

**N
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W** **MASSES**

JULY, 1930

15 Cents



**ART YOUNG
L. HUGHES
C.Y.HARRISON
M. GOLD
Wm. GROPPER
L. LOZOWICK
J. FREEMAN
JESSICA SMITH**

**IN A GEORGIA
MILL TOWN**
By **GILBERT LEWIS**

*Negro Workers
—Drawn by Wm. Siegel*

A MAGAZINE OF WORKERS ART AND LITERATURE

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MICHAEL GOLD

NOTES OF THE MONTH

It takes a combination of earthquake, tidal wave, flood, fire, panic and world war to shake the average American out of his petty illusions. This undoubtedly is the most childish race in history. It may weep; but give it any stick of candy and it will smile again.

Many sticks of sweet, cheap taffy were handed out by Hoover, Heywood Broun and other optimists during the recent unemployment agitation. Forced into recognition of the problem by the crude, "impolite," and effective mass-tactics of the Communists, the professional joy-spreaders told us from pulpit, press and White House to wait until June, when everything would be lovely again.

Well, June is here, and everything is lovely. The bees are in the clover, making honey. The fruit trees are ripening busily, the trout are fattening, the young wheat and corn are active every moment of the day.

Only human beings in America are still idle and black-hearted this promised Spring. Some seven million were out of jobs and hungry in December; probably another million have joined them since, to envy the bees, birds and flowers for the fact that no capitalist profits by their starvation.

The *Annalist*, an economic survey published by the *New York Times* every month, assures us authoritatively that the slump will not be over until July, 1931. So our unemployed may as well tighten their belts, and try not to commit suicide until then. Maybe Walter Lippmann or some other liberal will write a book during the winter, and solve the whole question.

Pickpocket Tactics—

As said here before, unemployment cannot be solved under capitalism. It is as necessary to the functioning of capitalism as an exhaust is to a gasoline motor.

Capitalism operates on the basis of private profit. This means that there must be a margin between the wages paid the producer, and the goods he produces. This "surplus value" piles up in great fortunes, and concentrates the consuming power in a few hands.

The great majority of consumer-producers have not been paid enough wages to buy back that which they produced. Over-production follows. Mass unemployment is the next step. And then all the piffers and fakers step in, with their quack nostrums. They are always very humanitarian, in the usual manner of kindly slave-owners. And they club Communists who try to propagate the simple but amazing truth about the matter. They forge documents, like Grover Whalen, to prove that unemployment is the

fault of Moscow. They lead Congressional committees, like Hamilton Fish, to deport every Communist who dares suggest that American freedom is a fraud if it means only the freedom of seven million jobless men to starve to death.

These investigations! These committees! They are so solemn and imposing! Actually they are shyster tricks played by the national pickpockets to divert the attention of the robbed from the hands that have snatched their watch and chain.

To paraphrase Lenin: build a tall electric fence around America; cut off every possible communication with Moscow; deport every Communist and radical; destroy every inflammatory pamphlet from Tom Paine to Bill Foster; delete every column of revolutionary world news from the newspapers; yet you will not reduce by a penny the wage demands made by your own *conservative* workers.

You will not affect your cycle of inevitable overproduction and unemployment; you will not lessen by one brave man those who will protest against the iniquity of mass-starvation.

Being a Gentleman—

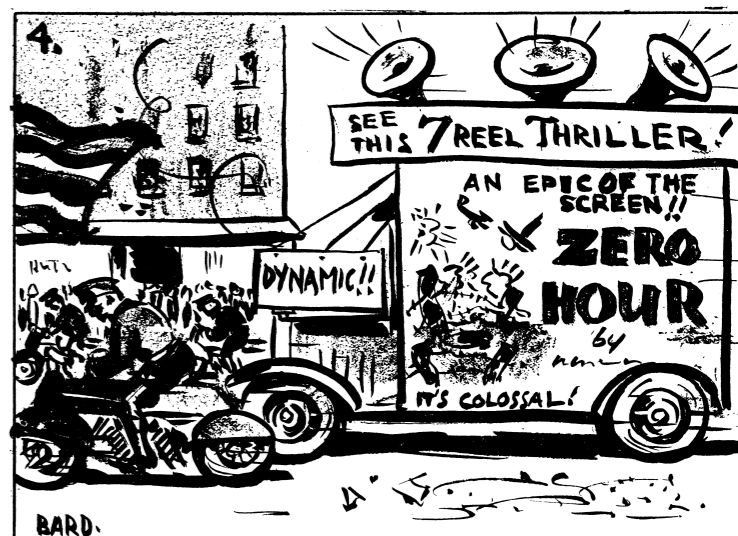
Many of the lower middle class had been climbing into the upper floors of American prosperity during the recent boom. But the crash took them by surprise, and most of them are back where they began—at work.

The experience has needed a little Christian humility into their proud veins. It was time. Some of them had grown quite impossible. Who, that is forced to move among the bourgeoisie, has forgotten the crop of waxed moustaches, malacca canes, Oxford accents and Napoleonic attitudes that began to appear among the busy climbers?

They were free with superior advice on every subject; they were sure American prosperity would last forever; and they all had learned that with money, one must be a "gentleman."

The British "gentleman" cultivating his boredom and fake "fair-play" on an income derived from sweating coolies in India and Africa! He has long been the model of every parasite group in the world. The Americans have long envied him too, but only the recent boom produced enough idlers to give Americans the group-courage to strike this pose.

Would a Chief of Police like Grover Whalen of New York have been possible before this great wave of snobbism and easy money? A Tammany cop wearing a fresh gardenia every morning, and a tuxedo every night? It is true that in his bourgeois uniform Whalen looked a little uneasy; something like a trained ape that



—Drawn by Philip Bard

has been taught to eat with knife and fork. But he lasted for more than a year, and it is said he will be the next Mayor.

Then Gene Tunney, the heavyweight champion who suddenly began to read Shakespeare and to crook his little finger while sipping tea with society debs. Was there ever such a clown in the history of prize-fighting? But he was only another one of the thousand products of a decade of prosperity; social era of gorgeous vulgarity worthy of Balzac's pen.

Some of the climber-apes are still with us. We would offer them a bit of advice; do not use the word "gentleman" so frequently. It is true some intellectuals and liberal weeklies are fond of overworking this word. But as one who has never cared to be a British "gentleman," may we suggest that even in England no "gentleman" talks so much about his "gentlemanliness?"

And might we add that every "gentleman" in the history of the world has always been a parasite, living off the labor of helpless men, women and children? And that he has produced no great literature, no great science, and that politically he has always been a Tory, a child-labor cad, a blood-stained imperialist, and a strike-breaker?

There is a disinterestedness, a sense of real honor, a steadfast loyalty and courage that are among the finest traits of human nature. But one rarely finds these traits among people who are obsessed with the single trivial job of making and spending a lot of money. They are traits usually found today among revolutionary proletarians who despise money-making and the word "gentleman." Let someone else explain this paradox.

If the word "gentleman" ever had any virtue, it lost it completely hanging around stock brokers' offices, or in the pages of such magazines of the rich vulgarians, as *Vanity Fair*.

This Humanism—

Humanism, seven-day sensation that caused a wagging of waxed moustaches among the more profound and well-tailored of our literary thinkers, can be explained only by the same social analytics. It had been hibernating with Irving Babbitt at Harvard for twenty years, snoring low and mournfully, its pulse feeble, its fat melting away. Then came the Spring. Then came prosperity, a new herd of stock market snobs, a new great mob of *nouveaux riches* needing a gentlemanly philosophy that would go well with their newly-bought antique furniture.

Humanism stumbled out of the caves of Harvard, blinking in the sun. The snobs, young and old, fell down in worship. Here was what they had been looking for. They grovelled at the master's feet. The sick old bear of Humanism was amazed by this sudden adulation. I am sure he has not yet found any explanation for it, and never will. But it was only the economic boom, and American prosperity.

Literature is the camp-follower of Life. In America, the non-literary *nouveaux riches* went in for golf, baggy pants, sophistication, Florida winter tours, duplex apartments, divorce suits, "gentlemanliness," European drinking tours, etc. etc.—all of which no American Babbitt had previously dared to admit into his life.

Their literary camp-followers felt much the same, but found their baggy pants in Humanism.

Then the market crashed; publishing slumped; other sad things

happened. There now aren't so many European tourists or antique buyers; and there isn't a tenth as much Humanism as there was a few months ago.

In good times the petty bourgeois feels like an aristocrat and Humanist; he despises the masses. In bad times he feels like a Socialist, reads Dostoevsky, and takes to thinking about Death and his market losses and the Soul of Man.

So, Humanism will be a dead herring until the stock market comes back, (if it ever does.) This is our prediction, based on astrological readings of the June stars, the itching in our left corn, and a slight pain in the seat.

Thank God, another bore is dead! Did anyone ever write as boringly as these Humanists? Dull, dull as British ex-Colonels, as American Ph.Ds, as evangelists and Presidents! A philosophy of dull dignity! And the dull literary sons of the vulgar *nouveaux riches* tried to ennoble themselves by adopting this dull dignity. But now money is tight, and people have to work. It's hard to be dignified aristocratic and superior while writing ads for tinted toilet paper in some vulgar non-Humanist's advertising agency!

Old Fashioned—

Let me confess a prejudice; I believe most of the liberal young literary men around the age of 30 or so, Humanist and Anti, our new crop of critics and poets, are much less interesting than the generation that preceded them.

They have wide reading, scholarship, academic solidity; the men like Krutch and Allen Tate; but the juice of life is not in them somehow, as it was in a Mencken, a Sinclair Lewis, a Dreiser.

There is something cloistered about them. The older men had contact with the American mass-life. These "youngsters" seem never to have graduated from the better colleges.

They lack humanity, desire, will-to-creation, that strong



—by Jacob Burch
Serving The Unemployed

sense of reality that makes for the great literature, and not for the lesser. They know the past, and they know the grammar and etiquette of thought. But their thinking is too remote from the battlefield where important events are decided.

Search their philosophy; you will find nothing but a vague tolerance and a formless eclecticism. How beautiful and real even a ham sandwich seems beside one of their pale essays.

Their fundamental weakness, of course, is that they lack a real philosophy of social progress and change. The older men got some of this through a natural exuberance and through experience. This new crop has to get it from books, but they have been too snobbish or fearful to read the real books, the Communist books.

So they are the easy prey of every pompous literary quack who comes along—Spengler, and Whitehead, and Gurdejief, and the rest. They have no fundamentals; they sway in every strong wind, and every year a few more of them collapse into Catholicism or some other cult for the weak-minded.

But it is just an interlude. The older men got their strength from the mass-movement of the pre-war democratic Socialism. This Socialism died during the war, and is still dead, and will remain dead forever.

It will take another great wave of revolutionary labor struggles before we develop a new crop of writers who can stand beside the so-called "men of the twenties." During this interlude the "men of thirties" will go on writing, I suppose, then, dull, bloodless, intellectualistic poetry and criticism a la T. S. Eliot, their well-tailored godling. It is a dismal prospect.

A few may get their heads out of this stupid rut. But their only hope is in the revolutionary movement—and of course, they are too blinded by academic snobbery to see this. And it really doesn't matter; in good time, our own group will produce a living proletarian literature in America, and confound all the skeptics.

Transition—

We are living in enormous times. Possibly events are too huge for us to estimate, as a man walking amidst skyscrapers finds it hard to get any real idea of their spaces.

Our time is something no writer has yet been able to encompass. Everyone stutters, sooner or later, in writing of the Russian Revolution. The prospects stretch to infinity; one is dazzled as by the sun.

Look at the Orient. Here is the spectacle of more than half the human race leaping at a bound out of feudalism. Here are the French Revolution, the Renaissance, and the Russian Revolution all in one. Who can write anything but fragments about such a theme?

