Colors and utopias are, in many ways, closely connected. Most descriptions of ideal countries or fantastic islands of social and political perfection contain vivid landscapes and brightly colored houses and clothing. Even where white is dominant it is often as brilliant as a condensed rainbow. The cloaks, woven from ersatz wool, which the forked-tongued inhabitants of Iambulos' Island of Sun wear, are dyed bright purple by means of crushed oysters.\(^1\) The skins of the Megamicres, citizens of Giacomo Casanova's kingdom buried in the depths of the Earth, are strangely colored: when the first language lesson is given to Edouard, the main character, of his four teachers two have yellow skins and two have blue, and they carry with them seven inkpots, each containing ink of one of the seven fundamental colors.\(^2\) The houses of Madaillan's Leliopolis have vividly lacquered pieces of furniture, "more perfect than Chinese ones," and replaced every year; their walls and ceilings, all white, are inlaid with gold.\(^3\) Even the austere inhabitants of Morus' Amaurotum live in houses whose windows are covered by linen cloth, coated with glossy oil or amber, while in Rabelais' Thélème the rooms are hung with different tapestries according to the season, the doors covered with green drapery, and in every room a crystal mirror is placed, framed with gold and pearls.

The chromatic atmosphere in Aleksandr Bogdanov's complex utopian novel *Krasnaia Zvezda* (The Red Star) strongly differs from the preceding examples.\(^4\) This may be considered one of the keys for its understanding.

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4. A. A. Bogdanov, *Krasnaia zvezda: Roman-utopiiia* (St. Petersburg: Tvorchestvo khudozhestvennoi pechati, 1908; Petrograd: Knigoizd-vo pisatelei, 1918; Leningrad, 1929). A modern reprint in the anthology *Vechnoe solntse*, comp. S. Kalmykov (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1979) is still significantly censored. All further references and quotations will be to the Petrograd 1918 edition, in the body of the article by KZ and page number in parentheses; the translation from Russian is mine.
Russian word krasnyi, meaning "red," is closely related to krasivyi, "beautiful," yet Mars, the Red Star, to which Leonid, the main character of the novel, flies on an eteronef, a starship propelled by minus-materiia (minus-matter, an antigravitational substance, somewhat similar to Wells' Cavorite) is frightening and chromatically disturbing to him. The vegetation is red, since a red substance takes the place of chlorophyll; but the red leaves diffuse a painfully bright light through the enormous windows of Martian homes, and the blue glass ceilings of Martian bedrooms do not seem conducive to human repose but to ugliness.

Such a feeling for landscapes and architecture would not be unusual in a science-fiction novel: SF readers are accustomed to every conceivable combination of strange or dreadful elements composing alien planets. However, it is quite unusual for a novel like The Red Star, written not only as a classical utopian tale but, what is more, written by a Bolshevik revolutionary three years after the 1905 Revolution and describing a world where socialism was achieved many generations ago. One would imagine such a novel would provide an occasion for a revolutionary leader, a philosopher of science, and a socialist dreamer to present a beautiful image of the world of socialism, but The Red Star shows such complex and interlocking contradictory features that doubts might arise about the utopian significance of the whole construction.

Bogdanov was himself one of the most interesting figures of the revolutionary movement leading to the 1917 October Revolution. As Lenin's friend and companion in the early stage of Bolshevik political activity, and as Lenin's rival later, his cultural influence on the revolutionary movement was outstanding. In spite of that, his name is little known even inside the Soviet Union, his works—like most works by the revolutionary "heretics" before the end of the 1920s—have been put into the "hell" of zakrytyi fond (closed stacks) of Soviet libraries.

Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Malinovskii (Bogdanov was only the best known of the many pseudonyms he used on the underground work) was born in 1873 to a teacher in Tula. Already in the local high school he conceived a harsh hatred against institutionalized culture and official power. He studied natural sciences in Moscow, but was arrested during a student rebellion in