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*From a sketch by Boardman Robinson*

# Abraham Lincoln

# THE LIBERATOR

Vol. 4, No. 2 [Serial No. 35]

February, 1921

## Locked Out--By Mary Heaton Vorse

**E**ARLY in the lockout of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, I went to one of the shop meetings which ceaselessly succeed each other in many halls. A flood of men was pouring down the steps and spreading out in dark pools on the street where they stopped in the mild evening to talk together while children played gravely under their feet paying no attention to them. I asked one of the men—

“What’s the main issue of disagreement between you and the manufacturers?”

He said: “There’s only one. They want to smash the organization, all the rest is talk.”

I said: “Can they do it?”

He answered without excitement, “Not a chance.” He added as he moved to one of the groups of talking men: “We’ve suffered before—we can now if we got to.”

This man is right. The lockout is about one thing only. The seven points of the employers have a single meaning. The demanded reduction of wages is not important nor even the pressing question of piece work. The meaning of these seven points which the manufacturers presented to the Amalgamated in December was this: “We manufacturers are going to give you terms which we know you cannot accept. When you don’t accept them we will lock you out. Our pockets are bulging, your pockets are lean with five months of slack season. Winter is on us. When you refuse to accept our impossible conditions, we will break your organization. Hunger will be our ally. We will use hunger and the anxiety of your women to break you. When we drain the red from the faces of your children maybe you will see your way to doing without your organization.”

In their private meetings the employers have been predicting that before the winter is over they will “have labor eating out of their hands.”

They mean by that phrase that labor will be at their mercy, that the organizations will have been broken and that the open shop shall have become a fact.

The Amalgamated’s answer to the Manufacturers was a mass meeting where 30,000 clothing workers shouted “No,” to the manufacturers’ terms.

The lockout followed—65,000 clothing workers stopped working.

The lockout is a situation new to me. I have never seen a big lockout before. I have seen plenty of strikes. I have seen masses of people—miners, steel workers, metal miners, railway men, rise up in thousands in long heaving waves of discontent. I have heard their clamorous demands for a chance to live. I have seen them sit down tight, dug in for months for a principle—for the recognition of their union.

Always these demonstrations were an advancing tide. I have never before seen workers fighting to keep from returning to the slave conditions of sweat shop days.

Five months ago—only a few months after the time when the cry “Produce! Produce!” was being dinned into labor’s ears, it began to be slack season in the clothing trade.

Men were laid off. Men worked three days a week, then two days a week. The lockout merely was an emphasis of conditions—complete unemployment instead of partial unemployment.

At a slack and stale moment, the sluggish wheels of industry slowed down altogether. There was nothing dramatic about it. There was no thunderclap to make working people throughout the country realize that this had the importance of an historical moment, since it was the first time that combined greed was organized well enough to start a concerted battle on organized labor—combined greed with all its sinister forces at its command.

Now I will ask you to consider again the nature of the open shop and the weapons which it uses.

The Open Shop Campaign is a conspiracy on the part of the few to destroy the many. It is the first, direct, concerted attempt of the entrenched employers to destroy utterly the only weapon of the workers—their organization. It is mothered by panic and fathered by repression.

I know a cheerful young man who goes around organizing Chambers of Commerce. His place of business is a respectable one with a fine address to it of a well known firm, which undertakes organizing work of various kind. It has organized for the government. He is highly paid for his work. The idea is, of course, to organize the country one hundred per cent, into chambers of commerce and employers’ and manufacturers’ associations, whose purpose shall be to fight organized labor.

These chambers of commerce have no other object than fighting labor. They have lost all the other legitimate objects for which employers might band themselves together. When a town hasn’t enough white-terrorist feeling to do this of itself, some bright young man like my acquaintance is sent to organize the town.

“I go into a town,” he told me, “and throw a scare into it. If there is any employer who don’t want a shake-down and who thinks labor is all right, I talk red revolution to him. I tell him the red revolution is around the corner. Of course, I know it isn’t around the corner. But it’s great fun to see these birds fall for it, and get cold feet one after another.”

The first thing is to start a slush fund to finance weak brothers through lockouts.

The next thing is to start a spy system.

Like a growing cancer with obscure roots penetrating through the whole tissue of industrial life, is the spy system. Men are discharged for alleged union activities on the evidence of anonymous letters. Spotters are kept in every shop, in every factory. I have had a spy explain how it was done—how he filled every day a list of questions, and reported every day the conversations of his fellow workers.

When I asked him how he could do it, he said:

"Well, these fellows aren't human anyway. They send their money home, which hurts the prosperity of the country."

These under-cover men link up with the crime-breeding detective agencies. In many of the industries like the textile, for instance, a union man is surrounded by a net-work of detectives and spies ready to report him. If he is an alien and an active union man they report him to the Department of Justice, which will try to deport him. If he goes on a strike, there is another type of agency to cope with him.

There are the strike-breakers—hired scabs and hired thugs. Thugs to beat up the pickets, and scabs to take the workers' jobs. On top of this structure of filth, of violence and of espionage stand growths of the manufacturers' and employers' associations. The detective agencies, the provocateurs, and later if necessary, spies, thugs, scabs, the guards, the police, the constabulary, the militia and the United States troops—all this based on the cultivated fear of revolution among the credulous, are the sinister weapons of the open shop campaign.

To oppose their dark forces, the workers have only their collective courage, their collective genius, which goes by the name of solidarity. The clothing workers are especially knit together by powerful bonds. The suffering of sweatshop days is recent, though the organization left it behind in a few years.

They showed the mighty feeling of brotherhood by at once starting to raise a million dollar relief fund. The organization all over the country responded with what is known in the industry as the "Amalgamated Spirit."

Last year I went to the Amalgamated convention in Boston. I never, in any public gathering, had so keen a sense of fellowship and of beauty. It was a liberated people that was there assembled—a people recently emerged from bondage. It was different from any other convention that I had ever attended.

It was there that I first sensed the Amalgamated Spirit. The Amalgamated Spirit—you hear it all over when you go through the industry.

I take the Amalgamated Spirit to mean the creative force in the labor movement, force that knows where it is going, which has an ideal, which is constructive. A force that grows, educates, invents, is courageous and living. Yet in New York's vast indifference this lockout is swallowed up. Sixty-five thousand people out of work do not secure a ripple on New York's monstrous surface.

In Industrial towns, strikes flow up and down the main street. You see the sullen tide of men, of restless unoccupied men, an ordinary crowd on the street is a demonstration.

Labor is no longer confined within the factory walls. It overflows on to the streets. You feel the tension of the strike in the air. But New York swallows a strike as it swallows everything else. You know that the first gun has been fired at labor's forces, yet you have to hunt to find the lockout. For four weeks I have been following the progress of the lockout through the many halls from the Bronx to Brownsville. More widely sundered than the halls, are the people in them.

How far removed is this impeccably dressed young American

tailor from this Galician grandfather, powerful and deep-chested, with a long beard, a patriarch of Israel. How far apart in culture and ideals is this woman, a shawl over her patient head, her eyes submissive to sadness, waiting with her immemorial and unquestioning patience—and this fiery girl from Milano, scornful of American labor, her eyes across the sea watching for a glare of the revolution. Such people come together at meetings. Women whose only influence outside their homes has been the priests, women who stand on tip-toe, watching Russia, the flame of a new vision in their eyes. I have made friends with many of the people whose organization the manufacturers are seeking to destroy. I pick at random, over in the slack back water of Brooklyn, a basement tailor shop. A woman with a gipsy face, coarse gipsy hair, smouldering dark eyes, gayety in her mobile mouth—quick to anger, quick to laughter.

"You ask why I don't come to shop meeting—look one reason!" She pointed to a high chair where a gleaming-eyed baby bounced up and down. Its curls bobbed, its arms and legs never stopped. Hey, a good reason, and there on the floor another and there a little girl fed in the room a small boy in full pursuit. She shrieked, "Mama, mama!"

"Wot you think o' those *devil* reasons—and two more beside," she added as a complacent afterthought.

"W'en she work in shop," her husband explained, "we get woman for look after 'em. Now can't afford." He was a splendid young fellow and he stooped down to pick up the little girl in the sure-handed fashion of a man used to innumerable babies. The room was littered, babies swarmed, but happiness and youth lived here.

If the manufacturers succeeded in breaking the Amalgamated and bringing wages down to a standard that only beaten and helpless people will accept, what would happen to this home? But the spirit in this home—the spirit of the Amalgamated—is a bulwark against the plans of capitalism.

Near this riotous, hospitable family lived a slender stoop-shouldered young man, with a sensitive intellectual face. He had been working, he said, in a little repair shop. He was sure that this was not a scab shop, but if it was found out that the employer had ever been hostile to labor he would leave immediately.

So it went, in house after house. Fine people making the most of drab surroundings, people who had the precious sense of unity with their unknown fellow workers. Call it solidarity, or the Amalgamated Spirit—it is the motor power for the transformation of society.

On such visits one learns over again the incorruptible soundness of the workers in contrast with the total bankruptcy and corruption of this system by which they are exploited.

One can follow the strike from the slack hand-me-down streets of tepid Brooklyn, around Atlantic avenue to the hot, human rapids of the East Side, to whose recent glory I never am quite accustomed, for the old East Side of twenty years ago is still with me a vivid memory. To-day the squalid streets end at nightfall in vistas of glory. A swing of the car and the lofty-spanned Williamsburg bridge greets you, turn a corner, and New York's insolent turrets defy heaven. There is beauty here and heart-break and despair. There are hard young faces here and young people with dreams in their eyes! The creative artists of the labor movement, the radicals, are bred here.

I was looking for one of the Amalgamated families. An organizer and I went into a tenement of the type I remember so well many years ago—a converted house, with no conven-

iences of any kind. The halls were shockingly kept; rubbish stood in every corner; they were dark and they smelled bad.

And then the door opened on a home of spotless cleanliness. A big happy woman in a print house dress greeted us. She had the quality of a ripe coarse fruit. There was nothing to do but we must sit down and she would make us some coffee.

Her daughter would be in in a minute. And so we sat there under the pictures of a numerous family, the house pleasant with homely adornments and because of its cleanliness.

Presently the door opened and a little straight, lance-like Italian girl came in, the daughter. I wish I had a picture of her. This girl of seventeen or eighteen is the stuff which



Oh, sweet normalcy again!

wins industrial battles—composed, sleek, dark-haired, violet eyes under straight brows, with a concentrated hot anger, an anger held under control, an anger that could be used as a weapon. She had been born in this country, the noise of the East Side in her ears; she had been bred in the clothing trade, had seen it emerge from the sweatshop. So she was out to fight. You felt as you talked to her that the clothing manufacturers would not have much chance when the industry had mothered girls like this.

On New Year's day I got a new vision of the meaning of the Amalgamated. It came to me clear as a stab of light—something evident, something I had always known. On New Year's day I learned all over again that the strike was about children.

On that day the Amalgamated Clothing Workers gave a children's party. They hired all the halls that they could. But the children swamped the halls. I struggled through a children's mob to get into the hall where I was to go. I had never seen anything like the beauty of spirit of these children; they filled the hall with a sea of life.

## Hits and Misses

**I**F food is scarce this winter we can subsist upon that piecemeal tariff.

**W**HEN Harding tried to scrap the League he only got into a scrap with the Leaguers.

**T**HAT butler who got \$10 for stealing Schwab's \$10,000 cigar box hardly lost his amateur standing.

**T**HUS far everybody in South America has been polite to our Mr. Colby and if he keeps out of Columbia, Santo Domingo and Haiti, a pleasant time is going to be had by all.