It is so easy to be a "Humanist" and shelter oneself in the comfortable mausoleums of the past. But it is better to choose the hard way, to go on living, and to try every day of one's life to write about the living world.

Who wants to write about "the windy plains of Troy" when he can witness and write about the more significant battles on the steppes of Soviet Russia, or the streets of America and India?

Why does one have to repeat this seeming platitude again and again? Because it seems to take too much courage for most peo-

ple to live in the present.

I am thinking specifically of the magazine *transition*. It was a literary magazine published in Paris by another young American group. Its retreat from the present was into the dark vague tombs of what is called "the unconscious mind." Some of our young *New Masses* writers of unformed philosophy were strongly affected by the *transition* movement. They attempted a fusion of anarchic *transition* form with the disciplined proletarian content. It has never been successful. It could never be successful.

To be a revolutionist, one must be based firmly on reason. The forms of the rational mind are not similar to those uncontrolled wanderings of the irrational mind. You can't write *transition* poems to the proletariat, and expect either camp to understand.

transition was dedicated to an exploration of the irrational. It competed with the psychiatrist. It sacrificed literature, but brought us only the feeblest science. It lost its function as a literary magazine. It became a kind of pseudo-psychological review. It is amazing that young writers should have been affected by this cult. But they are affected by everything, it seems. It takes years to find one's own sure path; in the interim, one is a kind of spiritual hobo.

transition had one virtue; it was not afraid to experiment. There can be no progress without experiment. Experiment is often dangerous; *transition* succumbed to this danger. It reached the point where experiment seemed more important to it than any solid accomplishment.

It grew individualistic to the point of insanity. It lost all contact with the real world.

It has announced its suspension. We are sorry. But there is something symbolic about this death of every literary vestige of the pre-war period in America; *Dial*, *Little Review*, *transition*. The cards are being shuffled for a new deal; a bigger game is being prepared, may we all find ourselves ready to play it.

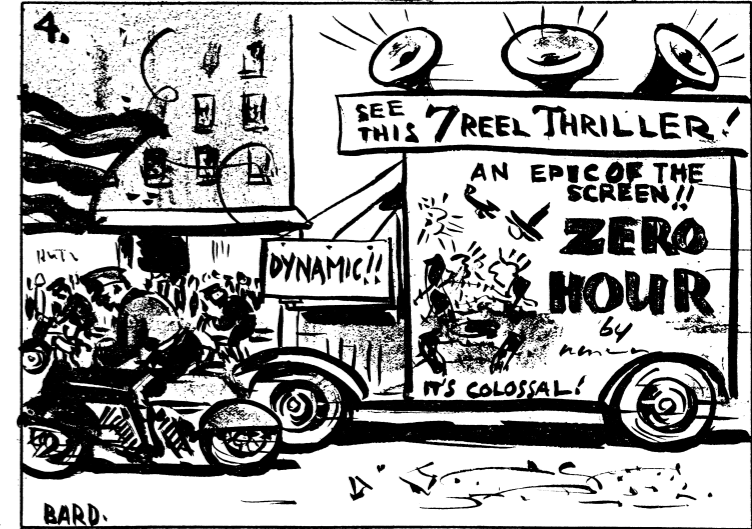
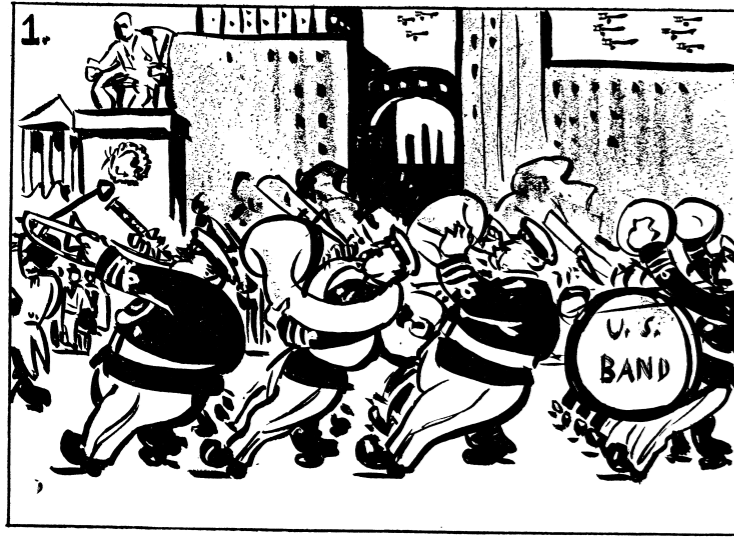
Bob Minor and Others—

Bob Minor is still in jail, after three months, along with William Z. Foster and two other Communists. Their crime was in leading the unemployed out into the streets of New York. It is a crime to fling open the dark closets of America, and to expose the many skeletons festering there.

The men have been sentenced to three years. Bob Minor, the great fiery artist, is sick in the hospital but undaunted. Let us help to set him free. Write for information to the International Labor Defense, 799 Broadway, New York City.

There are also the cases of two Negro and four white workers in the south, who are facing the electric chair. Their crime consisted of an attempt to organize a labor union in which Negroes and white workers would stand side by side in solidarity.

They are being tried for sedition, under an old law passed during the Civil War days. The penalty in Georgia for being fair to Negro workers is death. This case has a national significance; all of us must help free the South from its feudalism. The case will be more socially significant than that of Sacco and Vanzetti before it is over. Write the defense organization. If you have but a dime to spare for their defense send it to the I. L. D.



has been taught to eat with knife and fork. But he has not

—Drawn by Philip Bard



—by Jacob Burck

Serving The Unemployed



—Drawn by Art Young

PARTY FOR WHITE FOLKS

By LANGSTON HUGHES

(Two small colored children experience the color-line in a Kansas town)

In the summer, a new amusement park opened in Stanton, the first of its kind in the city, with a merry-go-round, a shoot-the-shoots, a Ferris wheel, a dance hall, and a band stand for weekend concerts. In order to help popularize the park which was far on the north edge of town, *The Daily Leader* announced under its auspices, what was called a Free Children's Day Party open to all the readers of that paper who clipped the coupons published in each issue. On July 26th, these coupons, presented at the gate, would entitle every child in Stanton to free admittance to the park, free popcorn, free lemonade, and one ride on each of the amusement attractions—the merry-go-round, the shoot-the-shoots, and the Ferris wheel. All you had to do was to be a reader of *The Daily Leader* and present the coupon cut from that paper.

Aunt Hager and Sister Johnson both took the *Leader* regularly, as did almost everybody else in Stanton, so Sandy and Willie-Mae started to clip coupons. All the children in the neighborhood were doing the same thing. The Children's Day would be a big event for all the little people in town. None of them had ever seen a shoot-the-shoots before, a contrivance which pulled little cars full of folks high into the air and then let them come whizzing down an incline into an artificial pond where the cars would float like boats. Sandy and Willie-Mae looked forward to thrill after thrill.

When the afternoon of the great day came at last, Willie-Mae stopped past for Sandy, dressed in her whitest white dress and her new patent leather shoes which hurt her feet awfully. Sandy's grandmother was making him wash his ears when she came in.

"You gwine out yonder 'mongst all them white chillen, I wants you to at least look clean!" said Hager.

They started out.

"Here!" called Aunt Hager. "Ain't you gwine to take yo' coupons?" In his rush to get away Sandy had forgotten them.

It was a long walk to the park and Willie-Mae stopped and took off her shoes and stockings and carried them in her hands until she got near the gate, then she put them on again and limped bravely along clutching her precious bits of newspaper. They could hear the band playing and children shouting and squealing as the cars on the shoot-the-shoots shot downward with a splash into the pond. They could see the giant Ferris wheel, larger, than the one the carnival had had, circling high in the air.

"I'm gonna ride on that first," said Sandy.

There were crowds of children under the bright red and white wooden shelter at the park entrance. They were lining up at the

gate—laughing, merry, clean little white children, pushing and yelling and giggling amiably. Sandy let Willie-Mae go first and he got in line behind her. The band was playing gaily inside . . . They were almost to the entrance now . . . There were just two boys in front of them . . . Willie-Mae held out her black little hand clutching the coupons. They moved forward. The man looked down.

"Sorry," he said. "This party's for white kids."

Willie-Mae did not understand. She stood holding out the coupons waiting for the tall white man to take them.

"Stand back, you two," he said looking at Sandy as well. "I told you little darkies this wasn't your party . . . Come on—next little girl." And the line of white children pushed past Willie-Mae and Sandy, into the park. Stunned, the two dark ones drew aside. Then they noticed a group of a dozen or more other colored youngsters standing apart in the sun just without the bright entrance pavilion, and among them was Sadie Butler, Sandy's class mate. Three or four of the colored children were crying, but most of them looked sullen and angry, and some of them had turned to go home.

Willie-Mae, between the painful shoes and the hurt of her disappointment, was on the verge of tears. One of the small boys in the crowd, a hard-looking little fellow from Pearl Street, was cursing childishly.

"God damn ole sons-of-biscuit-eaters, that's what they are! I wish I was a big man, dog-gone, I'd shoot 'em all, that's what I'd do!"

"I suppose they didn't mean colored kids," said Sandy again.

"Buster went in all right," said Sadie. "I seen him. But they didn't know he was colored, I guess. When I went up to the gate the man said, 'Whoa! Where you goin'?' just like I was a horse . . . I'm going home now and tell my papa."

She walked away followed by five or six other little girls in their Sunday dresses. Willie-Mae was sitting on the ground taking off her shoes again, sweat and tears running down her black cheeks as Sandy saw his white school mate, Earl, approaching.

"What's matter, Sandy? Ain't you goin' in?" Earl demanded looking at his friend's worried face. "Did the little girl hurt her foot?"

"No," said Sandy. "We just ain't going in . . . Here, Earl, you can have my coupons. If you have extra ones the paper says you get more lemonade . . . so you take 'em."

The white boy, puzzled, accepted the proffered coupons, stood dumbly for a moment wondering what to say to his brown friend, then went on in the park.

"It's yo' party, white chile!" a little tan-skin girl called after him, mimicking the way the man at the gate had talked. "Whoa! Stay out! You's a nigger!" she said to Sandy.

The other children, in spite of themselves, laughed at the accuracy of her burlesqued imitation. Then, with the music of the merry-go-round from beyond the high fence following them, the group of dark skinned ones started down the dusty road together—and to all the colored boys and girls they met on the way they called out, "Ain't no use, jigaboos! That party's for white folks. You all just as well turn around and come back."

Proletarian Student

I told the pretty 'professeur':

"I come to school when the sweat
of the night's grind ain't dried yet.
I work all night down at the shops
rolling steel. I tell you, sir,
it's hard as hell when the whistle stops
our sweating—and the blinding steel
has drained a man, and scorched his eyes
(till dawn shows only faded dyes)—
It's hard—when the fires still reel
in a man's brain, raw for sleep,
to key a mind for pedantry—and then
to snap back answers like I handle grates."
The 'professeur' just smirked and said:
"You know, my man, a teacher hates
to hear excuses (hot steel splattering in my head)
and college was not made for working men."

DON MCKENZIE.



—Drawn by Art Young

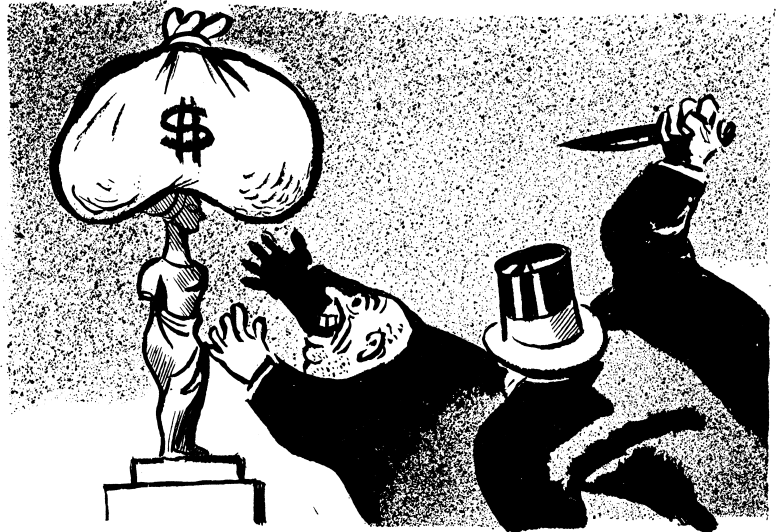
I'll Tell the Cockeyed World — by William Gropper



Where can you find such lovely
gallant gentlemen as we have
down south? —



And brave, patriotic little
mothers who are proud their
sons died to make this world
what it is to-day?



