

REPAIRING THE EARTH*

Andrei Platonov

What is the earth?

The earth is the whole world with its croplands, flowers, people, rivers, and clouds. The earth is where we are from and where we return, where we live, rejoice, and struggle. That is what ordinary people think, and it is right. But what is the earth in our sense, in the peasant sense?

It is a means for growing grain, producing fodder for livestock, and so on.

That is, it too is a machine, only it produces food for humans, as, for example, a loom produces fabrics for clothing.

Like any machine, the earth requires repair, tuning, and replenishment of the vital forces that it expends producing plants.

For thousands of years, man has been feeding the earth with his labor, and the earth returns this labor to him with a large surplus. It is only thanks to this surplus that life on earth flourishes, and man's powers grow and improve.

But the earth has been terribly depleted over those thousands of years. Its life-giving forces have been impoverished because its sap is sucked from it year after year.

Energies are also continuously pumped from industrial machines, but they are immediately replenished.

No one replenishes the earth's energies (except the sky, but it is unreliable), and so our fields yield less and less grain from one year to the next.

The same is true abroad, in other countries, but they take more diligent care of the land there and do not allow yields to decline. Despite their bourgeois way of life, they have both science and the whole of society helping the husbandman in his struggle with nature for grain.

Until now, the Russian peasant has been left all alone, with no knowledge or support, ignorant and unhappy. Deal with it as you like, he has been told, but supply us with grain every autumn.

It is another matter nowadays. The peasant and the worker are the chief people: everything is in their power.

If the earth is tired and exhausted, we shall fix it, repair it, and sate it with new strength.

The means for this exist, and they are wholly at the peasant's disposal. Those means are knowledge, the science of agriculture.

When the peasant has learned to wield them, he will find no task fearsome. Hunger will be forever banished from the world.

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Science has already found excellent ways to restore the earth's energies and even to increase them.

Armed with knowledge, man turns deserts into blessed fields of grain. Armed with science, the peasant will turn the Russian soil, good as it is, into a mighty source of human nutrition, and thus into a source of universal culture, the socialist culture borne by our revolution.

For the rich, intense, beautiful life of the future, we need lots of grain, lots of all the things that the earth yields.

It is given to us by an earth fertilized by knowledge.

Fields are machines, peasants are workers.

We will repair them. We will set them into motion with unprecedented speed. May they give rise to great forces worthy of a great humanity.

We shall renew the decrepit, emaciated croplands. May they become young and powerful, as we have become.

A REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL OF THE EARTH*

Andrei Platonov

The woe of the new human soul is that man's bonding, unity, and sensitivity with nature have weakened.

The new, urban, machine man feels less and less kinship with the world. The book of the universe is less and less comprehensible to him. Man has forgotten how to read it: he has become deaf to the wind, and blind to the stars. What I have said is confirmed by most people's bovine indifference to the great, deadly disaster that time is pushing us towards – the future drought of 1922 and the following years (maybe only with small intervals of moisture).

The earth speaks of itself to the person who lives at one with nature. For him, it takes off its clothes – time. One must be born with great love in one's heart for everything. The loving person is the son of every woman, of every blade of grass, and welcome on every road. How can a loving person not know and not see, when the heart is the largest and clearest eye?

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And when the world got worried and sick, the common folk also got sick worrying about the future.

The winters have been poor, with little snowfall, and the grass has started to grow in a way it had not grown in previous years. Something in the world has faltered and broken – it has been wounded. In response, a wound and pain has opened in man.

We predicted this year's drought in the spring.

It was not me who spoke – it was the world resonating inside me.

But no one believed it then. Everyone who was listening was sated and indifferent. "To hell with him!" they said.

Summer came, and the rye caught fire in the Volga region and in most of the southern part of our province.

Sorrow, vexation, and death were unleashed on Russia.

Hydraulification was then discovered and considered as a means of combating drought on behalf of life, that is, on behalf of grain. After a prolonged hullabaloo in the newspapers, the center (Moscow) finally responded. It transpired that there were likeminded people there who agreed with us and now they are fighting for the creation of a revolutionary agricultural council, a shock task force to combat the heat, poor farming methods on the part of the peasants, and hunger – and to fight for bread crops and satiety among workers and peasants, to fight to save the revolution from defeat and the people from extermination.

The drought can be defeated only as we defeated Kolchak and Wrangel – with all the effort, sacrifice, and talent of the great leaders of labor and ingenuity.

A revolutionary council of the earth will probably be created one of these days, and man's mighty mortal struggle with the forces of nature will come to a head.

We sense a great catastrophe, but we have a brain and vigor in our blood. We know how to make tools to tame and fetter nature.