**T**HE subject of taxation is getting too deep for us. Secretary Houston advises shifting more tax to small incomes because the rich cannot afford to pay.

**T**HAT satiric laughter recently heard in the land came from the revenue agents when people offered to pay their income tax with the "best security in the world" at face value.

In certain arid countries there grow flowers of flaming color; in the same way, the tenements of the East Side are a forcing ground for some of the most beautiful children in the world. They are lovely physically, but it is their flaming life which amazes one. They have a beauty of spirit, a quick response.

Crammed into this hall was the essence of life itself, the hope of the future, new born, fresh minted, a hall full of children ablaze in their love of beauty, thirsty for joy, famished for music.

What riches of mind and heart were crowded into this little hall! The good years of the organization, which has taken this industry from the sweatshop, has given these children strong bodies. They were bright of eye, red of cheek.

Outside were the lurking forces of disaster; forces arrayed against their fathers and mothers. The manufacturers were using the economic blockade of the lockout against their children in the attempt to break their fathers' spirit. The manufacturers with their army of thugs and spies and strike breakers are plotting against these children's future.

**A**UTHORITIES agree that the open shop movement can be carried too far. In New York they are not only breaking open shops but also safes.

**W**HEN Police Commissioner Enright accepted the resignation of Lieutenant Enright he gave himself a pension of \$3,750 a year as a slight token of self esteem. However, the paper says, "Christmas Eve was quiet in criminal circles."

**N**EW YORK STATE did not have to wait for normalcy until the fourth of March. Its new Republican administration has already been indicted into office.

**O**NE is relieved to learn that, contrary to first scareheads, Mr. Coolidge did not wash the dishes after his Christmas dinner. He is to have a place in the cabinet but not in the kitchen cabinet.

**T**HERE have been plenty of rumors from Marion but at the zero hour of going to press no actual appointments except that of Private Colonel to the President.

**A** BRAVE man like d'Annunzio could not possibly have run away, so his escape from Fiume in an aeroplane must be put down as a poetic flight.

**A** NEW YORK theatrical manager tried out his new play in Sing Sing. Now he is probably boasting that nobody got up and walked out.

**T**HINGS are coming Russia's way at last. The French Socialists sent them a signed blank, the British send them goods and we send them Martens.

**A** MERICAN hospitality has reached a new high level. Soviet Russia is not permitted to spend its gold here. "Your money," we say, "is not worth a cent."

**A** MOB of unemployed in England seized fifteen private residences, five libraries, four town halls and two public baths. They ought to have been pretty comfortable except at meal hours. Why not a couple of restaurants?

1921

To my friends:-

Some place up there,  
St. Peter, Charlie Marx  
and Jesus Christ,  
will ask you-

"What the ~~hell~~ did  
you do?"

Oh! then, then  
what will you say?

GROPCZ-





**JANUARY** is the time for announcing new partnerships.

Thus Dr. William A. McKeever of the University of Kansas appeals to the American Legion to "turn from the selfish cigarette and come out on the side of Christ and Kansas."

**T**HIS pearl dropped out of the Attorney General's message of Christmas cheer to the prisoners. "No matter how dark the present day may seem, the sun will rise again." In the bright lexicon of Palmer there is no such word as jail.

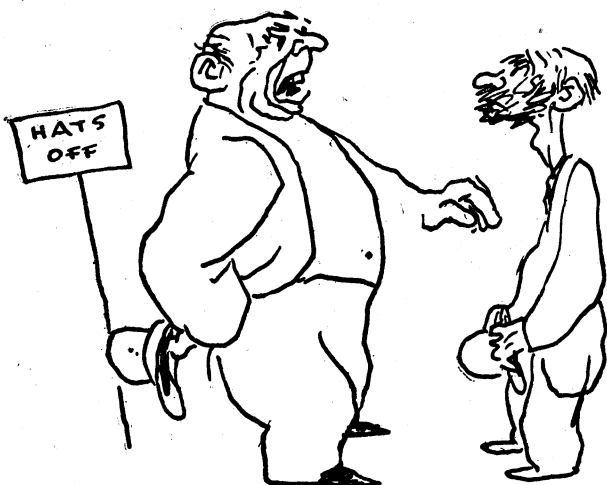
**P**EOPLE are getting more excited about the vague prospect of losing their personal liberty on the seventh day than they were over actually losing it on the other six.

**T**HEY want their place in the Sunday.

HOWARD BRUBAKER.



"—the same liberty as—"



"Ya comes here to this free—"



"—everybody else. An'—"



"—country and enjoys—"



"—still ya ain't satisfied!"

GROPER.



# Last Days With John Reed

A Letter from Louise Bryant

Moscow, Nov. 14, 1920.

DEAR MAX:—I knew you would want details and a story for the *Liberator*—but I did not have either the strength or the courage. As it is—I will be able to write only a very incoherent letter and you may take from it what you wish. Jack's death and my strenuous underground trip to Russia and the weeks of horror in the typhus hospital have quite broken me. At the funeral I suffered a very severe heart attack which by the merest scratch I survived. Specialists have agreed that I have strained my heart because of the long days and nights I watched beside Jack's bed and that it is enlarged and may not get ever well again. They do not agree, however, on the time it will take for another attack. I write you all these stupid things because I have to face them myself and because it must be part of the letter. The American and German doctors give me a year or even two, the Russians only months. I have to take stimulants and I am in not a bit of pain. I think I have better recuperative powers than they believe—but, anyway, it is a small matter. I once promised Jack that I would put all his works in order in case of his death. I will come home if I get stronger and do so.

All that I write now seems part of a dream. I am in no pain at all and I find it impossible to believe that Jack is dead or that he will not come into this very room any moment.

Jack was ill twenty days. Only two nights, when he was calmer, did I even lie down. Spotted typhus is beyond description, the patient wastes to nothing under your eyes.

But I must go back to tell you how I found Jack after my illegal journey across the world. I had to skirt Finland, sail twelve days in the Arctic ocean, hide in a fisherman's shack four days to avoid the police with a Finnish officer and a German, both under sentence of death in their own countries. When I did reach Soviet territory I was at the opposite end of Russia from Jack. When I reached Moscow he was in Baku at the Oriental Congress. Civil war raged in the Ukraine. A military wire reached him and he came back in an armored train. On the morning of September 15th he ran shouting into my room. A month later he was dead.

We had only one week together before he went to bed, and we were terribly happy to find each other. I found him older and sadder and grown strangely gentle and aesthetic. His clothes were just rags. He was so impressed with the suffering around him that he would take nothing for himself. I felt shocked and almost unable to reach the pinnacle of fervor he had attained.

The effects of the terrible experience in the Finnish gaol were all too apparent. He told me of his cell, dark and cold and wet. Almost three months of solitary confinement and only raw fish to eat. Sometimes he was delirious and imagined me dead. Sometimes he expected to die himself, so he wrote on books and everywhere a little verse:

*Thinking and dreaming  
Day and night and day*

*Yet cannot think one bitter thought away—  
That we have lost each other  
You and I....*

But walking in the park, under the white birch trees and talking through brief, happy nights, death and separation seemed very far away.

We visited together Lenin, Trotsky, Kaminev, Enver Pasha, Bela Kun, we saw the Ballet and Prince Igor and the new and old galleries.

He was consumed with a desire to go home. I felt how tired and ill he was—how near a breakdown and tried to persuade him to rest. The Russians told me that he often worked twenty hours a day. Early in his sickness I asked him to promise me that he would rest before going home since it only meant going to prison. I felt prison would be too much for him. I remember he looked at me in a strange way and said, "My dear little Honey, I would do anything I could for you, but don't ask me to be a coward." I had not meant it so. I felt so hurt that I burst into tears and said he could go and I would go with him anywhere by the next train, to any death or any suffering. He smiled so happily then. And all the days that followed he held me tightly by the hand. I could not leave him because he would shout for me. I have a feeling now that I have no right to be alive.

Of the illness I can scarcely write—there was so much pain. I only want you all to know how he fought for his life. He would have died days before but for the fight he made. The old peasant nurses used to slip out to the Chapel and pray for him and burn a candle for his life. Even they were touched and they see men die in agony every hour.

He was never delirious in the hideous way most typhus patients are. He always knew me and his mind was full of poems and stories and beautiful thoughts. He would say, "You know how it is when you go to Venice. You ask people—Is this Venice?—just for the pleasure of hearing the reply." He would tell me that the water he drank was full of little songs. And he related, like a child, wonderful experiences we had together and in which we were very brave.

Five days before he died his right side was paralyzed. After that he could not speak. And so we watched through days and nights and days hoping against all hope. Even when he died I did not believe it. I must have been there hours afterwards still talking to him and holding his hands. And then there came a time when his body lay in state with all military honor, in the Labor Temple, guarded by fourteen soldiers from the Red Army. Many times I went there and saw the soldiers standing stiffly, their bayonets gleaming under the lights and the red star of Communism on their military caps.

Jack lay in a long silver coffin banked with flowers and streaming banners. Once the soldiers uncovered it for me so I might touch the high white forehead with my lips for the last time.

On the day of the funeral we gathered in the great hall where he lay. I have very few impressions of that day. It was cold and the sky dark, snow fell as we began to march. I was conscious of how people cried and of how the banners floated and how the wailing heart-breaking Revolutionary funeral hymn, played by a military band, went on forever and ever.

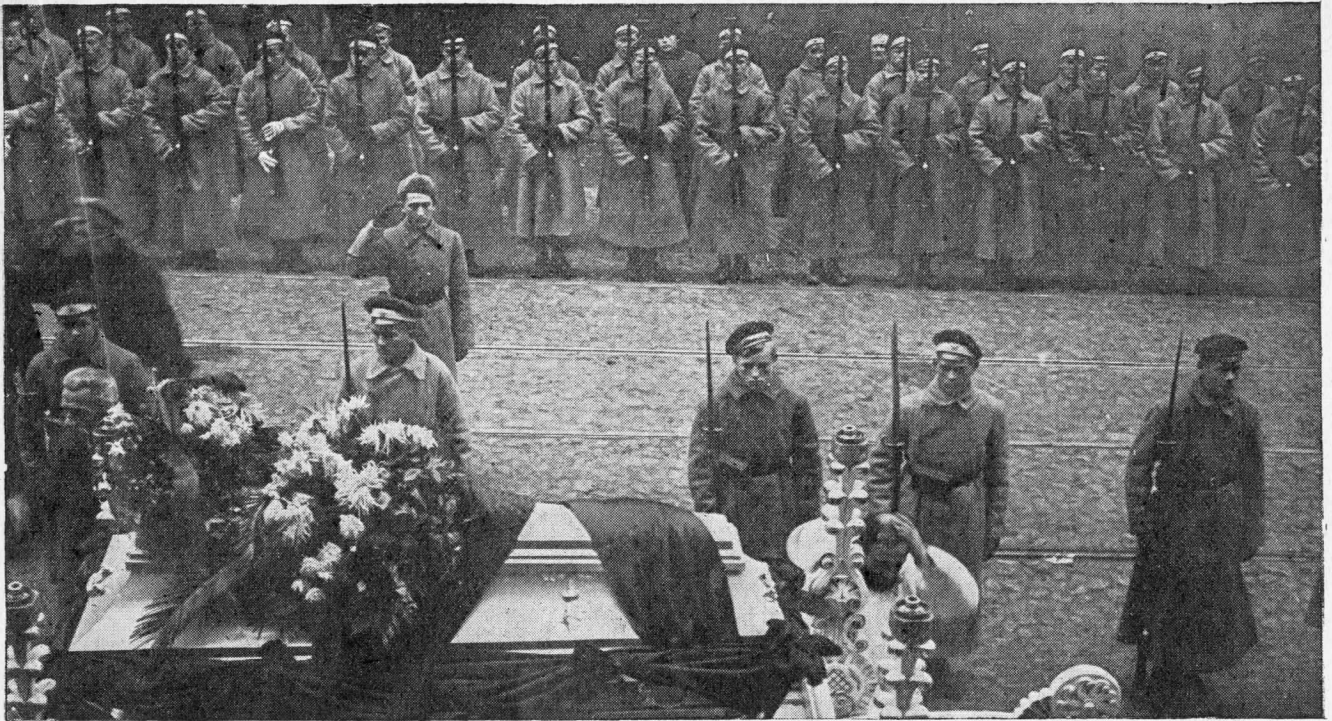
The Russians let me take my grief in my own way, since they felt I had thrown all caution to the winds in going to the hospital. On that day I felt very proud and even