What other country does as
great a business as Wall St.? huh?



Show me where you can find
closer friendship of Bootleggers,
Judges, and Sons of Bishops,
than right here at home?

And don't forget, we have
Independence Day
all year 'round —





Where can you find such lovely
gallant gentlemen as we have
down south? —



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GROPPER

CHARLES YALE HARRISON

A CHILD IS BORN

*"Facts are phantoms; facts begin
With a bud, a seed, an egg."*

Red Hook, on Brooklyn's waterfront. Saturday night. The slums are celebrating. Fumes of cheap Geneva gin deadening the sloweating worm of poverty. Brawls. Drunken laughter of slumwomen . . .

A bedroom on Walker Street. A woman lies awake besides her sleeping husband. It is a warm night and he sprawls diagonally across the bed crowding her close to the wall. He sleeps in his underwear which wrinkles at the elbows and knees so that he appears to be grotesquely formed. The soiled bedclothes are pushed back. A coarse nightdress covers the woman's body which is big with child in the seventh month. She lies with her face to the white wall thinking . . .

She thinks of the man beside her, of the nearly-formed child within her, of the street noises which pour in through the open window, of her other children, two girls who sleep together in the next room. She lies thinking poverty-thoughts . . . She passes her hand over her tightly-rounded body. Under her lower ribs she feels a little kick.

Another little one kicking its way into the world; well, she would have no illusions about this one as when the other two were born . . . She remembers the first time she felt that strange kicking within her. What thoughts! What plans! And in this very room, too. What had become of the thoughts, the plans?

Under her left ribs the little embryonic foot shoots out and gives her body a tiny jerk. A little sickening the first time you felt it and yet a little pleasant.

Here she was, Margaret Smith—she smiles at her error. Of course, she is Mrs. Roberts now—funny how at times she kept thinking of herself by her maiden name—up against her ribs—kick, kick . . .

She is a woman of about thirty with gray, sallow skin and irongray hair over her temples as though a little of the metallic quality of life had entered into her and colored her face and hair. Before she had met the man who now sleeps by her side she worked at a bag factory and somehow or other in the manner in which these things sometimes happen she came to know him at a ball given by his union. When the dance was over they walked by the side of the malodorous Gowanus Canal and he asked her to marry him. She thought he was joking.

But he wasn't, it seemed. The next night he called at her boarding house. The other boarders giggled for she was considered an old maid. She was nervous as she met him in the hallway and tremblingly led him into the parlor where the boarders took their "men friends."

Although his back was turned to her now as she lay thinking these thoughts she could see his face as it appeared to her that night in the boarding house—a hard face, long, with creases in it, unsmiling.

After Miriam, the first baby, came, he stopped drinking because they couldn't afford it and this sacrifice he charged to his wife. "See," he seemed to say, "see, I do not drink liquor although I like it, but I give it up because I have a child to support, I am that kind of a man . . ."

Kick, kick, go the feet up against her ribs, impatient feet kicking a way into Red Hook; little feet which will swim in the Canal nearby . . .

In the street outside the Saturday night revelers seem to be celebrating the youngster's impatience . . . "come into the world, young mister Roberts, come on, there's plenty of room for another in Red Hook."

She knows it will be a boy for the young doctor at the clinic told her so. He said he could tell by the way it lay, and the size of the head . . . kick, kick . . . another mouth to feed, a red-ugly-little thing that will need stockings and diapers, kick, kick.

The bed jerks with the movements of the embryo. The figure in gray underwear stirs by the woman's side. The long, wooden

face grimaces in waking. Edward Roberts opens his eyes and looks in a startled manner at his wife:

"What's that—what's that . . . ?"

A drunken pair sing in the street, under the window.

"It's him," she replies. She places her hand over her stomach.

"Oh—him!" the husband says. "He shook the bed. He kicks like a horse, don't he? The little son-of-a-gun . . . ain't he, now?" He half-smiles in his drowsiness.

He closes his eyes and rolls over.

Margaret Roberts turns and faces the white wall . . .

II.

Samuel Blumgarten, agent for the Gibraltar Life Insurance Company, industrial department, was making his Monday morning round in Red Hook. He climbed two flights of stairs in a Walker Street tenement and knocked sharply at a door. He waited for a moment. The hallway was filled with the soapy odor of Monday morning washing, stale food and that stuffy odor caused by cats and dogs. He felt slightly ill and knocked again impatiently. Margaret Roberts heard it above the sizzling boiler of clothes on the stove and shouted "come in." The agent walked through the parlor and into the kitchen.

"'morning' Mis' Roberts. No rest for the wicked, huh?" He opened his long collection-book and thumbed the pages.

"M'm, You're two weeks in arrears, Mis' Roberts." He speaks with a sing-song Russian-Jewish accent.

Mrs. Roberts got her premium book down from a shelf over the gas range and gave the collector some money. He looked at it.

"This is only vun veek. Dun't let your insurance fall too far beck."

For some time he had suspected that Mrs. Roberts was pregnant but this morning there was no mistaking it and this reminded him of something he must say to her.

"I—I would like to talk to you for a liddle vile Mis' Roberts. You see, de compeny is making a special drive and in order to make it very attractive for our policyholders . . ."

"Mr. Blumgarten—I've got all the insurance I can pay for now . . ."

"Yes, but hev you got all you nid, ha, Mis' Roberts?" The agent sat on a kitchen chair and turned the pages of his collection book.

"Now, I dun't vunt to be personal but, you see—I—I—you will soon hev anodder beby—anodder liddle moud to fid, und in dis voild—"

Margaret Roberts went on poking the boilerful of steaming soiled clothes with a long wooden stick.

The words of the eager little agent streamed through her ears and were lost somewhere.

This was Monday and all morning there would be an endless parade of agents and collectors coming into the hot kitchen and each would bully for more money or wheedle her into buying another piece of furniture, pay off some of her arrears on last month's milk bill, buy a gramophone. In a daze she heard the rapid, cunning little words . . . "protection . . . in your hour of nid . . . b'lieve me Mis' Roberts a dollar is your bast friend . . ." Meaningless words, part of the ceaseless, irritant, depressing reality which is poverty. The sing-song voice of the agent was relentless. Little by little some words began to affect her.

" . . . in a few months . . . and ven he grows op von't it be fine to hend heem a chack . . . 'ven you ver a baby', you will say to heem . . . education . . . dot is, I hope (and here with a flattering smile) that it's a boy. Eef his mudder vunt provide for him, who vill?" Margaret leaned up against the wall near the stove and wiped a wisp of hair from her smarting eyes. She was listening to the agent now. Aware of the interest he had aroused he continued:

" . . . und den, vot vill it cost?" Tventy-five cents a veek! Vot

it dot? T'ree cents a day. Vot is t'ree cents a day?"

"Notting!" he answered himself triumphantly.

There was no resistance in Margaret Robert's attitude now: she was looking with a faraway look at the ceiling. Mr. Samuel Blumgarten took some application blanks from his coat-pockets and began to look for a clean one.

Yes . . . she would do everything for that little tumbling one in her womb. Her boy would escape this squalor—she did not think the word "squalor"—she thought of her husband's sagging, worn face when he returned from work, the noise of Walker Street, of the fighting drunks on Saturday night, of the discomfort of the soapy-smelling kitchen on Monday morning, of all this—perhaps salvation lies in the words of the excited little man who fumbled in his pockets for a piece of paper—maybe he will be a fine big important man with a bronzed, strong face and will wear smart clothes when he grows up and people will say sir to him and he will do things that will be reported in the newspapers . . .

Blumgarten wrote on the piece of paper which lay before him. He asked a few questions . . .

" . . . how old are you, Mis' Roberts?"

She did not answer. He repeated the question. She smiled and said:

"I—I am thirty-two next September."

"Mm-m. B'live me you dunt look it, Mis' Roberts. You look so-o young. Sign here, plis."

The pen scratched laboriously across the bottom of the paper. Blumgarten folded the application and put it into his pocket. He beamed on the woman.

"Un ven in twenty years from now de compeny brings you a check for de muny, Mis' Roberts, you'll denk me—you'll see."

Mr. Blumgarten skipped his plump five-foot-three body down the foul-smelling steps of the hallway out into the cleaner air of the street where he took a deep breath of relief. He passed a



—Drawn by William Gropper

white hand across his brow and made a rapid mental calculation.

"Tree dollars," he said to himself. "Not so bed—not so bed."

III.

At noon one day Margaret Roberts was taken with labor pains. When Miriam came home from school at lunchtime a neighbor sent her down to the docks to fetch her father. For the first time in a long while Edward Roberts smiled when he saw his pigtailed daughter run towards him when he was pointed out to her. Then she saw him walk up to the foreman, say a few words to him, then the foreman smiled and then her father smiled too and then he walked towards her. He looked down into her shiny face and rested a heavy hand across her shoulder.

"So, ma's sick?"

"Yeah, she's sick, pa."

"What's wrong?"

"She's gonna have a baby, I guess."

The man smiled and walked with his girl out of the dock-gates into the cobblestoned street beyond, his hard, stiff boots heavily striking the stones as he walked.

"How do you know she's gonna have a baby?"

"I heard Mrs. Slovak say."

"How's your ma doin'!"

"When I lef' they wuz bending over her and wuz sayin' she hoped it came soon an' I said what and Mrs. Perkins said the baby."

The man walked on looking straight ahead of him. He saw the whole scene as clearly as though it were happening before him—this was the third time he was to witness a child coming into the world and he thought of many things as he walked. Speaking a thought aloud he said: "Well, I hope this one is a boy."

"Why, pa?" the little girl asked.

The man looked down at her with a start—he had nearly forgotten she was with him.

"Oh, I dunno," he said after a while.

When Miriam and her father turned into Walker Street and the women looking out of the windows saw Roberts walking to his tenement with little Miriam running breathlessly at his heels they knew that the hour of the baby's delivery had come. Men came home from work in the middle of the day in Red Hook only for birth and death.

When Roberts climbed the three flights to his tenement and entered, he saw several of the wives of neighbors in possession of the house. One woman, Mrs. Slovak, the wife of a Russian longshoreman brought some linen from her supply and was busy changing the bed; another, Mrs. Perkins, the wife of the foreman in the bag factory nearby, was heating some water on the coal stove in the kitchen. Two middle-aged women, neighbors, Mrs. Todd and Mrs. Williams, had Margaret between them and were pacing her up and down the floor of the "parlor."

"We're walkin' her up an' down," Mrs. Todd explained, "to keep the pains up. By the way they're comin' it won't be long now."

Margaret, her face drawn with pain and her body contracting with each spasm, walked up and down between the two women, groaning with each step. Mrs. Todd had brought some preserves from her larder and told Edward to get himself into the kitchen and cut himself a slice of bread and try some of her crabapple preserves and not stand there like a bull in a china shop or something. Mrs. Williams kept saying encouraging things to Margaret; stupid but well-meant words of courage:

"Never you mind, my dear," she was saying, "never you mind. You think this is hard. Well, when you've had thirteen as I have done—it'll be as easy as taking sweet medecine." She laughed a well-meaning raucous laugh and Margaret twisted her face into a sympathetic smile.