We will organize million-man armies of workers and deploy them to the fields and steppes and workshops – to the plows, the pumps, the dams, the motors, and the lathes.

We declare all-out war against heat and hunger. Long live the revolutionary council of the earth! Long live man's mind and machine!

LIGHT AND SOCIALISM*

Andrei Platonov

The creation of socialism is underway all over the world. And yet, the socialist equivalents of physics, chemistry, engineering, biology, and so on, must be created (and are being created). Socialism is unthinkable and impossible otherwise.

We shall focus here on socialism's technological equivalent.

Socialist technology must find and utilize such energy that it would almost automatically create for humanity the colossal quantity of products of which capitalism has no clue. Socialism needs a physical force that is its equivalent. Socialism would by means of that force become a solid thing and establish its global dominion. But it must be a boundless power, available everywhere, always ready for production, a power that liberates man from the most menial forms of labor.

Capitalist society's productive power has consisted of coal and iron and the corresponding social organization. The uneven distribution of natural fuel reserves over the earth and the small number of such energy reservoirs have been the natural conditions that substantiated the capitalist mode of production.

Electrification partly overcomes these natural conditions, unfavorable for socialist production, and severs energy's dependence on geographical location. But only partly.

We need a complete solution to the issue. Only then can socialism be made, having been defined in advance, when we know what physical force will be harnessed to socialist production and how it will be harnessed.

This force is light.

According to the latest hypotheses, space is electromagnetic in nature. Space functions physically as an alternating electromagnetic field, for light is an alternating electromagnetic field with a very high frequency, approximately 500 trillion hertz. Electromagnetic light waves are approximately 0.6 microns in length.

There is thus no fundamental difference between the electricity operating in a lamp and light. In Voronezh, the power plant generates an alternating current of fifty hertz and a wavelength of three kilometers. (As far as I can remember – I cannot vouch for the exact accuracy of these figures.)

Distant from all poetic verbal excrement, we say that we see, feel, and know: the only physical function of space that we know is light, which is an alternating electromagnetic

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field with a terrifyingly high frequency and an incredibly short wavelength. Light and electricity are the same thing.

Space and time constitute everything we know about the world. The combined functions of space and time are all that we know.

Electricity is everything we know about, so to speak, “pure” space – ether.

Because pure theory is a prejudice of the outgoing era, we are not delving into theoretical realms. The material product interests us more than the truth, the fact of hegemony more than justice.

We are simply saying that socialism should be built on the physical power that is the cheapest and most widespread, and whose reserves are incalculable. (There is as much light as there is space.) That is, communism should be cast and chiseled in light and from light.

The whole universe is, precisely speaking, a reservoir, an electrical energy battery, because the universe is primarily space, and space is primarily an alternating electromagnetic field. If we regard history as the practical solution to the sole issue of energy – an issue whose ultimate solution is man’s complete, one hundred percent use of the universe without any expenditure of manpower – we can say that the use of light in industry is the perfect solution to the energy question of our time. Let us remember that light is the base of the plant world and let us make light the base of the human world as well. All technology should be reduced to photic engineering, and all physics (maybe chemistry) to electrical engineering.

Photic engineering must design the mechanism that turns the sun’s light into an ordinary operable electrical current, suitable for our electric motors. This mechanism is already half constructed.

It is called a photoelectromagnetic resonator transformer. Its purpose is to transform the heavenly current of light into an earthly, human current. If this technical problem is successfully solved (we are not going into its details here), light – and the entire universe with it – will become humanity’s “proletarian” for many inexhaustible centuries, and humanity will not exhaust this energy with any machines, resistances, or facilities. Even the energy of the atom, split by Rutherford, is nothing compared to the photic ocean’s energy.

The basis of human creativity under socialism is not mood, chance, inspiration, or intuition, but consciousness. So, if the photoelectromagnetic resonator transformer has not yet been made, it must be consciously willed into being, because it is necessary for utilizing light, and light is necessary for socialism. For light must form the basis of socialist production, or there will never be socialism, but only a perpetual “transitional era”. Socialism will not arrive earlier (but a little later) than the introduction of light as the engine of production. Only then will photic production give rise to a socialist society – the new man as a being replete with consciousness, wonder, and love, and communist art as universal sculpture and planetary architecture. Only then will humanity’s coupling into a single physical entity be consummated, and art, as it is now

understood, will not be needed, because art is the correction of revolutionary matter in reactionary consciousness, but matter and consciousness will be one under communism.

In the age of light, interstellar transport will be powered by means of the self-same light, and we will know (because it will have been remade to its ultimate depths) electricity - the key to knowing the universe and the sword for achieving victory over it.

Translated by Thomas H. Campbell