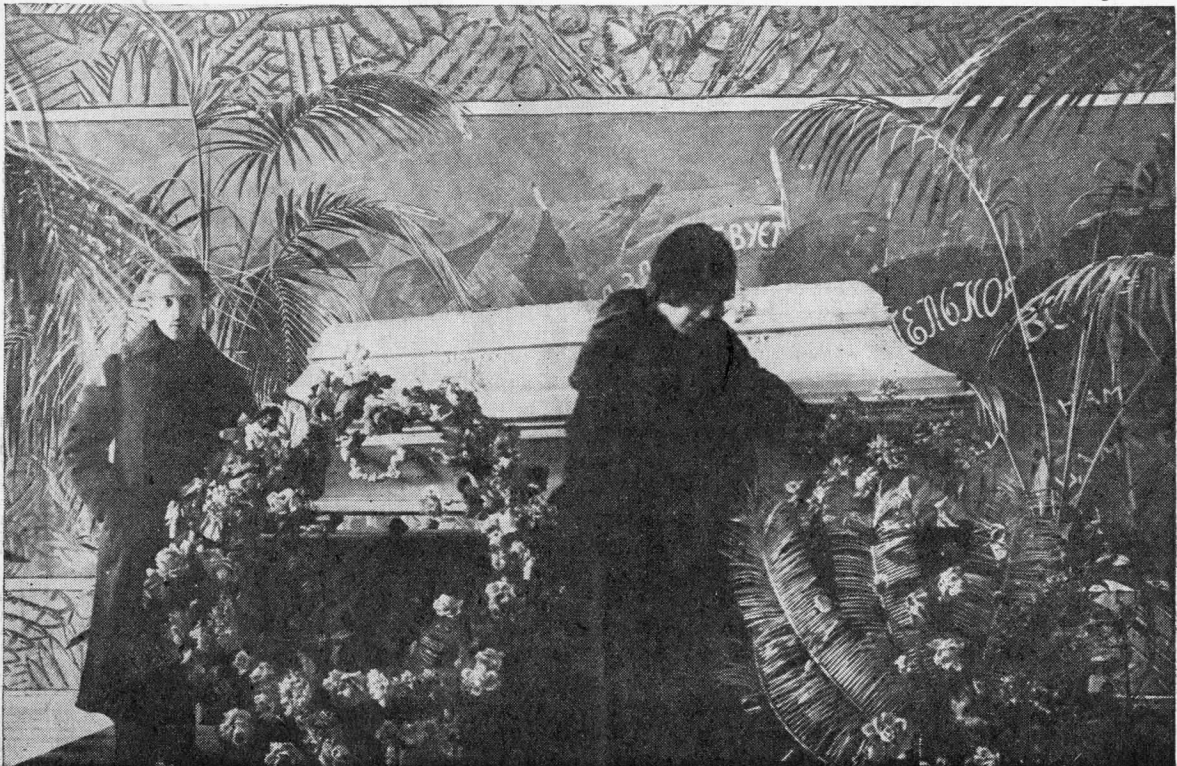
**The body of John Reed lying in state at the Labor Temple in Moscow**



**In the funeral procession—a group headed by Jacques Sadoul, the French Communist**



**Soldiers of the Red Army saluting their dead comrade from America**



**Louise Bryant beside the coffin of her husband**

strong. I wished to walk according to the Russian custom, quite by myself after the hearse. And in the Red Square I tried to stand facing the speakers with a brave face. But I was not brave at all and fell on the ground and could not speak or cry.

I do not remember the speeches. I remember more the broken notes of the speakers' voices. I was aware that after a long time they ceased and the banners began to dip back and forth in salute. I heard the first shovel of earth go rolling down and then something snapped in my brain. After an eternity I woke up in my own bed. Emma Goldman was standing there and Berkman, and two doctors and a tall young officer from the Red Army. They were whispering and so I went to sleep again.

But I have been in the Red Square since then—since that day all those people came to bury in all honor our dear Jack Reed. I have been there in the busy afternoon when all Russia hurries by, horses and sleighs and bells and peasants carrying bundles, soldiers singing on their way to the front. Once some of the soldiers came over to the grave. They took off their hats and spoke very reverently. "What a good fellow he was!" said one. "He came all the way across the world for us." "He was one of ours—" In another moment they shouldered their guns and went on again.

I have been there under the stars with a great longing to lie down beside the frozen flowers and the metallic wreaths and not wake up. How easy it would be!

I send greetings to all old friends.

Good luck to all of you.

LOUISE.

## Bach

TIME was, I would have smiled, and said—  
Your music is so cold and white—  
That empty was the life you led  
Of all delight.

But I that am in sorrow old  
Know now your life was never vain—  
Your music is so white and cold—  
But full of pain.

Your music is so cold and white—  
Hunger you were not fearful of,  
Or Mary's death, or loss of sight,  
That left you love.

I know your sorrows; they were few  
In all your life as it is told.  
Was there a grief that no friend knew  
Or tear consoled?

All alone in the deepening gloom,  
Johann Bach, I see you sit  
There at the clavier in your room,  
And your brows knit.

The twilight loveliness of spring,  
It is a wound that will not heal;  
The song that birds in the lindens sing,  
It cuts like steel.

You do not pause or glance aside,  
Lest in the shadows there might be  
Some token of some hope denied  
You dread to see.

Over the keys your fingers run.  
You cannot laugh; you will not moan;  
But beauty is oblivion,  
Beauty alone.

And when the lamp is faint, your hand  
Grown slow and heavy on the keys,  
You step into the garden, stand  
In the night breeze.

Spring is a laugh and dusk a sigh,  
Joy is a timbrel, love a lute;  
But cold and white upon the sky  
The stars are mute.

And mute upon the stars you gaze  
And lift your face to beauty there,  
Beauty that equally allays  
Desire, despair.

And brief the solemn clock has tolled  
From darkness underneath the spire;  
Over the trees the night is old  
When you retire. . . .

\* \* \*

Johann Bach, I rinse my thought,  
When pain appals and fears confound,  
In water of your music, wrought  
Of cold white sound.

Or walk beneath the stars and trace  
Their patterns etched upon the night,  
Where shepherd, lion, swan or face  
Burn cold and white.

Therein is beauty of a kind  
Remote, supernal, purged and pure  
As wind in rainfall; there I find  
Strength to endure.

Leonard Lanson Cline.

### To Our Friends

MICHAEL GOLD, formerly a contributor and lately made a contributing Editor of the Liberator, has suffered a serious nervous breakdown. Those interested in contributing to his recovery can send money to the Liberator.



Maurice Becker

## When the Devil was sick

TO JOHN REED

JACK, you are quiet now among the dead.  
 The pulse of the young lion and the fire  
 In that bright engine of extreme desire  
 That never would be tired or quieted,  
 That could fight, laugh, give, love, and sing,  
 And understand so carelessly—so brave  
 You seemed to ride on life as on a wave—  
 It all is dead now, dead and mouldering.

They say you died for Communism—they  
 Who to some absent god must always give  
 The choicest even of the fruits of youth.  
 You died for Life. Because you chose to live,  
 Death found you in the torrent of the fray,  
 Exulting in the future and the truth.

Max Eastman.

Note

"MARRIAGE and Freedom," a discussion by Floyd Dell, will begin in the next issue.

## THE LIBERATOR

*A Journal of Revolutionary Progress*

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# On Duty in Russia

A Letter from Boris Reinstein

*Moscow.*

I AM glad I can still report that I am alive and nearly well, though it is by mere lucky chance that I did not go to "the land where there are no capitalists and no Bolshevik workers fighting"—to the other world. During the last five months I had two unusually narrow escapes from death. I have already written to you about it, but not being sure that that letter had reached you, I repeat the main facts. On Jan. 8th last the Soviet troops entered Rostov-on-Don, and Denikin's officers and troops ran out of the city, panic-stricken, to the other side of the river. For some reasons, due to imperfect organization, the Reds did not pursue the fleeing Whites, and gave the latter a chance to entrench themselves at Bataisk (about six miles from Rostov) on a hill dominating the low lands between Bataisk and Rostov. Then began the bombardment of Rostov, which lasted for nearly eight weeks. Not a day or night passed but scores of shells dropped into the city, destroying homes and sometimes wiping out whole families.

Shortly after Rostov was taken by Soviet troops, I was ordered by the N. E. C. of the Russian party to go to work in Rostov. (Here the local or central administration of the party or of the unions has the same power by way of party discipline to order a party member or a union man to leave his job and his family and go wherever he is most needed, just as the government sends soldiers wherever they are needed.) I reached Rostov on Feb. 6th last, and was appointed to work as a member of something like a State Board of Health for the entire territory of the Don Cossacks. Besides I had to lecture in political party schools and was also put in charge of all the wine, whiskey and alcohol at all the innumerable wine-dealers of Rostov. It was my duty to take stock of all such supplies in the city, to have them properly graded and to superintend their distribution for medicinal, pharmaceutical, technical, etc., purposes. I got busy first of all on arranging for regular delivery daily of at least two carloads of coal (all that was available) for the hospitals, military or civil, of the city; for I found that, because of lack of fuel in the hospitals, the sick and wounded were freezing in the wards—they often could get not even warm tea till evening, and the hospital linen, which remained unwashed, was accumulating in enormous quantities—and that in face of a terrific epidemic of sypniak (spotted typhoid fever), which was raging everywhere in Russia.

When I got to Rostov the bombardment of the city by the Whites from Bataisk was in full swing, and oftentimes, when going to work, I did not feel sure that I'd return alive, since shells were sometimes bursting in the streets a short distance off.

But we gradually got used to the music. Finally, on Feb. 22 (Washington's Birthday), after an unusually severe cannonading during the night, I woke up to learn that our military supplies were being carted away, and everybody (troops, workingmen, etc.,) was getting ready to evacuate before the White Cossack forces that were about to enter the city. The main difficulty was to get some vehicle to get out of town. All the available ones were needed to remove from the hospitals and the city the sick and the wounded, and the Red

Army men. Some comrades wanted to put me on a cart with the sick, but I refused because it meant to leave behind some sick comrades who were not able to walk. The sick and wounded that fell into the hands of the Whites are generally murdered by them.

Two women comrades, entire strangers in the city, ran home from the headquarters to get a bundle of their most necessary things before leaving the city. I promised to wait for them, though I urged them not to bother about clothes, etc., when their very lives were at stake. But woman-like, they persisted and went. Before they returned with the bundles a comrade with an auto came along and invited me to jump in and rush with him out of town. To do that meant to get out of danger for myself but to leave the two inexperienced women to their fate, which—as often happens to women that fell into the hands of the counter-revolutionists—meant being raped and then murdered. I could not do that and decided to throw my lot in with the women. The comrade with the auto rushed off. I remained behind, waiting anxiously for the women; as every minute the White Cossacks were drawing nearer and one could already hear rifle and machine-gun shots in the street.