As soon as Edward came home, the little Roberts girls, ran out into the street to play where they became the center of an admiring group of street children; but they drew away and walked to the corner with haughty disdain. After a while they tired of this aloofness and joined the chattering children outside of the Roberts tenement-house.

"—sure, I know how they come. The doctor feels—"

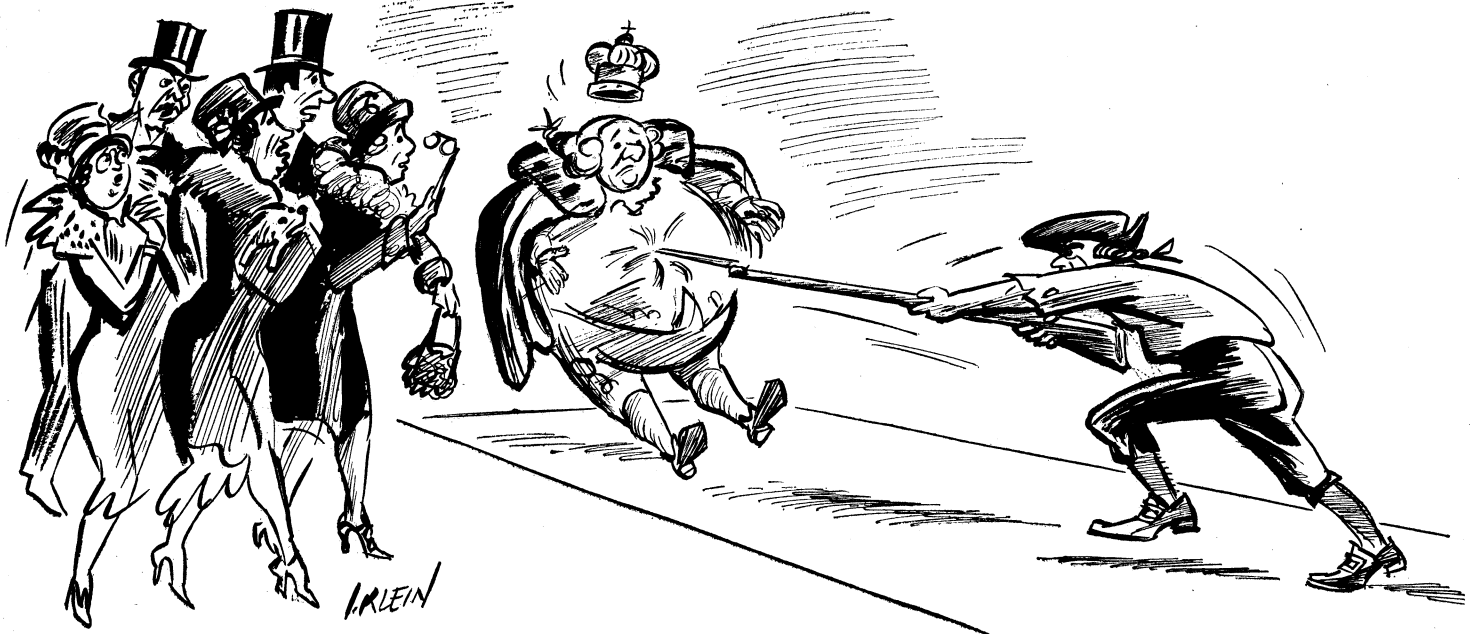
"Teacher says a bird brings 'em."

Titters greeted this remark.

Tony, the son of the Italian grocerystoreman volunteered gra-



—Drawn by William Gropper



D. A. R. Delegation: "But, my dear, our ancestors acted like horrid Bolsheviks!—Drawn by I. Klein

tuitous information:

"I'll tell yuh how it happens. I know, see." His eyes twinkled. "I know 'cos one night I seen. . ."

IV

All day long Roberts dodged swinging blocks and tackle, fearlessly slipped from under monster bales of goods which swung up and out from the holds of ships at the docks, but now that Margaret was in labor and her eyes stared from her head, he began to grow sick at the pit of the stomach. The nervous movements of the women who had come in to aid her added to his nervousness—that incessant walking up and down and the increasing frequency of the groaning made him feel shaky and fearful. The tenement was filled with neighboring men and women. Miriam and Gladys stood in the hallway outside surrounded by two or three admiring girls of their own age.

Just before midnight Dr. Rosenbloom came into the tenement and prepared to deliver the child. He was a young man and went about his business with a grim, silent efficiency. The woman left Margaret with the doctor, her husband and Mrs. Schmerer; an elderly German woman, the wise woman of the neighborhood who acted as midwife in emergencies.

Roberts poked his head through the curtains of the "parlor" and saw the doctor roll up his shirtsleeves and sit down by the side of the bed. Margaret tossed from side to side; her nightgown had crept up so that her thighs showed. The calm look of the young doctor reassured the husband. He walked into the room where the girls lay. They were wide awake and looked at their father with large questioning eyes. Outside in the hallway he heard the buzz of excited voices.

At once, from the bedroom came a long, drawnout shriek. "Ah-h-h-h." Slowly, with a musical quality, it died away to a soft moan. The buzzing stopped in the hallway. Roberts stood still; his heart hammering against his ribs. Again the scream knifed its way through the stillness of the rooms. From the bed where the children lay he heard one of the girls whimper. He heard the guttural accents of Mrs. Schmerer soothing the laboring woman. Once he heard the voice of the doctor but could not make out what he was saying. He walked back and stood near the doorway of the room whence his wife's moaning came. The cheap cotton curtain partly hid the scene from him. He saw the figure of the doctor move across his field of vision. Like the death-sighing of a man whom he once saw dying after he was crushed by a falling bale, the moaning in the room rose and fell. Suddenly the doctor came through the parting of the curtain. He seemed

surprised to see the husband. His hands were covered with blood. "Water. I want some water," he said.

Roberts stood motionless.

"Where's the water?"

"In there." The husband pointed towards the kitchen.

The doctor walked away. From the kitchen came the shriek of the tap being turned on.

Roberts walked through the curtains and into the bedroom where his wife lay.

When the doctor returned from the kitchen he went to work on Margaret. Roberts turned away. What the doctor was doing seemed wrong to him somehow. The husband looked out of the window into the street and saw boys and girls sitting on the stoops opposite. Those kids, he thought, will grow up and have children and have to feed 'em and the girls will lie on beds and toss around with blood-streaked thighs. . . . He groped around in his mind for some sort of answer to an unformed question that troubled his mind but no answer came.

The doctor was speaking to him:

"I'm afraid we're going to have a hard time with this one. It's a dry birth. The water broke this afternoon. I guess I'll be here all night. You look tired; you'd better go out and get yourself a drink. You're no use here."

The husband turned and walked out the room glad to get away. He put his hat on and walked out into the street.

When he pushed his way past the swinging doors of the corner saloon he saw Schmerer, Williams and Doyle standing up against the bar drinking.

"Here he iss," Schmerer shouted. He was a tall, fair man with a ruddy face and watery blue eyes. "Here iss de new fodder."

Doyle, the business agent of his union, held out his hand to Roberts.

"Put it there, me lad."

Roberts held out his hand. He recognized the labor leader.

"Well, what is it, a boy or a girl?"

"It didn't come yet."

"How long?"

"About eight hours already. Doctor says it's a dry birth."

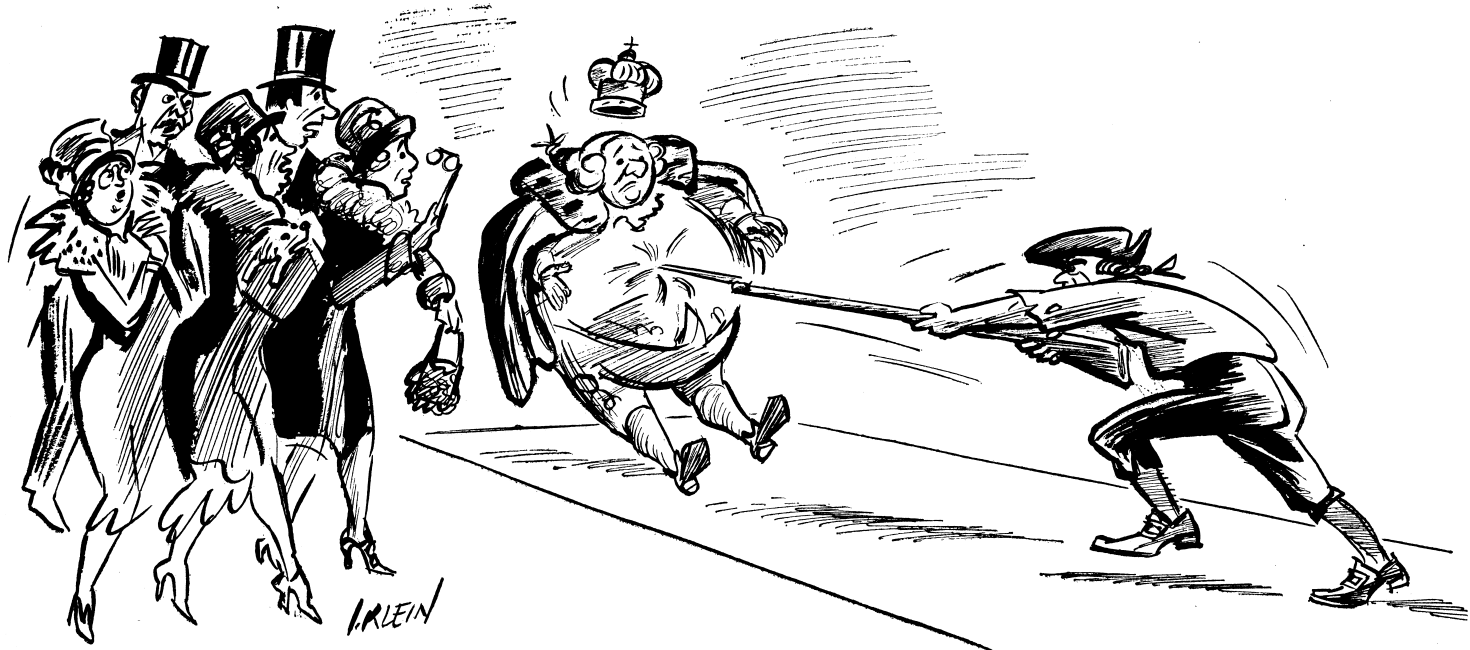
"Well, I guess it's gonna be a dock worker. De're stubborn as hell."

"If he is, I'll make him a union man."

"You're damned right. Let's have a drink."

Leo, the bartender stood smiling behind the bar.

"If it's all the same to you, sir, this one's on the house," the



D. A. R. Delegation: "But, my dear, our ancestors acted like horrid Bolsheviks!"—Drawn by I. Klein

bartender said to Doyle.

"What? Wid one of me men gonna be a poppa. No sir. It's on me. C'mon—er—er—

"Roberts—"

"C'mon, Roberts, order up."

Leo put a bottle of rye on the bar and elaborately polished each glass before he set it down. The men drank. The smooth whiskey slid down Roberts' dry throat and burned pleasantly into his stomach.

"How's that?"

"Hits the spot."

"Yes sir. Have another."

"This one's on me now," Leo intervened.

The men opened their throats and poured the drinks down. Roberts felt that ~~the~~ feeling at the pit of the stomach gradually leaving him. His insides glowed. He walked to the free lunch counter and cut himself a piece of Dutch cheese and ate a salted biscuit with it.

"It's five years since I've had a drink," he shouted to the men at the bar. Perspiration streamed from his forehead. "Five years, by God, but I'm gonna have my fill tonight. C'mon, Leo, fill 'em up again. This is on me."

"Not on your life," Doyle shouted. His face was red and a little wet. "When one of me men is havin' a kid, by Christ, I'm gonna pay fer his licker until it comes out of his eyes."

Two hours later when Roberts stumbled up the stairs and walked into his kitchen he found the doctor washing his hands at the taps.

