don't understand my position."

Maria came into the hallway where the men were.

"I don't understand your position?" Zingler retorted. "What

Question 7



*Herr Zingler was obviously under considerable tension yet he tried to be as casual as possible. "The less you know the better." He looked at his watch. "It is ten o'clock now. Be ready in one hour."*

good will you be to your people in prison?" He looked over to the Pastor's wife. "And how about your boy? Do you think the other side is heaven for a child alone? If you are going, have the drapes open and the lights on. If you are staying, close them tight and forget all about this. Trust me, Herr Pastor. You won't be the first one."

One hour! They had to make up their minds in one hour.

The father and mother had to decide within one hour whether to go to their son or not.

The Pastor went into Peter's room and saw the empty spot where the motto had been. He had to decide now – stay or go. As he turned to go out of the room, his hand brushed against a piece of paper, pushing it off the desk to the floor. He picked it up. It was the school questionnaire!

He opened it. It was blank except for the last question, where the boy had scrawled the beginning of an answer.

Question 7. *What have been the predominant influences on my social development?*

Peter's answer stabbed at the Pastor's heart: "MY FATHER . . ."

"Maria, I have decided. You must go to Peter! You must stay with him. It won't be easy for him, all alone in a strange city."

"Friedrich! How can you suggest such a thing? What about you?"

"I won't be alone. I have my work and the people who depend upon me. It is a difficult decision, Maria, but Peter had a difficult decision too."

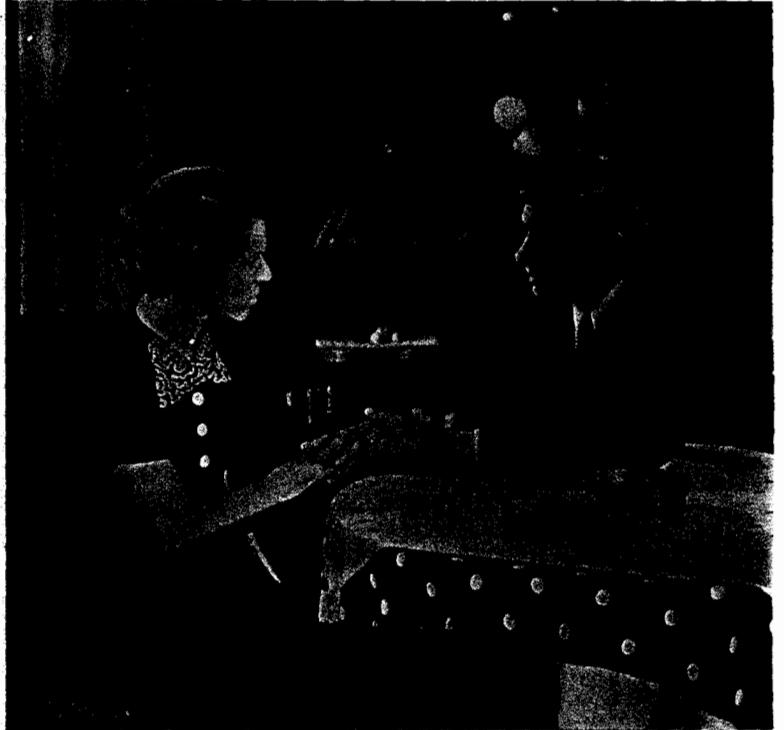
The tall clock in the corner of the room began to strike. Friedrich took out his watch to check the time. Impulsively he unfastened the chain and gave the watch to her, saying, "This is for my son."

It was eleven o'clock. Very faintly, a little "cuckoo" could be heard from Peter's room upstairs. They became aware of the sound of a motor outside.

Calmly, Maria got up and walked over to the window. She pulled the drapes shut. "Sometimes I am overwhelmed by my riches – having such a husband and such a son."

The ride on the bus from downtown Berlin to the suburban area called Marienfelde took about an hour. It was late when

Question 7



*"I won't be alone. I have my work and the people who depend upon me. It is a difficult decision, Maria, but Peter had a difficult decision too."*

Peter arrived and joined the procession that walked slowly from the bus stop to the gate. A sign identified the fenced-in compound as the refugee reception center.

The next morning everyone in Osterstadt heard the church bells ring. The word had spread that Pastor Gottfried was under house arrest so it was generally assumed that Sunday worship would automatically be cancelled. The bells kept on ringing. The curious burghers sensed an urgent quality in the tones

resounding from St. Jacobi's fortresslike tower. Many instinctively turned from what they were doing to heed the summons. One listener reached for a little black notebook on his desk, carefully placed it in his pocket, and headed for the church on the hill.

The tall man in the pulpit put his hand on the Bible and looked down at his people. Then in a clear strong voice he pronounced the salutation:

*"Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen."*

He now opened the Bible to the verses of his text.

"God's Word for today is from Second Corinthians, the fourth chapter:

*We do not lose heart. We have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways; we refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. . . .*

*We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed . . . .*

*For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal!*