Finally the women came, lugging two parcels. I again pleaded with them to sacrifice the baggage and hurry off, but it was of no avail. There we stood on the street, watching wagons, loaded to the limit with sick and weak comrades passing us in the direction towards the outskirts. Finally a motor truck carrying some fifteen people came along. There was still room for more, we piled in and drove off. In a few minutes we were at the end of the city street. Farther were snow-covered fields. A long string of people were rushing across the snow-fields. Our chauffeur stopped at the city limits, declaring that the machine was out of order and he could not drive across the snow-fields. Out we went and joined the long procession of unarmed people that were rushing across the snow-fields. To the right of us was a line of huts of poor people. To the left, snow-fields, and about one-third of a mile of a railroad track with a string of freight cars standing on it. We hardly managed to rush past a few houses when the Whites, who had evidently got around the city and hid in the freight cars, opened on us a terrific machine-gun fire.

We all dropped on the snow, some killed and wounded. As the fire slackened up, those nearest to the houses would pick themselves up and run into the yards, the rest of us would run a short distance ahead and drop to the snow again as the fire would get hotter, and after a while would run a little farther. Thus I and the two women gradually reached the end of the second block. There were no houses further and the firing kept increasing. To run along the snow-fields meant to present a beautiful target for the machine guns. We turned around the corner and a few feet from it dropped cowering down between a high 8-foot fence and a snowdrift piled up on the sidewalk. While we lay there the White Cossacks with machine-guns and artillery gradually took possession of the near-by houses.

It appeared that any minute they would come up to the corner near us and that would mean the end. We saw six shells crashing through the walls of a Red Army hospital across the street from where we were hiding. Shells and machine-gun bullets were flying over our heads so thick that I lost all hope of coming out alive, and feeling that I had only some minutes more to live was only thinking how to act (when the Whites discovered us) so as to prevent them from



getting us alive and torturing us, as they do. I had a revolver in my pocket and during the three-and-a-half hours we were hiding there I did not take my finger off the trigger, in spite of the strain and excitement of the fight around us.

One of the two women began to fall asleep in the snow. Knowing that she would thus freeze to death we kept her awake. Finally, when the firing began to quiet down, we managed to run into a yard and there, in a hut of a sick, poor working man, we spent a night sitting on the bench. Soon after we got into the hut a neighbor came in and said that the Denikin Cossacks had already taken possession of the outskirts of the town. When night fell we heard every few minutes rifle-shooting in the neighborhood, and we understood that the White Cossacks were searching the yards, dragged out those they found hiding, and shooting them down. All through the evening and night we expected every minute than our turn would come.

But morning came at last and nobody showed up. Then we learned that during the night the Reds had beaten off the attack of the Whites. We then decided to return to my room, leaving the baggage in the hut. Later we learned that three hours after we left the hut the Whites had again taken possession of the outskirts and came also to that hut in search for Soviet people; but we were already gone, and the women of the hut had thrown our baggage out on the street for fear of getting into trouble. Thus our clothes, etc., were lost anyhow. Soon after we came to my home, in the afternoon of the second day, the Whites with their reinforcements, firing along the streets with artillery and machine guns, swept through the whole city. In the evening the city was in full possession of Denikin's troops. There we were in the enemy's camp, without passports, without a safe place to hide in, and no chance to get out of the city—and to make matters worse, I was already well-known in the city by name and appearance. I had to shave off my mustache, change my appearance, and go every night to a different place, risking being recognized by some supporter of Denikin.

Thus, after all kinds of adventure, four days passed. I figured that it would take a few weeks before the Reds would take the city, and was only concerned how to find a safe place for the three of us. (I did not know of other comrades that were in the same fix.) Suddenly, towards evening of the fourth day, we heard again approaching heavy firing—it was the reinforced Red Army sweeping the Whites once more out of the city. In a couple of hours the scenery had shifted again—the Soviet flag was flying in Rostov and we were safe. I went home and had a good night's sleep.

The next morning I resumed my work. But a few days later I had another "close shave." Maybe a still closer shave than the first one. I came down with an exceedingly severe case of spotted typhus, probably contracted in the hut of the sick workingman.

For over two weeks I was unconscious with fever around 102-104. The doctors did all they could, but I was burning up with fever. They injected eight bottles of 500 grams each of aniline solution, innumerable injections of camphor, etc. When finally my brain got affected and hiccoughs set in uninterrupted for about thirty hours, the doctor lost hope and expected the end before morning. I pulled through, chiefly thanks to my sister-in-law Bertha and one of the women (the one that nearly froze to death during the attack of the Whites)—these two women watched at my bed day and night, almost without taking their finger off my pulse. About

the time of the crisis in my sickness, Kalinin, workingman-peasant president of the Russian Soviet republic, happened to pass through Rostov with his agitation-train, and having learned of my dangerous condition, he visited me (I was unconscious at the time) and left some money and provisions and ordered that all possible be done to save me. I was saved, and in April I began to get out of bed. On May 5th I went to recuperate to a sanitarium in the Caucasian mountains (in Kistlovodsk). Early in June I was in working trim again. There were none of the serious complications that often follow spotted typhus, but the doctors diagnosed (and the Roentgenoscope proved it) that I have a serious case of dortite due to sclerosis and too severe strain on the heart during the sickness. Still I hope to work along in our great task for some time yet. Of course I must be a little more careful, as the aorta is quite elongated and damaged. I am now back in Moscow temporarily, in a few days will go to Rostov, and about end of September will finally return to Moscow. . . .

If \_\_\_\_\_ had a clear idea what great opportunities she would have here to apply her knowledge, energy and experience in any field—in that of social medicine, of social bringing up and care of children never dreamt of in other countries, of propaganda and organization work, etc.—she would have found a way to get over here long ago. She would certainly spend here the happiest time of her life, feeling that while suffering from less food and material comforts than in America, she at last had a chance to devote every hour of her time, every ounce of her energy, to the most wonderful work of reconstruction of society on such a large scale and such progressive lines as we never expected to have an opportunity for during our lifetime. I suffered much from strain, hunger and other material causes during these three years, but I would not change for thirty years of work under "normal" conditions. Yours, B.

## A Memory

A LITTLE more than five years ago Jack Reed and I stood in the Kremlin, at Moscow, and contemplated that old cemetery under the ancient wall. Nicholas II was still on the throne of his fathers, and his minions were all about us—some of them, we knew, charged with the not difficult task of keeping their eyes on us.

The mutilated bones of that emperor now lie in an unknown grave, his empire has passed into history, and the mysterious powers of change, amid a multitude in tears and to the triumphing strains of The Internationale, having placed the splendid body of Jack Reed in the ground once sacred to the Romanoff—still the heart of Russia, and the capital of the world's workers.

The fact is grandiose enough, and could Jack have prefigured it, he would have smiled and shrugged, with an artist's admiration of the large movements of destiny, but it would not have seemed important to him. He would not have thought a thought, or done a deed, to escape a more humble end, or to achieve a happier fate—if that would have interfered with the doing of his job as he saw it. That job he did with an immense and joyous energy, regardless of jolts and scars, and with a magnanimity only possible to a great spirit.

BOARDMAN ROBINSON



Some people seem to be unpopular everywhere—not wanted here on earth, barred out from heaven for fear of their spoiling it too, and usually, as Dante says, “Neither would deep Hell receive them.”

“Nello profondo inferno gli riceve . . .”

—Dante

# Towards Proletarian Art

By Irwin Granich

## The Apocalypse

IN blood, in tears, in chaos and wild, thunderous clouds of I fear the old economic order is dying. We are not appalled or startled by that giant apocalypse before us. We know the horror that is passing away with this long winter of the world. We know, too, the bright forms that stir at the heart of all this confusion, and that shall rise out of the debris and cover the ruins of capitalism with beauty. We are prepared for the economic revolution of the world, but what shakes us with terror and doubt is the cultural upheaval that must come. We rebel instinctively against that change. We have been bred in the old capitalist planet, and its stuff is in our very bones. Its ideals, mutilated and poor, were yet the precious stays of our lives. Its art, its science, its philosophy and metaphysics are deeper in us than logic or will. They are deeper than the reach of the knife of our social passion. We cannot consent to the suicide of our souls. We cling to the old culture, and fight for it against ourselves. But it must die. The old ideals must die. But let us not fear. Let us fling all we are into the cauldron of the Revolution. For out of our death shall arise glories, and out of the final corruption of this old civilization we have loved shall spring the new race—the Supermen.

## A Basis in the Maelstrom

It is necessary first to discuss our place in eternity.

I myself have felt almost mad as I staggered back under the blows of infinity. That huge, brooding pale evil all about me—that endless Nothing out of which Something seems to have evolved somehow—that nightmare in man's brain called Eternity—how it has haunted me! Its poison has almost blighted this sweet world I love.

The curse of the thought of eternity is in the brain and heart of every artist and thinker. But they do not let it drive them mad, for they discover what gives them strength and faith to go on seeking its answer. They realize in revelations that the language of eternity is not man's language, and that only through the symbolism of the world around us and manifest in us can we draw near the fierce, deadly flame.

The things of the world are all portals to eternity. We can approach eternity through the humble symbols of Life—through beasts and fields and rivers and skies, through the common goodness and passion of man. Yet what is Life, then? What is that which my body holds like a vessel filled with fire? What is that which grows, which changes, which manifests itself, which moves in clod and bird and ocean and mountain, and binds them so invisibly in some mystic league of purpose? I have contemplated all things great and small with this question on my lips. And seeking a synthesis for Life, and thus for eternity, I early found that the striving, dumb universe had strained to its fullest expressiveness in the being of man.

Man was Life become vocal and sensitive. Man was Life become dramatic and complete. He gained and he lost; he knew values; he knew joys and sorrows, and not mere pleasures and pains. He was bad, glad, sad, mad; he was color

## The Dead and the Living

From a letter written by John Reed

“ONE may say, I think with entire truth, that the majority of the working class vanguard who made the October Revolution are dead. These were the best, the most intelligent, the bravest of the workers. These were the force and the brain of the revolution, the Bolsheviks of October days. And when all the energy and courage of Soviet Russia was concentrated on the creation of the Red Army, on the defense of Soviet Russia against the world, these comrades went to the front, and died there.

“In each emergency the working-class of the great industrial centers was stripped of its conscious revolutionists, and those left behind in the factories were the less intelligent, the less consciously revolutionists. The first rank came back no more. Then arose another crisis; the mass fermented, and from it sprang a new rank of revolutionists, called forth by the danger to Soviet Russia. These were skimmed off, too, leaving again the raw mass. And so on. Eleven times have the workers of Moscow and Petrograd been so skimmed off, leaving an ever and ever greater proportion of unintelligent, unskilled, unclass-conscious workers—boys, old men, half-peasants fresh from villages. And still the revolutionists spring up. This is the test and the justification of the Revolution.”

and form; he contained everything I had not found in the white, meaningless face of pure Eternity. Eternity became interesting only in him. He had desires; he engendered climaxes. He moved me to the soul with his pathos and aspirations. He was significant to me; he made me think and love. Life's meaning was to be found only in the great or mean days between each man's birth and death, and in the mystery and terror hovering over every human head.

Seeking God we find Man, ever and ever. Seeking answers we find men and women.