"It's a boy," Dr. Rosenbloom said.

Mrs. Schmerer, hearing voices bustled out of the bedroom. Her round face beamed.

"It iss ein boy."

The husband grinned drunkenly.

"Then, by Jeez, he's gonna be a dock worker—like his old man."

"Sh-h," Mrs. Schmerer said, "Margaret iss sleeping."

MIDOCEAN

Lithograph by

LOUIS LOZOWICK



LOUIS LOZOWICK '30

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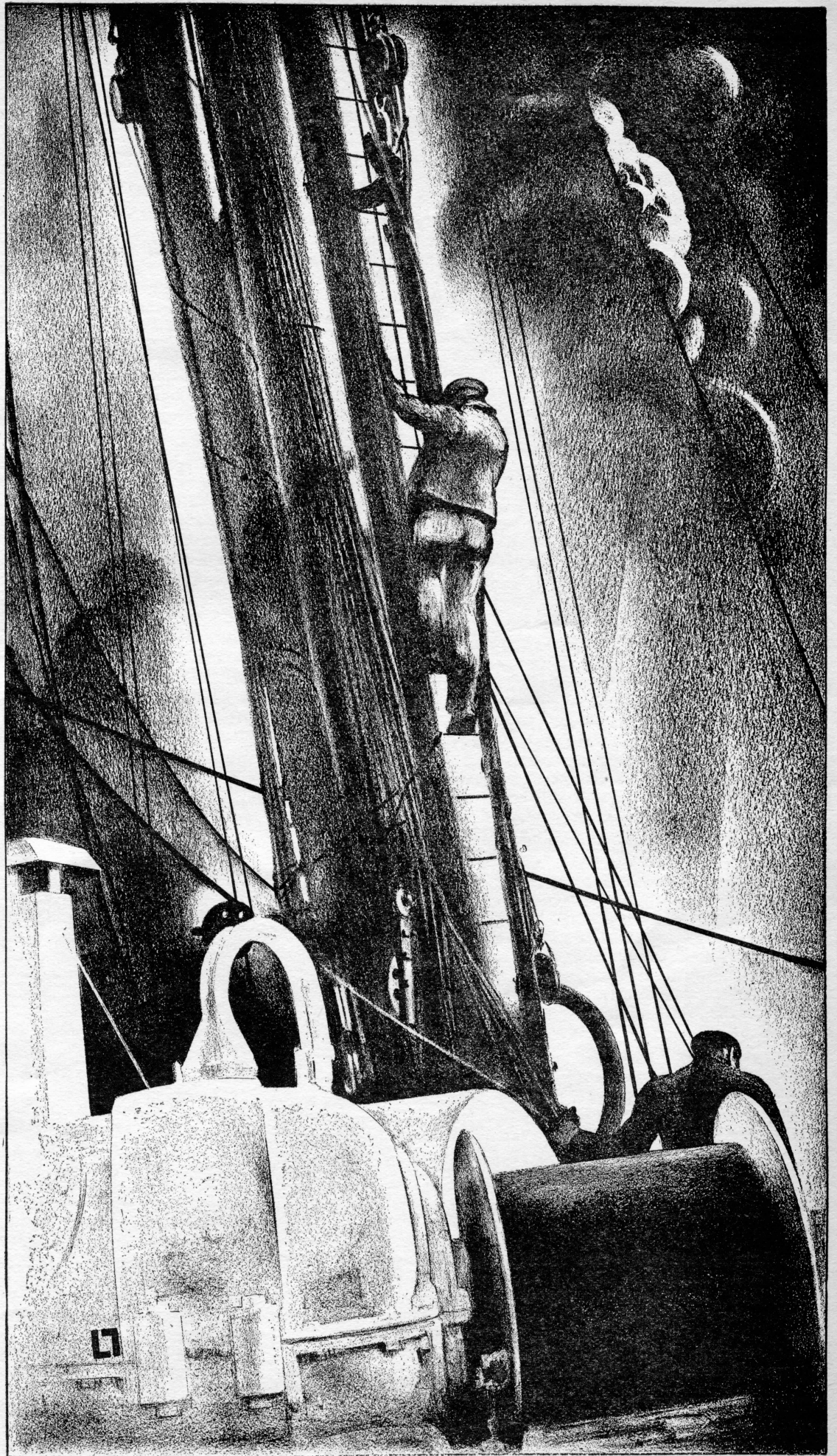
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MIDOCEAN

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LOUIS LOZOWICK

LOUIS LOZOWICK '39

JOSEPH FREEMAN

WAR AND THE INTELLECTUALS

Politics is the public face of economics; war the military face of politics. In all three fraud is as necessary as force. Workers are driven from factories, farmer-boys from fields, into the stinking death-ridden trenches through conscription; they are lured by false hopes and promises. The industrial magnates point to the markets; the statesmen juggle with treaties and alliances; the generals lay out military strategy. They know, in advance, what all the shooting's for. Behind the smokescreen of goodwill and international amity, behind the polite jabber or peace conferences, the armies and navies expand; the munitions manufacturers do a thriving business; the commercial rivalries, the diplomatic negotiations go on. To the lords of the earth a big war is only a question of time; they expected the last one for years before it broke; they are now busy preparing for the next. Agreements for the partition of territory lay in the archives of imperialist governments long before the shot at Sarajevo; we may be sure deals are now being made for hoped-for booty in the next universal slaughter. Naturally nothing is said about it; it is indispensable for predatory rulers to conceal their aims. In this they have the assistance, mostly bought and paid for, of various churchmen, journalists, and scholars; those who in time of peace obscure from the masses the preparations for war; those who when war suddenly breaks loose, to the astonishment of the deluded masses, can make up the necessary lies, can romanticise and idealize the slaughter, screen its real aims in noble formulas about civilization, humanity, liberty and other magic formulas guaranteed to rouse the required amount of hysteria.

Here the intellectuals play a special role. They publish books. They stand for the "impartiality" of literature, art and science. They are, in the mythology of western civilization, the best brains. The verbal battle of the professors on both sides of the last imperialist war may seem amusing now; they laugh at it themselves: We shall see whether the Bergsons and Lamprechts of the next war will behave any better. It will be nothing short of a miracle if they do. Naturally, there are no miracles.

When the last war was over, and the loot had been quarrelled over and unsatisfactorily divided, and a lot of crowns went rolling in the dust, and generals and statesmen, usually out of jobs, felt they now "belonged to history," and the soldiers, disillusioned about democracy and civilization, crept back to their offices, factories and farms, there came a flood of war literature, the leitmotif of which was "Now it can be told." It is probably true, as the editor of the volume under review* observes, that "no event in world history has ever called forth a richer or more varied body of literature than the World War."

This literature may be divided, roughly, into two classes. There are the memoirs of statesmen, generals, industrialists and diplomats who pulled the wires and prepared the slaughter. These tell the truth, if not about themselves, at least about their enemies; and by checking up one apology with another we can arrive at some true picture of the ferocious creed of the imperialist powers. Then come the memoirs of the obscure citizens, mostly intellectuals, the lieutenants and privates who describe their immediate experiences, psychological and physical. Sometimes these memoirs are called novels; but their value as war literature lies in their recording of fact.

Mr. Lohrke's anthology thus raises a fine point: What is literature? For it includes chiefly the memoirs of the second class, and, with a few damning exceptions, ignores the first type of memoir. As a result, the anthology shows men butchering each other with a precision and ferocity that makes tigers look like angels, although official documents are included to indicate time sequence, there is not a single excerpt from the warmakers to re-

veal the imperialist nature of the war.

This distortion springs from the editor's class bias. The compiler of anthologies, like the poet, playwright, novelist or journalist, works from preconceptions. He selects the quotations to include, as the novelist selects the scenes to describe, with an end in view. It is a great idea to get up an anthology of war literature; by the passages selected, and even more by the introduction which gives them general meaning, an editor can make a striking statement about war.

But the bourgeois man of letters pretends to be impartial, and usually ends up as an apologist for imperialism. "This is not the place," Mr. Lohrke says in his preface, "to discuss the logic of war in the general strife of living."

Is it worth while to get out an anthology of war literature, to select a few scraps from the thousands of books that have been written about the war, unless one is going to drive some point home? How can one help doing it? Mr. Lohrke could not help doing it. The inspiration for this book came from the first German anthology of war literature called *Der Krieg*, an anthology which Mr. Lohrke did not like because it was "a work of propaganda—more specifically Pacifist propaganda." He determined that his anthology should not "furnish an argument for the pacifists." That is a praiseworthy aim; a pacifist anthology of war literature would tend to obscure the true nature of imperialist war. But this anthology, too, obscures the true nature of imperialist war, first in the all-important preface, then in its selection. In his anxiety to avoid pacifist propaganda, the editor becomes an apologist for the world war. He idealizes it in the name of literary values.

This is a natural outcome of his intellectualist attitude toward the war. Despite the confessions of statesmen and generals, the reams of published official documents revealing the intrigues and preparations for the war, the commercial and territorial rivalries, the greed, the fraud, the deliberate attempts to fan hysteria, to delude the masses, the editor can blandly remark that the war showed for the first time in history that "material civilization was its own greatest enemy"; that science and progress had negative sides. "Men wanted this," he says of the imperialist war, "this terrible release from the penalties of safety and monotony"; without once naming the men who wanted it, though they, too, have contributed to world war literature, or indicating the mechanism of capitalist society which makes war inevitable. In the face of such a romantic statement, one cannot help asking, if men, in general, without regard to social class, wanted the war, why did the imperialist governments have to resort to conscription, to propaganda?

Mr. Lohrke is aware that most war literature tends to idealize war, a tendency which he shares. He is also aware that the editor of such an anthology must severely limit himself to relatively few selections. It is the nature of his selections that are significant. Though the last imperialist war was literally a world war, this anthology excludes Japanese, Chinese, and Latin American writers. Its attention to the literature of the German revolution is confined to one mild excerpt; the Hungarian revolution is ignored; and the October Revolution, the historic event which gave the world war true significance, is restricted to Lenin's speech at the meeting of the Petrograd Soviet, and the description of the revolt in the Russian army from a book by the counter-revolutionary cossack general P. N. Krassnoff, in which a czarist officer, crucified by the "rough hands" of his revolutionary soldiers is identified with Christ. Translations of the newer war books were made in Berlin, the author tells us, and respected because "the overlapping of selections interfered with the general continuity." Still, one wonders: if the general continuity permitted the inclusion of Ringel's memoir, in which Liebknecht speaks and the hoary Lebedour stands on the top of an auto, how does it manage to exclude John Reed's *Ten Days*? But after all, Ringel's contribution to the an-

