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Arnold Brecht on his Personal Association with the Workers' Leaders
(Retrospective Account, 1966)

My personal association with the workers' leaders also contributed to changing my way of thinking, which had so long been rooted in the abstract, theoretical, and aesthetic. I came to feel deep respect for them. Their seriousness, conviction, and character impressed me. This was above all true of the craftsman type of Social Democrat, best represented by Ebert, the former saddler; or Severing, a former metalworker; or the former printer, Otto Braun. Lawyers like Landsberg and Haase, or intellectuals like Breitscheid, were less of a new world for me than those who had sprung from the class of manual workers.

It had been a habit of mine, as is the case with many intellectuals, to pepper my conversations with ironic comments. I soon discovered that in discussion with these men this habit was disturbing and confusing. They expressed their opinions frankly and wanted to learn mine without any unclear overtones. I began to talk to them in as straightforward a manner as they did to me and was ashamed of my ironic frivolities. Only now did I become a man, it seemed.

Source of English translation: Arnold Brecht, *The Political Education of Arnold Brecht, An Autobiography 1884-1970*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970, p. 125.

Source of original German text: Arnold Brecht, *Aus nächster Nähe, Lebenserinnerungen 1884-1927*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1966, pp. 214-15.