## In the Depths

I can feel beforehand the rebellion and contempt with which many true and passionate artists laboring in all humility will greet claims for a defined art. It is not a mere aristocratic scorn for the world and its mass-yearnings that is at the root of the artists' sneer at “propaganda.” It is a deeper, more universal feeling than that. It is the consciousness that in art Life is speaking out its heart at last, and that to censor the poor brute-murmurings would be sacrilege. Whatever they are, they are significant and precious, and to stifle the meanest of Life's moods taking form in the artist would be death. Artists are bitter lovers of Life, and in beauty or horror she is ever dear to them. I wish to speak no word against their holy passion, therefore, and I regard with reverence the scarred and tortured figures of the artist-saints of time, battling against their demons, bearing each a ponderous cross, receiving solemnly in decadence, insanity, filth and fear the special revelation Life has given them.

I respect the suffering and creations of all artists. They are deeper to me than theories artists have clothed their naked passions in. I would oppose no contrary futile dogmas. I would show only, if I can, what manner of vision Life has

vouchsafed me, what word has descended on me in the midst of this dark pit of experience, what form my days and nights have taken, as they proceed in strange nebular whirling toward the achievement of new worlds of art.

I was born in a tenement. That tall, sombre mass, holding its freight of obscure human destinies, is the pattern in which my being has been cast. It was in a tenement that I first heard the sad music of humanity rise to the stars. The sky above the airshaft was all my sky; and the voices of the tenement-neighbors in the airshaft were the voices of all my world. There, in suffering youth, I feverishly sought God and found Man. In the tenement Man was revealed to me, Man, who is Life speaking. I saw him, not as he has been pictured by the elder poets, groveling or sinful or romantic or falsely god-like, but one sunk in a welter of humble, realistic cares; responsible, instinctive, long-suffering and loyal; sad and beaten yet reaching out beautifully and irresistibly like a natural force for the mystic food and freedom that are Man's.

All that I know of Life I learned in the tenement. I saw love there in an old mother who wept for her sons. I saw courage there in a sick worker who went to the factory every morning. I saw beauty in little children playing in the dim hallways, and despair and hope and hate incarnated in the simple figures of those who lived there with me. The tenement is in my blood. When I think it is the tenement thinking. When I hope it is the tenement hoping, I am not an individual; I am all that the tenement group poured into me during those early years of my spiritual travail.

Why should we artists born in tenements go beyond them for our expression? Can we go beyond them? "Life burns in both camps," in the tenements and in the palaces, but can we understand that which is not our very own? We, who are sprung from the workers, can so easily forget the milk that nourished us, and the hearts that gave us growth? Need we apologize or be ashamed if we express in art that manifestation of Life which is so exclusively ours, the life of the toilers? What is art? Art is the tenement pouring out its soul through us, its most sensitive and articulate sons and daughters. What is Life? Life for us has been the tenement that bore and moulded us through years of meaningful pain.

### The Old Moods

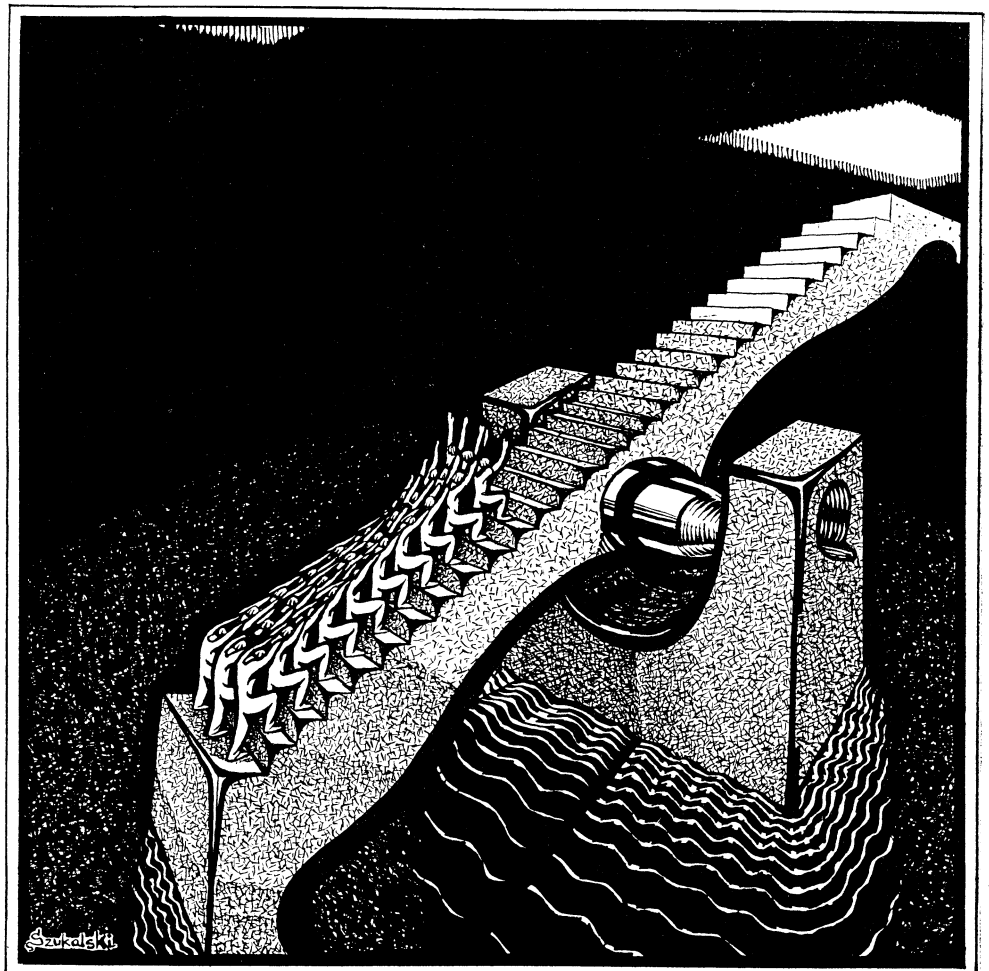
A boy of the tenements feels the slow, mighty movement that is art stir within him. He broods darkly on the Life around him. He wishes to understand and express it, but does not know his wish. He turns to books, instead. There he finds reflections, moods, philosophies, but they do not bring him peace. They are myriad and bewildering, they

are all the voices of solitaries lost and distracted in Time.

The old moods, the old poetry, fiction, painting, philosophies, were the creations of proud and baffled solitaries. The tradition has arisen in a capitalist world that even its priests of art must be lonely beasts of prey—competitive and unsocial. Artists have deemed themselves too long the aristocrats of mankind. That is why they have all become so sad and spiritually sterile. What clear, strong faith do our intellectuals believe in now? They have lost everything in the vacuum of logic where they dwell. The thought of God once sustained their feet like rock, but they slew God. Reason was once their star, but they are sick with Reason. They have turned to the life of the moods, to the worship of beauty and sensation, but they cannot live there happily. For Beauty is a cloud, a mist, a light that comes and goes, a vague water changing rapidly. The soul of Man needs some sure and permanent thing to believe, to be devoted to and to trust. The people have that profound Truth to believe in—their instincts. But the intellectuals have become contemptuous of the people, and are therefore sick to death.

The people live, love, work, fight, pray, laugh; they accept all, they accept themselves, and the immortal urgings of Life within them. They know reality. They know bread is necessary to them; they know love and hate. What do the intellectuals know?

The elder artists have all been sick. They have had no roots



The Machine Age

Stanley Szukalski

in the people. The art ideals of the capitalistic world isolated each artist as in a solitary cell, there to brood and suffer silently and go mad. We artists of the people will not face Life and Eternity alone. We will face it from among the people.

We must lose ourselves again in their sanity. We must learn through solidarity with the people what Life is.

Masses are never pessimistic. Masses are never sterile. Masses are never far from the earth. Masses are never far from the heaven. Masses go on—they are the eternal truth. Masses are simple, strong and sure. They never are lost long; they have always a goal in each age.

What have the intellectuals done? They have created, out of their solitary pain, confusions, doubts and complexities. But the masses have not heard them; and Life has gone on.

The masses are still primitive and clean, and artists must turn to them for strength again. The primitive sweetness, the primitive calm, the primitive ability to create simply and without fever or ambition, the primitive satisfaction and self-sufficiency—they must be found again.

The masses know what Life is, and they live on in gusto and joy. The lot of man seems good to them despite everything; they work, they bear children, they sing and play. But intellectuals have become bored with the primitive monotony of Life—with the deep truths and instincts.

The boy in the tenement must not learn of their art. He must stay in the tenement and create a new and truer one there.

### The Revolution

The Social Revolution in the world to-day arises out of the deep need of the masses for the old primitive group life. Too long have they suppressed that instinct most fundamental to their nature—the instinct of human solidarity. Man turns bitter as a competitive animal. In the Orient, where millions live and labor and die, peace has brooded in the air for centuries. There have never been individuals there, but family clans and ancestor worshipers, so that men have felt themselves part of a mystic group extending from the dim past into the unfolding future. Men have gathered peace from that bond, and strength to support the sorrow of Life. From the solidarity learned in the family group, they have learned the solidarity of the universe, and have created creeds that

fill every device of the universe with the family love and trust.

The Social Revolution of to-day is not the mere political movement artists despise it as. It is Life at its fullest and noblest. It is the religion of the masses, articulate at last. It is that religion which says that Life is one, that Men are one, through all their flow of change and differentiation; that the destiny of Man is a common one, and that no individual need bear on his weak shoulders alone the crushing weight of the eternal riddle. None of us can fail, none of us can succeed.

The Revolution, in its secular manifestations of strike, boycott, mass-meeting, imprisonment, sacrifice, agitation, martyrdom, organization, is thereby worthy of the religious devotion of the artist. If he records the humblest moment of that drama in poem, story or picture or symphony, he is realizing Life more profoundly than if he had concerned himself with some transient personal mood. The ocean is greater than the tiny streams that trickle down to be lost in its godhood. The Revolution is the permanent mood in which Man strains to goodness in the face of an unusual eternity; it is greater than the minor passing moods of men.

### Walt Whitman's Spawn

The heroic spiritual grandfather of our generation in America is Walt Whitman. That giant with his cosmic intuitions and comprehensions, knew all that we are still stumbling after. He knew the width and breadth of eternity, and ranged its fearful spaces with the faith of a Viking. He knew Man; how Man was the salt and significance of Eternity, and how Man's soul outweighed the splendor and terror of the stars. Walt feared nothing; nothing shook his powerful serenity; he was unafraid before the bewildering tragedy of Life; he was strong enough to watch it steadily, and even to love it without end.