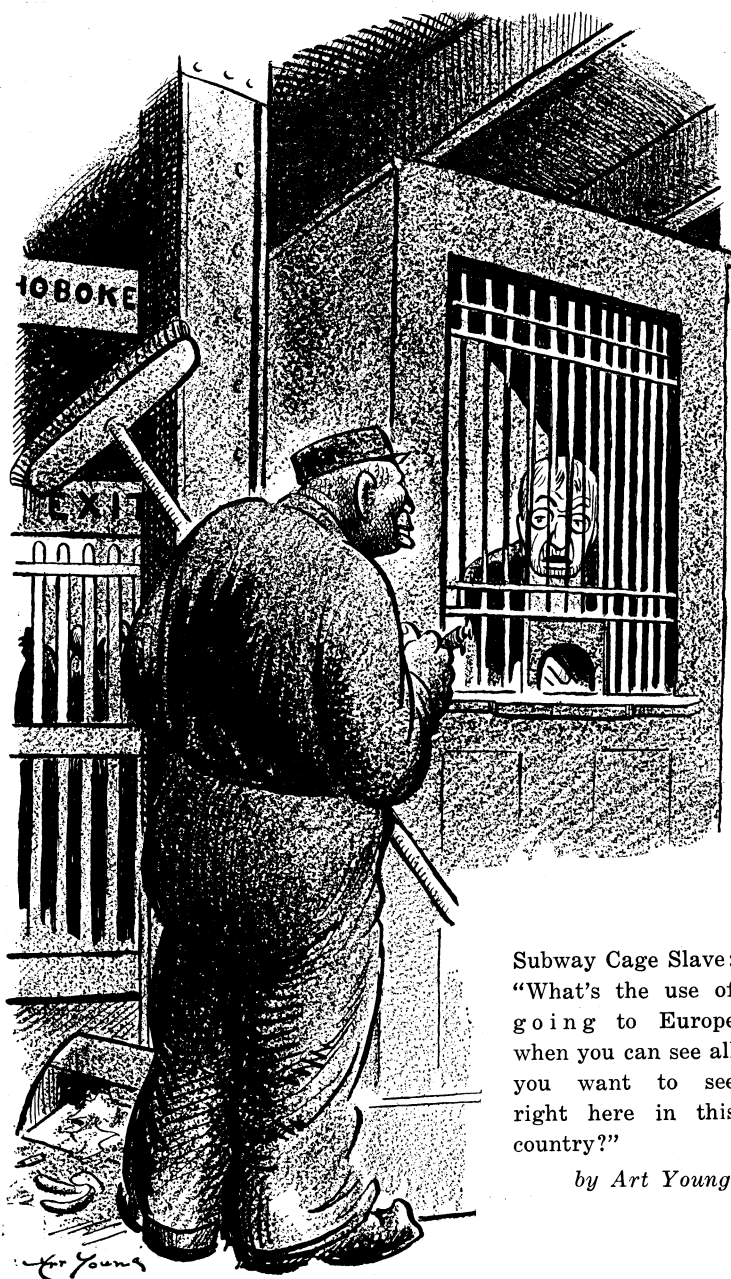
**Armageddon: The World War in Literature*: edited by Eugene Lohrke. New York. Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith. \$5.00.

thology ends with the death of Liebknecht and Luxemburg and the return of the "old system" in a "new form," while in Reed's book Lenin and the Bolsheviks come to power.

The anthology, which has excerpts from some of the best war writings of European and American writers, ends on a pathetic quotation from Henry Williamson's "The Wet Flanders Plain."

"I have a little boy now, an innocent who with his friends in the village street laughs in the sunshine; he sings and smiles when he hears the bells on the wind. Must he, too, traverse a waste place of the earth: must the blood and sweat of his generation drip in agony, until the sun darkens and falls down the sky and rises no more upon his world?"

There is no doubt that the younger Williamson's generation will see an imperialist war that will make the one his father witnessed seem like a mere skirmish. While the literary men of the middle class dream of the "glamour of our yesterdays," and see the last war with "eyes dimmed by the enchantment that distance lends," the industrialists and statesmen of the imperialist countries are heaping up dynamite for the next explosion. There should therefore be a really good anthology that should reveal the relation between the last imperialist war and the October Revolution, and the wave of revolutions that for a time swept Europe.



Subway Cage Slave:
"What's the use of going to Europe when you can see right here in this country?"

by Art Young.

Peasant Without a Hat

By NIICHI TAKIZAWA

*I wore a brown hat last year
While digging, while hoeing.
When I was hot, removed it,
Wiped my face and looked at the blue sky,
And heard the distant railroad bell,
Then ran from the field to the river,
Drank and drank the cool water,*

2.

*Spring again!
Kids sing as they pick flowers,
But I have no brown hat now,
While digging, while hoeing.
The old one is torn; of no use.
The sun beats on my bare head,
My hands and face are black with sweat,
And I can't hear the distant railroad train poetry,
Only the noisy new sawmill at the village,
Shattering my mind with dark thoughts:
'They will keep on sawing,
Until every tree is gone from our mountains,
And the floods will come
To wash away poor Sakuji's rice fields.'*

3.

*Whenever Kinzo and I talk about a peasant's union
Everyone agrees at once—but nothing gets done.
They're all afraid.
They are afraid the police will grab our land
And put us in jail if we form a union,
Sometimes it makes me lonesome to think
In the whole village there's only Kinzo and me
Who are not afraid to form a union,
Who are willing to fight.*

4.

*"Yes, we'll fight when there's nothing to eat."—
That's what they say now, and I answer,
"We eat; but what the hell is it we eat?"
And they blush with shame, and turn away.
"Why can't we form a real union?"
That's what worries me every day as I work in the field,
In the hot sun without my brown hat.*

5.

*I wish I had a hat.
But if I buy even the back number of a magazine,
I have to go without smokes for two days.
This year we are all so poor,
Even if the landlord's son goes to town each night
In his new auto-by, hunting for new women.
But I'm a man without even a wife,
A peasant without a hat.*

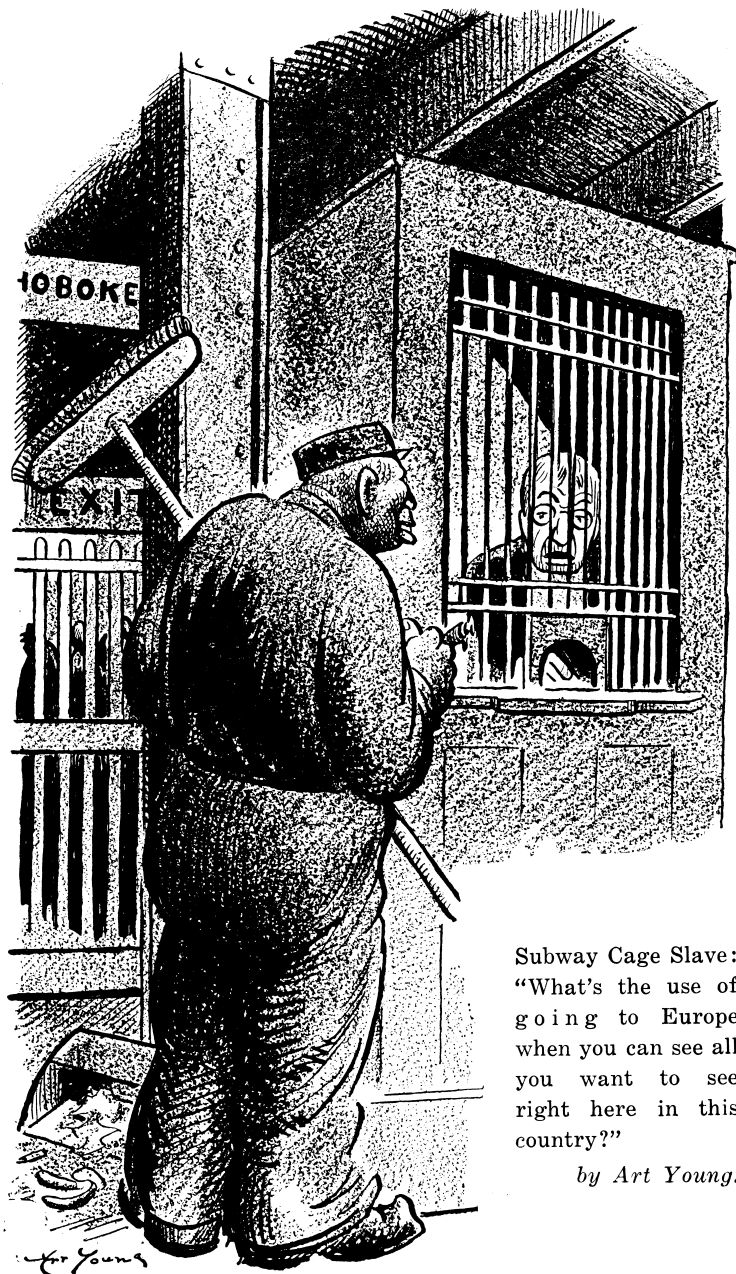
6.

*Yes, we need a union.
Hideji of the next village joined us yesterday,
He's a strong chap who will fight,
He has promised to stand with Kinzo and me,
To build a strong revolutionary union.*

7.

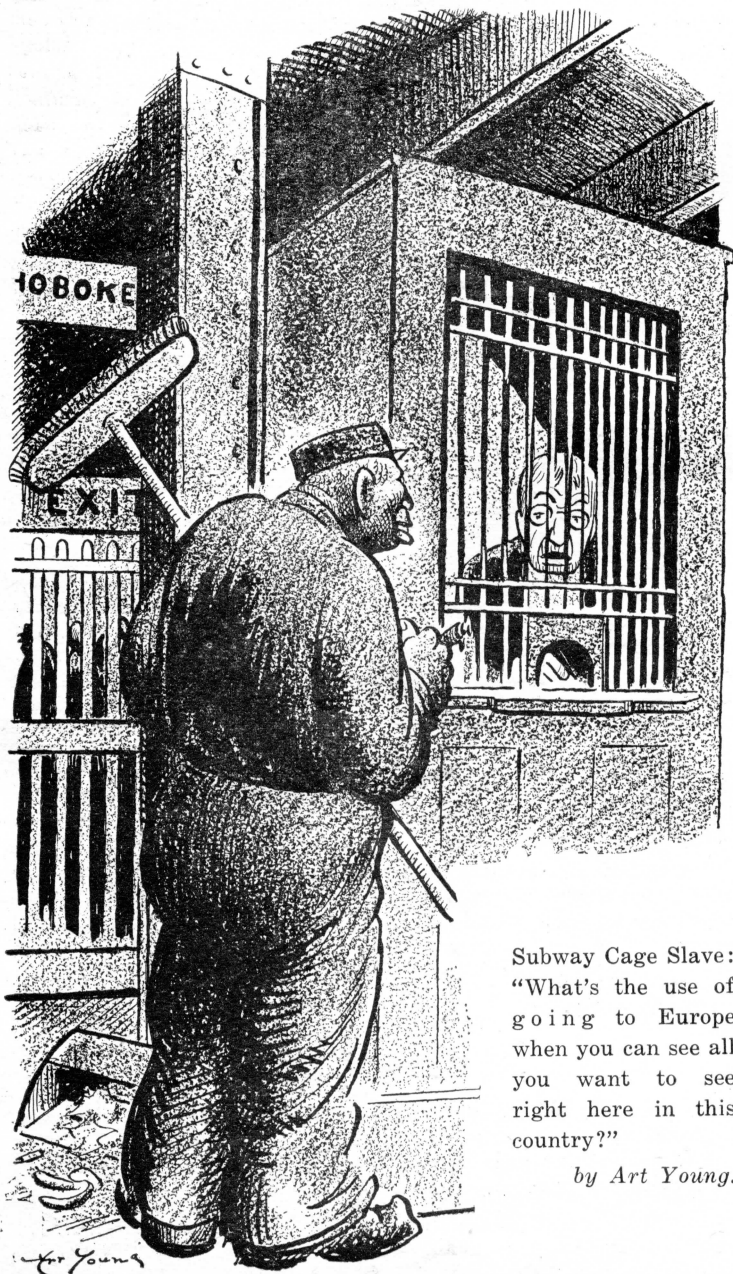
*Spring again.
The kids singing happy songs,
They march away to find the wild flowers.
Me, digging, hoeing,
I rest a minute to wipe the sweat,
And remember now that I have no hat,
And remember we must build a strong union.*

Adapted from a Japanese poem in "The Banner" by
D. UCHIDA and MICHAEL GOLD.



Subway Cage Slave:
"What's the use of
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when you can see all
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"Just Another Accident"—Drawn by Walter Steinhilber

IN A GEORGIA MILL TOWN

By GILBERT LEWIS

It was the night of May first. We held a fine protest meeting during the afternoon at the very steps of the City Hall, and were now sitting in the rear of the small store, where we usually met, discussing plans for future work. Suddenly the telephone rang. It was a long distance call . . . two of our comrades speaking from a Georgia mill town.