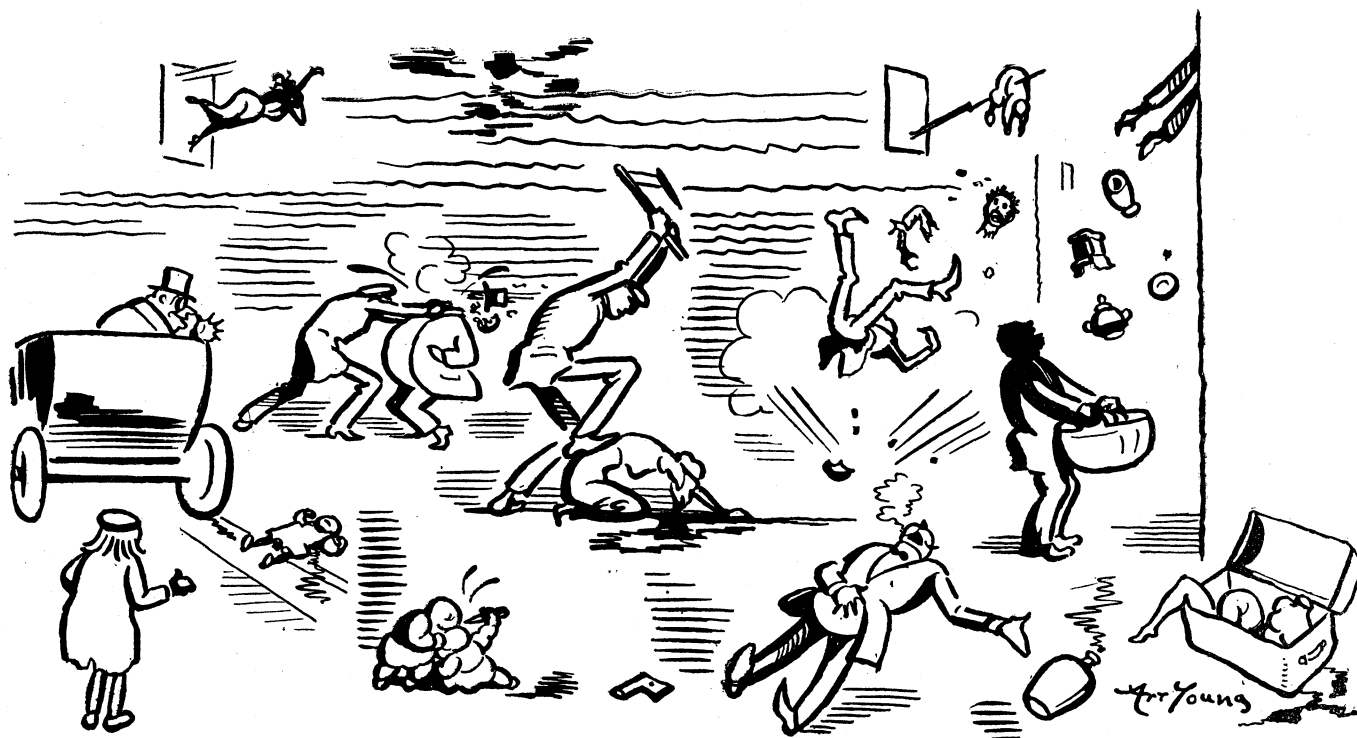
Walt dwelt among the masses, and from there he drew his strength. From the obscure lives of the masses he absorbed those deep affirmations of the instinct that are his glory. Walt has been called a prophet of individualism, but that is the usual blunder of literature. Walt knew the masses too well to believe that any individual could rise in intrinsic value above them. His individuals were those great, simple farmers and mechanics and sailors and ditch-diggers who are to be found everywhere among the masses—those powerful, natural persons whose heroism needs no drug of fame or applause to enable them to continue; those humble, mighty parts of the mass, whose self-sufficiency comes from their sense of solidarity, not from any sense of solitariness.

Walt knew where America and the world were going. He made but one mistake, and it was the mistake of his generation. He dreamed the grand dream of political democracy, and thought it could express in completion all the aspirations of proletarian man. He was thinking of a proletarian culture, however, when he wrote in his *Democratic Vistas*:

"I say that democracy can never prove itself beyond cavil, until it founds and luxuriantly grows its own forms of art, poems, schools, theology, displacing all that exists, or that has been produced anywhere in the past, under opposite influences."



"Hep!"



## The Crime Wave

Walt Whitman is still an esoteric poet to the American masses, and it is because that democracy on which he placed his passionate hope was not a true thing. Political democracy failed to evoke from the masses here all the grandeur and creativeness Walt knew so well were latent in them, and the full growth of which would have opened their hearts to him as their divinest spokesman.

The generation of artists that followed Walt were not yet free from his only fundamental error. Walt, in his poetry, had intuitively arrived at the proletarian art, though his theory had fallen short of the entire truth. The stream of his successors in literature had no such earthy groundwork as his, however. When they wrote of the masses it was not as Walt, the house-builder, the tramp, the worker, had, not as literary investigators, reporters, genteel and sympathetic observers peering down from a superior economic plane. Walt still lived in the rough equalitarian times of a semi-pioneer America, but his successors were caught in the full rising of the industrial expansion. They could not possibly escape its subtle class psychologies.

But now, at last, the masses of America have awakened, through the revolutionary movement, to their souls. Now, at last, are they prepared to put forth those huge-hewn poets, those striding, out-door philosophers and horny-handed creators of whom he prophesied. Now are they fully aware that America is theirs. Now they can sing it. Now their brain and heart, embodied in the revolutionary element among them, are aroused, and they can relieve Walt, and follow him in the massive labors of the earth-built proletarian culture.

The method of erecting this proletarian culture must be the revolutionary method—from the deepest depths upward.

In Russia of the workers the proletarian culture has begun forming its grand outlines against the sky. We can begin to see what we have been dimly feeling so necessary

through these dark years. The Russian revolutionists have been aware with Walt that the spiritual cement of a literature and art is needed to bind together a society. They have begun creating the religion of the new order. The "*Prolet-Kult*" is their conscious effort towards this. It is the first effort of historic Man towards such a culture.

The Russians are creating all from the depths upward. Their *Prolet-Kult* is not an artificial theory evolved in the brains of a few phrase-intoxicated intellectuals, and foisted by them on the masses. Art cannot be called into existence that way. It must grow from the soil of life, freely and without forethought. But art has always flourished secretly in the hearts of the masses, and the *Prolet-Kult* is Russia's organized attempt to remove the economic barriers and social degradation that repressed that proletarian instinct during the centuries.

In factories, mines, fields and workshops the word has been spread in Russia that the nation expects more of its workers than production. They are not machines, but men and women. They must learn to express their divinity in art and culture. They are encouraged and given the means of that expression, so long the property of the bourgeoisie.

The revolutionary workers have hammered out, in years of strife, their own ethics, their own philosophy and economics. Now, when their ancient heroism is entering the cankered and aristocratic field of art, there is an amazing revaluation of the old value manifest there. We hear strange and beautiful things from Russia. We hear that hope has come back to the pallid soul of man. We hear that in the workers' art there are no longer the obsessions and fears that haunted the brains of the solitary artists. There is tranquility and humane strength. The attitude toward love and death and eternity have altered—all the fever is out of them, all the tragedy. Nothing seems worthy of despair to the

mass-soul of the Russian workers, that conquered the horrors of the Czardom. They have learned to work and hope. A great art will arise out of the new great life in Russia—and it will be an art that will sustain man, and give him equanimity, and not crucify him on his problems as did the old. The new artists feel the mass-sufficiency, and suffer no longer that morbid sense of inferiority before the universe that was the work of the solitaires. It is the resurrection.

In America we have had attempts to carry on the work of old Walt, but they have failed, and must fail, while the propagandists still lack Walt's knowledge that a mighty national art cannot arise save out of the soil of the masses. Their appeal has been to the leisured class who happen to be at present our intellectuals. Such groups as centered around the Seven Arts magazine and the Little Review tried to set in motion the sluggish current of vital American art. The

Little Review, preaching the duty of artistic insanity, and the Seven Arts, exhorting all to some vague spirit of American virility, alike failed, for they based their hopes on the studios.

It is not in that hot-house air that the lusty great tree will grow. Its roots must be in the fields, factories and workshops of America—in the American life.

When there is singing and music rising in every American street, when in every American factory there is a drama-group of the workers, when mechanics paint in their leisure, and farmers write sonnets, the greater art will grow and only then.

Only a creative nation understands creation. Only an artist nation understands art.

The method must be the revolutionary method—from the deepest depths upward.



*Cornelia Barns*

## Cold Days

"Be real quiet, and they'll think we've come in to take a train!"

# The Apple

A Story by Mary Heaton Vorse

THERE wasn't any more work for anybody. In all the tenements it was just the same. It was just the same next door. Rosie knew because she asked Reba Rosalsky, "It's slack season by pants with you, too?"

"Sure, it's slack season everywhere," said Reba. "There's no work nowhere. If I hadn't got extra shoes last year my ma said I couldn't go to school this year."

Slack season had been going on so long that Rosie had almost forgotten the time when it hadn't been like that. Slack season is when your papa isn't working much. Sometimes he works two days a week, and sometimes there isn't any work at all. When there wasn't any work he went out to look for it, and then he would come back from the employment bureau on Fourth street and say, "It's getting worse and worse."

Before there was a slack season Rosie's mother didn't have to work, and now she went out and got pants to finish at home. She and Katie worked all day long from early morning till late at night. Katie was sixteen. There were four others besides Rosie and Katie. And Katie, she said she would tell the world, "You never could fill those kids up."

Rosie used to listen to the women in the hall and on the street. They talked about one thing. They talked about jobs and what were they going to do this winter. Then they began talking about the lockout. They talked in a way that scared Rosie. They talked about the lockout and the winter as if it was some awful creature to eat up people.

Rosie's papa scarcely talked to the kids. When he came home her mother would say, "Well?" and he wouldn't answer. He wouldn't look at her. And he would let himself down into the chair and look ahead of him as if he didn't know anybody, and Rosie didn't dare to speak to him.

But Celia, who wasn't five years old yet, didn't know enough to be afraid of him. She would run up and kiss him just as she used to.

Everything was different. Katie seemed mad all the time. They never got anything to eat hardly, but bread and tea. Rosie could hardly remember when her papa used to come home bringing a bag of bananas for the children or apples maybe. It didn't seem as if things could get worse. Then her papa got sick. They had to take him to the hospital. An ambulance came for him. It was almost as exciting as having a hearse in front of the house or a wagon from the "Society" that took away the Massini children.

After that mama sat quiet, staring. When the work was done she hardly moved, she just sat quiet. When the neighbors came in she answered their questions in a queer, toneless voice that gave Rosie a cold shiver. Now and then she would say under her breath:

"Six children and no work."

"You must rouse yourself," they would tell her.

"There's no use talking to her," Katie would snap. "She just sits that way." Katie had a sort of somber pride in it.

For two days even Reba gave Rosie the important place. She would point her out to the other children saying: "Her papa's gone to the hospital."

Then they forgot that Rosie's papa had gone to the hospital in an ambulance. But Rosie didn't forget about it. She

couldn't for this reason. All the children in school were talking about Christmas, everybody talked about it.

Reba said: "If it wasn't hard times my papa would get me a doll carriage—anyway he gets me a new doll, and my big sister, her beau's going to give her a from-real-gold pin."

Rosie ran up four flights of tenement stairs. Some tenements boil over with people. They have little short stairs. Some tenements are high between floors and the stairs are black. You don't meet many people. Rosie's was like that. To Rosie each flight seemed longer than the last as she got to the top. When she came in the room lately it was as though the room was cold with her mother sitting there so quiet, even though Katie would smash around and scold in a snarling grown-up voice.

"What am I going to get for Christmas?" Rosie asked as she got inside.

"People don't have Christmas when their papa's in the hospital," snapped Katie.

"Don't I get nothing?"

Katie shook her head and barked out, "No!" in a big, loud tone as if she was mad; then she turned to all the children. "Don't let me hear no more talk about Christmas. You ain't going to get a thing! Not a single thing! Not one of you! Nothing!"

The boys and Rosie looked at her with open mouths.

"What you gapping for? Can't you hear?" she cried at them. But Johnnie appealed to his mother.

"Ma, is it true? Don't we have no Christmas this year?"

Their mother raised her head slowly as though it was very heavy to lift. All she said was, "Of course not."

These three words made more impression on them than all of Katie's scolding.

Celia was sitting on a little stool under the table. She chanted to herself, "Christmas's coming, Christmas's coming, Christmas, Christmas—" making it sound like a song the way little children do.

Rosie crept underneath the table. "Don't sing that, Celia," she said. "It ain't going to do any good. There ain't any Christmas."

"Oh, yes there is," said Celia.

When they were in bed Rosie tried to explain about it. She couldn't make her see. You couldn't get Christmas out of Celia's head. She was confident about it as about sunrise. She *knew* there was going to be Christmas. There was a little Christmas tree up on the corner. There were lights in the windows. Christmas was coming. It would come to her, too. Every time she talked about Christmas coming it seemed to make Katie madder.

"Shut up with your Christmas, you!" she would holler.

And every time she would holler she would look up in a scared sort of a way at her mother. But you couldn't shut Celia up any more than you could stop birds twittering; the only way you can stop them is to wring their necks. You couldn't, of course, wring Celia's neck.

In bed Rosie asked Celia, "What you think you're going to get for Christmas?"

"I'm going to get an apple," said Celia. "An apple and lots of things."

Some way, apples were a symbol of prosperity for all of them. Before slack season their father used to come home with pockets bulging with apples.

"Why don't you get her an apple?" Rosie said to Katie.

"Yes, an' a diamond ring," snapped Katie. "You shut up!"

"She's going to be awful disappointed."



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"I think Woolworth's is a blot on Fifth Avenue. It really does seem so Bolsheviki!"

"That's about all from you!" Katie cried fiercely.

The days crawled along one after another. Christmas was coming nearer all the time.

Celia kept on chirping about Christmas.

Rosie felt she couldn't stand it. Rosie felt that something awful would happen when Celia woke up and didn't have a single thing. It was all right for big kids of eight years old—they could understand. Life had already taught the lesson: No work, no money. No money, no presents.

But Celia still believed in miracles and fairies and all the rest. You couldn't get it out of her, and since you couldn't, something had to be done about it. Rosie felt she was the one to do it. The reason was, *She knew how Celia felt.* She knew how horrible it would be to wake up on Christmas when you believed in it and find nothing. That was why it was just as though some one closed a hand tight over Rosie's heart every time she heard Celia sing:

*"Christmas, Christmas!  
Christmas, Christmas!"*

sitting on a stool underneath the table.

Rosie stood by the fruit-stand, and people she knew walked past her. High over her head Mr. Markowitz was talking. "I buy the boys tricycles. I get a tricycle for Jackie and one for Joe. I got them through the wholesale, through Max

Goldstein." Mr. Markowitz had a laundry; he was rich.

Everybody had a bundle. There were people with Christmas trees in their hands. People stopped and bought fruit, golden oranges, scarlet apples. They bought grapes, purple and white. They bought figs and dates.

Rosie stood there and watched them. The fruit man was very busy. Rosie was standing near a pile of bright-red apples. A tremendous thought came to her—

*"What if I should take one!"*

The world rocked. Taking things was stealing. If you do that, a policeman comes and shuts you up. The very first thing you learned in the world was, You mustn't take things. Things belong to somebody else.

Nobody was watching her. The fruit man's back was turned. Rosie sidled closer up to the apples. She put her hand around one. It seemed to close around the apple of itself. The apple seemed to help her.

It was done. She was walking away, the fold of her skimpy little dress around her apple.

She had stolen an apple.

Celia would have Christmas.

She walked quietly down the street, though her heart was bumping itself out of her thin little chest. Nobody had seen her. Christmas for Celia—a big apple red as fire. She crossed the street and began to run. She ran down the block,

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ducked up the dark tenement, started upstairs. It was black as night. The flickering gaslight was not yet lit.

On the first landing she stopped and felt the apple all over. She slid its cool cheek against her hot one. It smelled so good.

She walked off the second landing and stopped to smell it again. It smelled like paradise to Rosie. On the dark tenement stairs the smell crawled into the very inside of Rosie's stomach. The smell said, "Eat me, take a little bittee bite, Rosie; just take one little bite!"

For days and days Rosie's stomach had been drugged with hunger—bread and tea, tea and bread, polenta without anything on it—sometimes a little bit of grease. The dull monotony of what she ate had blunted the slow starvation that she was suffering, for when children get no sugar and no fat they starve.

Now it was as if all the hunger of the past months rose up and gripped at Rosie in her longing for this apple. Love of life itself was urging her: "Eat the apple, Rosie!" Every little hungry portion of her cried out dumbly, "Rosie, eat the apple!"

*But it wasn't her apple. It was Celia's Christmas.*

With the apple pressed close to her nose, right in front of her lips, she walked up the third flight of stairs, and there in the darkness, blood beating in her ears, her heart pounding like a drum, it happened.

Rosie never knew how. She didn't eat the apple. Some way it just forced itself down her throat. Something stronger than she and bigger—something very terrible—ate the apple for her. There was Rosie standing in the black darkness of the hallway chomping the apple, wolfing it down like a wild creature. As she ate tears were streaming down her cheeks. A choking in her chest made her feel as if her heart would burst.

Then some one took her by the shoulder, and Katie's voice came sharply:

"What ya doing here? What ya eating here in the hall? Where'd ya get that? Tell me where ya got that?"

Desperately Rosie gulped the last bite.

"March upstairs and tell me where you got that. I bettya you stole it!"

Terrible sobs shook Rosie.

"Ma, look here; look at Rosie. She stole a apple!"

But Rosie was past any reproaches. She was crying with the desperate tears of one who has betrayed one's own heart. There was something in the desperation of her grief that broke through Katie's fury.

"Don't ya cry, Rosie! Don't ya cry. I'm glad ya took it. I wisht ya'd taken a dozen."

Her mother looked up from her apathy.

"You're crazy!" she said. "What you saying to that child!" Then a furious anger shook Katie.

"I wish she had! Look at the kids! Look at 'em! Rosie—stop! Stop crying!" And she covered Rosie's face with fierce kisses. "Don't you care! It's all right!"

But Rosie went on crying bitterly. How could she explain that she wasn't crying because she stole the apple?

She was crying because she had stolen Celia's Christmas. In her hunger she had committed a crime against Celia's trust in the goodness of the world. Celia wouldn't ever again sing—

"Christmas Christmas!  
Christmas, Christmas!"

## Ido versus Esperanto

SOME time ago an objection was raised by the guardians of the shrine of Esperanto to our publishing an advertisement of the other international language, which is called Ido. It seemed that Esperanto had been endorsed by the Soviet Government of Russia, and that Ido was a sort of a counter-revolutionary imposter.

In view of this objection the Liberator asked for a full presentation of the argument from the sources of both advertisements, and secured text books of both languages, and I was asked to study them a little and make a decision. I came to the study with a certain prejudice in favor of Esperanto, but I leave it with the opinion that Ido is a decided improvement upon Esperanto, retaining what is best in its fundamental structure, and discarding what is cumbersome and still amateurish. It seems to me that the unwillingness of the Esperantists to accept this improvement upon their language has been due to that devil in human nature which always tries to turn everything into a church. I do not know as it is generally understood that the devil is responsible for the establishment of churches, but he is, and the evidence that he has been at work here is contained in the very thesis presented to us on the Esperantistical side of this argument.

"Today," says our correspondent, "you or I can make practical use of Esperanto, because Esperanto has stood its ground for nearly thirty-five years and in that time has built up an organization that makes a knowledge of the language VERY USEFUL—especially to the man whose interests are broader than the limitations of a single race or nation.

"Take the Universala Esperanto Asocio, for instance. Here is an international, world-wide organization, represented by delegates in more than one thousand cities in every corner of the world. These delegates stand ready to serve any Esperantist in the world who is in need of information or any kind of service that one human being might reasonably ask from a personal friend. That is no theory—it is a FACT. Philological problems are aside of the point. An Esperantist enjoys all the advantages of this great organization while his Idistic friend is talking about the accusative case and circumflexed letters!"

This statement is in sufficiently extreme contrast with that of a supporter of Ido, who has played a prominent part in the propagation of both languages. He says:

"I can discuss only linguistic matters, not claims of 'practical successes.' They are valueless even if true."

It seems to me that linguistic matters—"the accusative case and circumflexed letters" in Esperanto, for instance—are the very matters to discuss in estimating an international language. They are the matters I have considered in deciding that the Liberator ought to continue the publication of the Ido advertisement, and that if the Soviet Government has endorsed Esperanto to the exclusion of Ido, the Soviet Government—Allah have mercy upon me!—has made a mistake.

MAX EASTMAN

# The Downpull in Hungary

By Ann Chamberlain

Buda-Pest.

THE downpull here is that of hunger and hatred. There are three great hatreds—hate for the Old Men who turned the thumbscrews upon the vanquished at Versailles; hate for the Italians, who went over to the enemy; and hate for the Jews, who are rising faster than the Hungarians can endure. They are reminded always of the Old Men by the hunger that is clutching at their vitals; they need coal and milk, and there is little; and this winter will be the worst of the terrible winters that Hungary has seen.

Strangers in the chief streets of Buda-Pest do not see the realities; they see only the curtain in front—the gayety of the theatres, cabarets and *kaffe-hauses*. People downtown laugh and drink and wear good clothes; they laugh tonight; to-morrow must take care of itself; it may bring—anything. But these laughers can afford to laugh; they are of the *bourgeoisie*, the lucky ones the wise ones, who put their money on the fight between the international gladiators, and who won—won, strangely, when the fighters for whom they shouted were beaten into the dust. Their hands are still soft. . . . Nightly the Ritz, the brightest of the hotels, is frequented by three classes, the foreign diplomats, the profiteers, and the courtesans, the latter class of course living off the profiteers.

When the sun goes down over the gray buildings of Pest, then the miseries are hidden. Night-lights downtown come out and put a false glamour on life. Nights in the show-places do not reveal the children, and it is in their faces that one reads the tragedy most vividly. Malnutrition has struck at these people like a blight upon a forest. An American here, sitting in a cabaret one night, said that the next generation in Hungary would all be bowlegged. The prediction was hailed as a merry quip. But it is approximately true; the bones of a whole race have become softened from lack of proper nutriment. . . . Yet men and women here go on bringing children into the world. One hears little of any move toward birth control.

In the daylight one gets close to the realities—the old clothes, the patches, the haggard faces. Go into the back streets by day, either on the hill-slopes of Buda or along the flat pavements of Pest across the river, and you find yourself at the bedside of a race that is gasping for life. . . . I looked for the cripples from the war, but there were none to

Have you a friend who complains that his Liberator never comes? In nine times out of ten, we find that such people have forgotten to renew their subscriptions. Tell him to drop us a postal of inquiry and give us a chance.

**LIBERATOR**

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New York City

Would you like to see from the "inside" the Mooney "frame up," and the campaign of Big Business against the Reds? Read the story of a secret agent and "under cover" operative:

# "100%"

## The Story of a Patriot

### By Upton Sinclair

This book is now out-selling "The Brass Check" in the United States. Arrangements have just been made for publication in Great Britain and colonies. Translations for half a dozen European countries are under way. Our German translator writes: "Three publishers have clamored for '100%.' I am waiting to see what a fourth, who wired me today, will offer." Dr. Frederik van Eeden writes from Holland, enclosing a half page review of the book from "De Amsterdammer." It begins, "Goed Zoo, Uppie!" We don't know what this means, but perhaps somebody will tell us. Dr. van Eeden writes: "This is a wonderful book that you have sent me. The title is bad, but the book is a marvel. I love you for it. It is sharp as a needle and strong as an engine. I should not wonder if it were read very soon all over the world."

Allan L. Benson writes: "I have a slight grievance against you for being sleepy today. At 11:30 last night, I went to bed, and I picked up '100%' to read until 3:30 this morning, and then would not have put the book down if I had not known that I would be dead today if I did not get some sleep. It's a peach! I'll write something about it for the January number."