Trouble was brewing; the outlook was bad. Mary, organizer for the National Textile Workers Union, (now facing a possible death sentence in Atlanta on charges of distributing "insurrectionary" literature), a mere kid of 19, militant, fearless, was speaking:

"It looks tough, Gil. We distributed leaflets calling a meeting for tonight. Now we just learned that the mill bosses are planning to attack the meeting . . . they've got together some 75 thugs armed to the ears. Now, listen Gil, grab a car and get down there as quick as you can. They won't attack until after the meeting . . . It may be possible to avoid trouble by getting away from there right after . . . A cotton mill worker with a car? . . . don't be a damn fool. Borrow some comrade's car. But be careful . . ."

We immediately got in touch with two comrades who owned cars. Both were out of order. We called a taxi station . . . a Negro taxi station. He agreed to take us for twenty-five dollars cash. Absolutely the best he could do.

We began canvassing comrades and sympathizers for the money. We had little difficulty in making them appreciate the situation and soon had the required amount . . . but not before eight-thirty.

Eight-thirty. We had to be there by ten o'clock at the latest. The town was seventy miles away. We would have to drive like hell. The driver promised us he would make it . . .

He did. We got there at ten-five on the dot. The meeting, if there had been one, was over. Not a soul in sight. The place seemed strangely quiet. We got out of the car and, having no matches, began to crawl around on the ground searching for leaflets, mute evidence that the meeting had at least begun.

We found several, thoroughly crumpled and trampled. It didn't look so good. We began to feel pretty bad . . . and pretty vicious. If those bastards had pulled any rough stuff . . .

We crawled back into the big cadillac. The comrade who was with me remembered the address of a worker, member of the

union. We drove to his house. He was in bed but we dragged him out . . .

No, nothing serious had happened. The bosses had made an effort to start something but it seemed they had heard of Gastonia. They came armed, alright. But when they saw we were prepared for them, they sent out for six dozen rotten eggs and began hurling them at the speakers. No . . . they couldn't smash the meeting. It was a success. Yes . . . he knew where we could find the organizers . . .

After assuring ourselves that our comrades were OK we started home. As we struck the main road, a small roadster, occupied by two bourgeois rounders, pulled in front of us. Our driver sounded his horn several times, but they refused to give him the right of way. Picking an advantage at an unusually wide place in the road, our driver sped past him. It was close but unavoidable.

A second or so later, the roadster darted past us and once again slowed down in the center of the road. Again our driver sounded his horn; again they refused to give him the right of way. Our driver stopped sounding his horn and waited to guess their motives. Finally the roadster stopped and the rounders got out and came back to our car.

They accused our driver of not blowing his horn and attempting to run them into a ditch. Our driver denied the accusations. Suddenly the bourgeois rat, who previously had been blinded by the light, recognized the color of our driver's skin.

"Say! You're a Nigger, ain't you!" he screamed. "Well, you black son of a bi . . ." He snatched at the door of the car. It gave just in time to let our driver's fist pass out. It landed square on the rat's chin, sending him spinning from the running board into the street. Almost simultaneously our driver pressed his foot on the accelerator. The big cadillac quivered, heaved and plunged forward . . . The rat jumped and dashed for his own car.

Our driver took the road at seventy miles an hour. The highway was deserted and well-paved, lending itself to fast driving. The big "cad" hissed and sputtered and gripped the asphalt like car wheels grip the rails. The rat, however, also had a fast car . . .

This speed kept up for about twenty-five miles, with the rat steadily gaining ground. Then suddenly we struck a sharp, very sharp, curve. The big cadillac swayed and quivered and for a few seconds we thought we were headed straight into space. The driver kept his head, gripped hard on the steering wheel and pressed on the accelerator. We made it by a hair's breadth.

We sat up, drew a deep breath and looked back for the rat. He was just making the turn. We could see the reflection of his lights far out in the woods to the right of us. Then suddenly, they disappeared. We never saw them again.

I watched the Georgia papers for a week, but saw no account of the accident. Maybe I was wrong. But I would give almost anything to know what caused him to change his mind so suddenly.

It was 3:30 A. M. when I got home. I fell across the bed and slept like a top.

SLAVES

*Do crawling snakes and toads and insects with spotted skins
Dream of insect Gods and stunt themselves with "sin"?
Yet man is the only animal, who, though of highest station,
Crouches, a trembling slave to his own mind's creation!*

LOUIS GINSBERG.



Steinhilber

"Just Another Accident"—Drawn by Walter Steinhilber

MOVIES

By HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN

The Silent Enemy, Paramount-Publix release, Criterion Theatre, New York.

There are two things interesting about this film: its success with audience and reviewer, and its miserable failure as a motion picture and representation of primitive struggle. Here is a movie being shown on Broadway that isn't a talkie, save for the banal sycophantic foreword by the Chief, and has no familiar stars, and yet it has clicked with picturegoers and commentators. So much for its success. As a film, its failure is complete.

I can think of nothing good to say for this production, unless it be the initiative of the group that made it. The film was made independently by people who had nothing better to do and did that badly. We are told this is true Amerindian stuff. It may be. I have seen this aboriginal injun motif in the aboriginal western movie. Stuff of films is its treatment: its penetration and organization. The attitude of romanticizing the primitive but not presenting the energies of his struggle is typical job-showman's incompetence and ignorance. In this instance the incompetence is accentuated by the pretentiousness of the production.

The film does not show the least understanding of stress or symbol. The stresses of the struggle are placed erringly. There is not the necessary sustained tension of hunger leading up to the satiation after the caribou hunt. Hence the full effect of the satiation is lost. We are told, but not made to feel, there is hunger, just as we are advised of, but not made to experience, the fierceness of the trek and the winter. The movement of a pair of legs with the superimposition of literary legends, sub-titles is not stark energy. A thin curve of marchers in the distance—trite image which the prim audience applauds from habit—is not a trek. The symbols are incorrectly chosen, they do not convey the intention—of hunger, terror, doom, recurrent battle for survival. The makers of this film have not the least suspicion of the moods of pictorial tones—the values of gray and white—or of pictorial frames—rectangles and circles. The photography lacks all essential qualities. And even if the documentary material had been successfully converted into the structure of the film, the picture would have been defeated by the reduction of the entire struggle to “the eternal triangle,” and personal enmity—concepts of bourgeois society and its “dialectics.”

A caribou rush had been advertised. When it appeared the audience sighed “Ah!” and applauded. But this is not the elephant stampede of *Chang*. There is absolutely no camera point-of-view or composition to effect impact, danger, battle. Blunt literalness only. It might have been shot in the safe corral of a stockyard for all its excitement. The fight between the mountain lion and the bear contains a degree of fascination. That is not in the least due to the perspicacity of the film's makers. Their lack of insight keeps the fascination down to its minimum. Absolutely no feeling for the organization of the images, what the Russians call “montage.”

Epic stuff? Yes, even if epic stuff that is by now hackneyed. To make a competent film one needs technology. That much America has achieved. To realize epic material, philosophy—understanding—is needed with the technology. That is still lacking in the American movie, Hollywood-made or Park Avenue-made. *The Silent Enemy* lacks both technology and philosophy.

Dr. E. F. W. Alexander, inventor of the enlarged television projector tells this to the press:

“What will this mean in the war of the future, when a staff officer can see the enemy thru the television eyes of his scouting planes, or when they can send a bombing plane without a man on board, which can see the target and be steered by radio up to the moment when it hits?”

He continues: “Television will be a great asset to politicians. The day is likely to come when candidates for president of the United States will campaign by television.”

What a prospect for workers! Gassed in peace times by the politician, blown to bits in war! Hail capitalist “progress”!

BY
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“Communist though he may be, and thoroughly committed to an economic perspective on poverty and slums, Gold cannot help imbuing his study of the East Side with the warmth, the passionate emotionalism and the violent hatreds and loves he experienced as a boy on its dank streets. He writes so understandingly and sympathetically of its old men and women, its skinny kids, its rabbis, its schlemiels, its prostitutes, its daily life, one senses almost a nostalgia in him for some fundamental quality of living he seems to have experienced there.”—William Soskin in *N. Y. Evening Post*.

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O Workers' Revolution, you brought hope to me, a lonely, suicidal boy. You are the true Messiah. You will destroy the East Side when you come, and build there a garden for the human spirit.

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BOOKS

Joseph Freeman
Joseph Kalar
Harry Alan Potamkin

REVIEWED BY:
Scott Nearing

Jessica Smith
Beatrice Hyman
A. B. Magil

A good deal of Charles Yale Harrison's fascinating book about his war experiences was published in these pages. Its terse masculine style calls for a review as pointed as a military dispatch. Here goes:

Title: "Generals Die in Bed."

Author: Charles Yale Harrison: formerly private in the 244th Battalion (Kitchener's Own) of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Trained, at eighteen, in Shoreham, Sussex, England. Fought in France and Belgium 1917-1918 with the 14th Battalion, Royal Montreal Regiment. Participated in the looting of Arras. Witnessed the slaughter of unarmed Germans at Amiens, where, now a lance-corporal, he was wounded, sent home. Since the war has done a number of things, including publicity work and literature.

Publishers: William Morrow & Company.

Price: \$2.50.

Comment: One swell book. Different from the average war book in three important respects. (1) It is told from a private's viewpoint. A much-needed anti-dote to the romantic gush of Eton and Harrow lieutenants and German subalterns who rushed to the front with idealism in their knapsacks. (2) It makes no attempt to manufacture literature out of the war. The facts are there, naked and brutal, whether the Canadian authorities like it or not. (3) It does not hesitate to damn the generals and the bully-beef manufacturers and munitionmakers and other profiteers. Eugene Lohrke, in his lame introduction to his anthology *Armageddon*, records a conversation with Dr. Julien Champenois, "eminent authority on French letters", who observed that all war books are lies. He also records the storm raised in Paris by Jean Norton Cru who undertook to examine the historical merits and accuracies of some three hundred French war books and pamphlets, and is "still being shrieked at." The aesthetes viewpoint is that one need not be accurate about the war; one need be only literary; as long as there is sincerity, power, logic it is alright to lie or be blind to some important things. In a sense that is true. No one can see any event, let alone a war, with the same eyes as another person. The most sincere Eton boy telling his war story is bound to tell it from the viewpoint of a gentleman. Witness that really fine play *Journey's End*. You would think the war was fought exclusively by captains and lieutenants. The one private in the play is cook and comic figure, just as in Shakespeare's aristocratic plays the "common people" appear only as clowns. It is an honest play, from a gentleman's viewpoint. What, says Captain Stanhope to young Raleigh, you ate with the men? Shocking, such lack of class consciousness. Private Harrison tells the story from the soldier's viewpoint, the clerks, farmboys and mechanics. It seems they were in the war, too. To this soldier, at any rate, distance lends no enchantment to the slaughter, the curtain does not fall on sunlit trees, twittering birds and the infantile hope for an eternal era of peace.

JOSEPH FREEMAN

How the Derrick Works, Pictures and Text, by Wilfrid Jones. Macmillan. \$2.00.

Good straightforward presentation and illustration of the structure and working of a derrick. The very didacticism is romantic. Here is the stuff for the new "fairly-tale" for children. Someone should take this stuff and organize it into dramatic narrative, informed by a precise social point-of-view.

HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN.

Revolution In China

The Chinese Revolution: Arthur M. Holcombe, Harvard University Press. \$4.00

Professor Holcombe uses as a subtitle to his book "a phase in the regeneration of a world power." As this subtitle indicates, the author treats the Chinese Revolution as though it were a subversive movement directed against nationhood and possible reorganization of a Chinese Empire.

"Are the Chinese capable of self-government?" the author asks at an early point in the book. Again he uses the phrase "the political capacity of the Chinese." Into the highways and byways he goes dragging out instances to show, at least by inference, the infantile political character of the Chinese mind. His trump card is the chaos in China which followed the overthrow of the Manchu monarchy and the Mandarinate. Professor Holcombe writes about the "problem of China" as though he were sending a message from a world at peace to another world at war.