We call the attention of librarians to the fact that the "Bookman" for December reports one of the six books most in demand in libraries of the Western states to be

## "The Brass Check"

### A Study of American Journalism

Also the newspapers of Seattle, Washington, and Newark, N. J., report it the book most in demand in the libraries of these cities. We ask your attention to the following from "The Churchman," New York:

"It would be wholesome for public opinion to have this book in the hands of a million readers. The facts which Mr. Sinclair has collected and set forth in this volume, dealing with the suppression and falsification of news by the Associated Press and American journals generally, ought to be refuted or something ought to be done to reinstate truth in the heart of American journalism. If enough people were to read the testimony which the author brings to bear to support his charges, either Mr. Sinclair would be compelled to answer to the charge of libel or the Associated Press would be forced to set its house in order."

The new edition of "The Jungle" is now ready and is selling rapidly; also "Debs and the Poets." We are pleased to state that a friend has purchased from the publishers the copyright and plates of "The Cry for Justice," and has placed them at our disposal to issue an edition of this book at cost. We have signed an agreement to take no profit from this book. The price will be \$1.00 paper and \$1.50 cloth, postpaid, instead of \$2.00 net, the former price. Also we are pleased to state that we have purchased the copyrights and plates of "Sylvia," "Sylvia's Marriage," "King Coal," and "Jimmie Higgins." Concerning "Jimmie Higgins," we have just received the following letter from Romain Rolland:

"First let me say that I am ashamed of not having written you before to tell you how much I admire your 'Jimmie Higgins.' It is one of the most powerful works which have been written on the war. No novel of this time is nearer to the art and the spirit of Tolstoi. It has his abundant life, the virile human sympathy, and the impassioned truth. One such work will survive in an epoch, and will be its dread testimony to the future. If, as I hope, a new social order, more just and more fraternal, succeeds in establishing itself, your Jimmie, that sincere hero and martyr, will remain in the memory of men the legendary figure of the People sacrificed in the epoch of the Great Oppression."

*The prices of 100%, The Brass Check, The Jungle, Debs and the Poets are the same—single copy, 60c., postpaid; three copies, \$1.50; ten copies, \$4.50. Single copy, cloth, \$1.20, postpaid; three copies, \$3.00; ten copies, \$9.*

**UPTON SINCLAIR, Pasadena, California.**

be seen. They had all been sent away to farms and institutions, I was told, but no one I met could inform me where any of these institutions were. On the steps of public buildings, in the parks and in subway entrances are many ragged women sitting with babies in their laps, holding out a hand and crying: "Segan! Segan!" (Poor! Poor!) in endless monotone. Sundays the parks are crowded with families—men strolling with thin children and little pregnant wives.

The Hungarians have suffered vastly more from the peace than from the war. During the four years they managed to get along; but the treaty took mine lands and agricultural lands, timber, cattle and practically all of Hungary's raw material. And her money is worth little more than old magazines in America. The treaty took away from Hungary everything except her hatred.

The poor come daily to our kitchen door to be fed. They are glad to take away used tea-leaves. . . . Ten thousand refugees from adjacent countries—Roumanians, Czecho-Slovaks, and others—are here living in box cars, cattle cars, and any sheds they can find. It has been so since August.

\* \* \*

To-day the kitchen maid was discharged. She was a slip of a girl of seventeen, and was four months pregnant. When this terrible fact was cast at her, she retorted that shoes cost 1,000 crowns a pair. Her wage was 300 crowns a month. Before the war five crowns equalled an American dollar. Now a dollar is worth from 310 to 365 crowns. Stockings of cheapest cotton cost 120 crowns. Cotton gloves are 120 a pair. A good cook gets 800 a month, while an ordinary servant gets 400.

\* \* \*

The Jews have the money, and they are hated. In no country are they more hated than here—and yet they are the most dependable of all the peoples in Hungary. They are hated because the Hungarians fear their ascendancy. There is a malicious joke about the Jews going the rounds here—it is told at dinner tables and even in some of the lower-down variety theatres; this: "The League of Nations is going to kill off all the Jews. Then the negroes will be the lowest race on earth." . . . Despite all the hatred, the Jew has steadily pushed his way upward in Hungarian affairs; he is strong in law circles, he has achieved greatly in medicine; and the Jewish influence in Hungarian literature is strong. Yet it is only permitted that *five per cent.* of the children attending school shall be Jews. This is a special concession—a sop—and it is not whole-hearted.

Lurid stories are told by the rich in Buda-Pest of the days when the Reds were in power here, how people's homes were searched and jewels, luxurious furnishings, extravagant clothing were all confiscated wherever visible. Wealthy folk dug holes by moonlight in their gardens and hid diamonds. Necklaces were concealed beneath the flooring or behind wall-panels. Firearms, which were forbidden by the red regime, were likewise hidden. Servants went over in great numbers to the Reds. . . . A shoemaker and his family would move into the home of a rich man and deposit themselves, bag, baggage and bugs. During those times the peasantry were not really happy, the rich assert. . . .

The Danube is murky gray, hiding grim secrets. It must have been red only a little while ago, and the red has been washed on to the sea. . . . I saw it at dusk to-day. And at evening I talked with one who has been resident here for years. She was depressed. I asked why.

"There are unpleasant things in the papers to-day," she

said. "Four political prisoners were hanged this morning. There is little formality about trying such men. The papers, which are government organs, give the details in a fearful way."

She looked out upon the river. "It groans with its memories," she said. "When the Reds were overthrown, five hundred of them were hanged, and their bodies thrown into the waters: . . . But there will be another turning. . . ."

## BOOKS

### "Poor White"

*Poor White*, by Sherwood Anderson. (B. W. Huebsch.)

SHERWOOD ANDERSON'S new book is, first of all, a collection of contradictions. It is a novel that violates every tradition of novel-writing; it is a narrative that breaks off, interrupts itself and wanders dreamily into history, metaphysics, poetry; it is lyrical and epic in the same breath; it is an attempt to make a form without a pattern, to burst a mould before filling it. It is, first of all, these things. But this list of opposing qualities does not begin to express the contradictory powers of "Poor White."

Imagine "Winesburg, Ohio," on a larger scale; quicken the native background with the rise of industrialism following the Civil War; subtract the earlier condensation, add a new intensity and you will have the skeleton of Anderson's unshapely and astounding work. "Poor White" bares a dozen different lives, but it sets out primarily to tell three distinct stories. The first story is that of Hugh McVey, a discouraged, dream-ridden boy born in a little hole of a town stuck on a mud-bank on the shores of the Mississippi—a child of poor white stock who "piddles around" until his dreams turn into mechanical labor-saving contrivances and he becomes an inventor. The second story is the development of Clara Butterworth, a daughter of the prosperous Middle-West, a vigorous life-lover, confused and driven back upon herself, groping toward some way out, seeking something which, fulfilling her hungers, is beyond sex or self. The third story—and one which unfolds and overshadows the other two—is of the progress of industrial America: the sudden push of factories, the scramble to gas and oil-fields, the mad march of boom-towns, the huge and futile triumph of the machine. "Without music, without poetry, without beauty in their lives or impulses, a whole people, full of the native energy and strength of lives lived in a new land, rushed pell-mell into a new age."

And how has Anderson told these three tales? Realistically, one might say off-hand. But Anderson's realism is a strange growth; it is as far from the colloquial matter-of-factness of Sinclair Lewis as it is from the detailed veritism of Theodore Dreiser. It is the visionary leap and intuition that relates Anderson closer to Carl Sandburg and to D. H. Lawrence. Like Sandburg, Anderson uses realism as a spring-board from which he jumps into a mystical world; like Lawrence, he makes every incident a point of departure—a juncture where people, symbols and implications are inextricably bound. The backgrounds are local, the speech of the characters is unusually direct, the settings are actual—and yet "Poor White" seems to move through a nimbus of fantasy. In it the figures rise, suffer and fall in cloudy splendor; they stumble in a half-light pierced by terrific

flashes; they are uncanny, primitive, grotesque and fearfully alive. Anderson is most himself when his material is least "normal"; his affinity for what is extraordinary and even exaggerated in nature brings him, skirting the edges of defeat, to a dozen amazing triumphs.

The book is a record of these intensified incidents that take on the proportions of allegory. There is the figure of Joe Wainsworth, the harness maker, who in a rage against the commercialism that has increased his profits and killed his joy in labor, murders his assistant and cuts into ribbons the machine-made harnesses he had been bullied into buying. There is the almost apocalyptic figure of Peter Fry, the blacksmith, who stands on the street corners of Bidwell, Ohio, like a local prophet of scorn; jeering, abusing, flaying, roaring his jeremiads; finally driven to shout, in the isolation of an old cow-pasture, the things which expediency forbids him to utter in the streets. There is the beautifully rounded portrait of Jim Priest, the farm-hand who understands men through his knowledge of horses, who sees in the silent power of personalities like General Grant and the jockey Geers, the stuff of victory. And there is Hugh McVey himself, planning his first invention, crawling across the field and making his body simulate a machine, pointing his arms like pistons, imitating the mechanical strokes of the plant-droppers—a character mythical in significance, rich in realization.

One outstanding failure, and that one possibly due to Anderson's method of spasmodic and sudden illumination, is the struggle of Clara. It is obviously the least complete, although Anderson tries to make Clara the second most important figure in his story. She is only half realized, less than half expressed. For several moments you feel that she is about to take her place and give form to this shapelessness. But her outlines grow vague and we lose her. We retain only snatches of her development that omit too much; she is jerked from one episode to another, leaving great gaps that demand to be filled. We are told that Clara is sent to the State University at Columbus before she comes back to marry Hugh McVey. Yet of her contacts, her plans, the conflict of education and her dreams, of the inevitable impressions that a sharp change of environment must have made on so sensitive a seeker, we learn nothing. These four years—the most formative ones of which we are told—yield nothing more to the reader than a few conversations which reveal only one phase of Clara's problem.

But it is the record of the rise of industrialism which dwarfs these people who serve it without understanding it, that is the author's finest accomplishment. One of the great achievements of our recent literature is Anderson's reflection of this monstrous power that spawns cities overnight, that creates civilizations and kills culture with the same gesture, that substitutes false slogans for fundamental ideas and reduces to a new slavery the very servants it had promised to free forever. It is the poet as well as the prophet in Anderson that writes:

"And all over the country, in the towns, the farm houses and the growing cities of the new country, people stirred and awakened. Thought and poetry died or passed as a heritage to feeble fawning men who also became servants of the new order. Serious young men in Bidwell and in other American towns, whose fathers had walked together on moonlight nights along Turner's Pike to talk of God, went away to technical schools. Their fathers had walked and talked, and thoughts had grown up in them. The impulse had reached back to their father's fathers on moonlit roads of England, Germany, Ireland, France and Italy, and back of these to the moonlit hills of Judea, where shepherds talked and serious young men, John and Matthew and Jesus, caught the drift of the talk and made poetry of it. But the serious-minded sons of these men in the new land were swept away from thinking and dreaming. From all sides the

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voice of the new age that was to do definite things shouted at them. Eagerly they took up the cry and ran with it. Millions of voices arose. The clamor became terrible, and confused the minds of all men. In making way for the newer, broader brotherhood into which men are some day to emerge, in extending the invisible roofs of the towns and cities to cover the world, men cut and crushed their way through the bodies of men."

It is such uplifted prose that impels one to compare Anderson with the Russians. If, as has been said elsewhere, his quick sensitivity has prevented Anderson from writing a good novel, it has helped him to approximate a great one.

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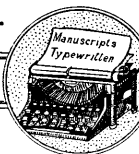
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