From the tone of political superiority which he assumes, the reader might easily imagine that the principal Western nations had not fought with one another nor had they been torn by civil strife of any kind for at least a century.

The Chinese Revolution, according to Professor Holcombe, is in great measure a personal revolution. Although he gives scant attention to Sun Yat Sen, he lays great emphasis upon the personal characteristics and career of Chiang Kai-shek. When he describes the overthrow of Yuan Shih-kai he again makes the incident almost wholly a personal one.

At one point in discussing the effects of a foreign loan upon China the author writes: "In 1913 Yuan-Shih Kai, strengthened by the great loan from the Five Power Consortium was able to defy the unestablished authority of a representative Parliament and crush the intractable remnant of the opposition party. Could he have secured such a loan in 1911 when the Revolution first broke out, there would have been no Revolution."

There is a hint here of the enormous influence exercised upon the course of Chinese Revolution by foreign imperialists. The author, however, turns from the problem with the above short paragraph and goes back to his descriptions of personality and to his abstract philosophizing in the realm of political science.

It is impossible to write a history of the Chinese Revolution or of any other revolution for that matter, without an understanding of the economic and social class alignment. Since the work of Marx and Lenin no history of a revolution can be written without an appreciation of the role that class struggle plays in revolutionary developments. The author has written his story of the Chinese Revolution very much as he would write the story of pioneering in Kansas or Montana. It is a pleasant journalistic narrative with personalities for the high spots.

The Chinese Revolution is one of the most important social revolutions in modern times. Sooner or later it will be described and explained, but the writer who succeeds in interpreting the Chinese Revolution must understand revolutions both in theory and in practice. *The Chinese Revolution* is proof conclusive that Professor Holcombe does not possess these qualifications.

SCOTT NEARING.

American Poetry

Our Singing Strength; An Outline of American Poetry 1620-1930.
by Alfred Kreymborg. Coward McCann, Inc. \$5.00.

At the outset, it can be admitted that Kreymborg has done a thorough, competent job, and that his industry in research is not far from amazing. He has perhaps missed a poet here or there, but never, I think, intentionally: the book is, in its way, a comprehensive anthology of American verse. It is written in a fine rhythmic prose, and combines the methods of criticism, biography, autobiography (and gossip) with considerable success.

But Kreymborg is too much the "good friend" of poetry to write an incisive, carefully pruned outline of what has been important in determining the growth of "our singing strength." For one thing, Kreymborg has assembled his material with an appalling bewildering inclusiveness. Far too many names have been resurrected that have little or no interest for us, and that had but a transitory influence in their day, if any. In this respect, his book recalls the old grammar-school histories which went into minute descriptions of unimportant battles. Where "our singing strength" was a thin uneven adolescent soprano, one feels that Kreymborg has attempted too often to fill the gap with a resuscitation of non-entities deservedly forgotten in oblivion. Had Kreymborg been less the "good friend" of poetry, the book would not have run to 643 pages.

Poetry has had far too many "good friends"—what poetry needs more than ever, is a "good enemy." Such a good enemy is needed to write the history of American poetry, an enemy with a wholesome contempt for the bombast, sighs and tears, pretensions, and egocentric posturing of much of our poetry.

Kreymborg is disconcertingly free with his critical affection. He can welcome and praise Sandburg, Marianne Moore, Cummings, Gould, Robinson, Lindsay, Eliot, and the more conservative "singers" in the same breath. For instance, Kreymborg professes a belief that our next major poet *could* come out of Wallace Stevens. He considers the "experimentalists" in *transition*, *Blues*, and *Exiles* as important, and is not at all dismayed that the experimenting is for "experiment's own sake," just as a great deal of our poetry is written for "poetry's own sake."

On the other hand, Kreymborg has had the courage to stress, in certain poets, the quality of revolt, and speaks of it not with disparagement, but with a warm regard. For instance, in the case of Whittier, it is well to remember that Whittier was a "fighting" poet, and, in a certain measure, a forerunner of proletarian poets, a point conveniently forgotten by all the "best" critics. Also, Kreymborg stresses the fact that William Vaughn Moody was probably our first poet of any significant stature to write poems condemning imperialism or "expansion." The radicals, with a radical content, were worthy of a special chapter; instead their work has been diffused throughout the book, and where grouped, always under an esthetic heading, as, for instance, "Originals and Eccentrics." He has listed Gold, Ridge, Giovannitti, Wallis, Fearing, Burnshaw, and Spector, all known to *New Masses* readers. However it is unfortunate that he missed Rorty and Root altogether, as well as three or four other *New Masses* poets certainly worthy of consideration.

Kreymborg is too genial and kindly to be the critic America needs. His criticism is never savage, acute, or specially penetrating. He walks quietly in fear of treading too heavily on certain sensitive toes. His criticism is laid on with a soft feather pillow: America needs criticism laid on with a club. His book, despite its undoubted merits as a history of American poetry, is almost equally important as a revelation of a wistful lovable personality who reads poetry with a naive passion and who is now and again saddened if this poet or that poet is not quite of major stature.

JOSEPH KALAR.

"A HELL OF A
GOOD BOOK", SAYS
JOHN DOS PASSOS

**GENERALS
DIE
IN BED**

BY CHARLES
YALE
HARRISON

"Generals Die In Bed is one of the most effective exercises in debunking the legend of the nobility, devotion and glamor of war. It is especially notable in its revelation that soldiers other than the Germans failed to behave as though on a Sunday School picnic. It is a book which should stand out prominently in the rising flood of war literature."

—Harry Elmer Barnes

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SOVIET ART AND LITERATURE

Voices of October, by Joseph Freeman, Joshua Kunitz and Louis Lozowick. Vanguard Press. \$4.00.

When *Voices of October* arrived I had just closed *The Woman of Andros*, and the petals of Thornton Wilder's frail unearthly flower were blown away in the strong fresh wind of these voices out of the real world. Reading this illuminating volume about the art and literature of Soviet Russia, it seemed to me that this too in a sense is art and literature of escape. But not escape into the past, into old beauty, not withdrawal into an egocentric world, not a refusal to face what is real—rather an escape *from* the past, and escape from the old world into "the coming new beauty" of which the worker-poet Sadoviev sings so exultantly. What one gathers from this book above all else is that however crude some of its forms, art has become an actual, pulsating part of life in Soviet Russia. These new artists and writers have learned that the way to escape from what hurts them is not by standing apart from life but by plunging in and using whatever gifts they have to change and remake the world. Propaganda—yes—sometimes dull propaganda, but mostly not. It is too inspired, too universal in its appeal, to be dull. It is less an attempt to make people think a certain way than an expression of burning aspirations already deep in people's hearts, and an effort to turn these aspirations into the social effort needed to realize them.

Joseph Freeman, who compiled and wrote the major part of this book, makes this social basis and effect of Soviet art very clear in his excellent opening chapter in which he discusses the background of Soviet literature, the new literary groupings, and the different methods used by the Soviet government to bring art and literature into everyone's lives for their joy, their enlightenment, and their own creative expression. Freeman points out that contemporary Russian art and literature cannot be understood without reference to Communist doctrine which is transforming every aspect of society, and that the modern movements in art which have come to mean certain definite things in other countries cannot be judged by the same standards in Soviet Russia, since "every movement in Soviet Arts lived or died by the supreme test as to whether or not it had anything to offer to the new social order." Those who believe that talent is stifled in Russia and "limited by a narrow official communist outlook" are answered not only by the resolution of the Communist Party of July 1st, 1924, which opposed a "frivolous and contemptuous attitude toward the cultural heritage of the past and toward specialists in style" and declared in favor of "the free competition of various groups and tendencies in the field of literature," but by the glimpses we are given in this book of the great richness and variety to be found in Soviet art, the unlimited opportunities given to the workers and peasants to express themselves, and to enjoy the artistic expression of others.

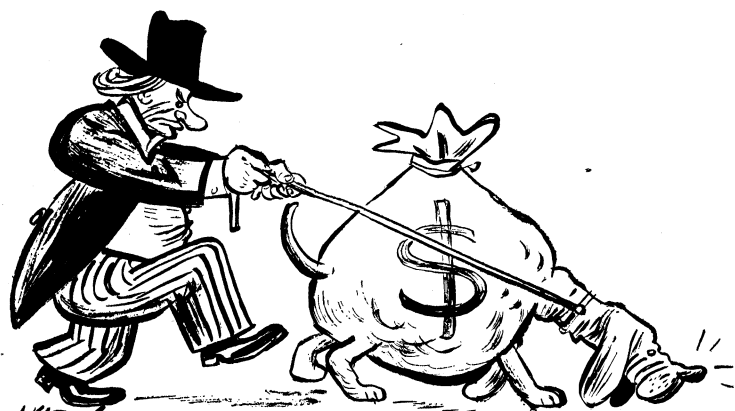
In the section on "Men and Women in Soviet Literature" by Joshua Kunitz the whole grandeur and frenzy of the civil war

and the reconstruction period sweep before us. Kunitz marshals the men and women out of the literature of those years, lets them speak for themselves, and at the same time gives his own rich and passionate commentary on the events and literary tendencies which created them. These are the real men and women of Soviet Russia—these leather-jacketed beauties "functioning energetically," turning from years of hot conflict to years of sober building, these arrogant city fellows, non-willed workers, dazed peasants, pitifully wavering intellectuals, strong people and soft people, women striding forward with assurance, others sinking pitifully, too ill-equipped for the search for "the new life and the new beauty" to stand the test of emotional agony. The poetry and the prose of the new Russia are full of an uncouth but magnificent beauty—the power of the unchained masses, forging out a new life. The old passive, introspective, dreamy literature has gone, and the new writers and their heroes struggle, exult and build. These tantalizing bits so well chosen by Kunitz cry to be re-quoted, but it is hard to choose for so short a space, because he has given us glimpses of every type of person and every problem thrown up in these cataclysmic years.

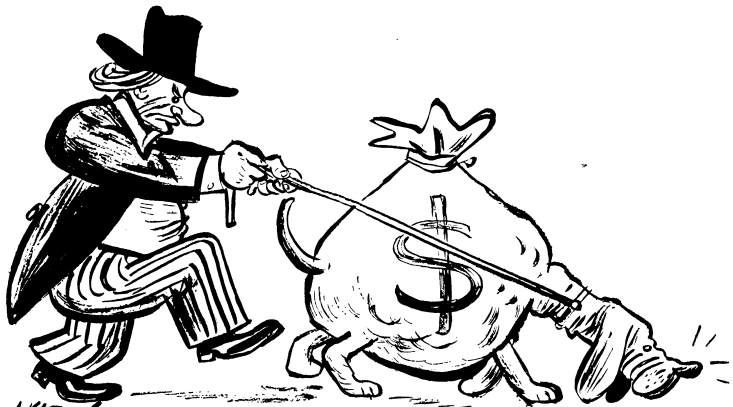
The remaining chapters deal briefly with the theatre, the cinema, painting, architecture and music. Each of these chapters emphasizes still further the intimate relation between Soviet Art and Soviet life, shows how carefully they have preserved the best of the old art while giving unlimited freedom to the new experimental forms surging out of the new needs of the times. The chapter on the theatre, by Lozowick and Freeman, is valuable in differentiating the place and purpose of the various theatrical groups and tendencies, from the serene conventional naturalism of Stanislavski to the stormy and spectacular innovations of Meyerhold. This chapter might have been improved by more bits from the plays themselves, by descriptions of such things as the fear and rhythm in the movements of the coolies in *Roar China!*, for instance, as they sway and sigh in the tense horror of the lot-drawing scene—one of the finest things I have seen on any stage. The section on the cinema is more satisfying in this respect, and gives also a very competent survey of the organization and methods of the film industry. It is appropriate that comparatively little space should have been given to easel art since this is the least social of arts, and since little of significance has been produced in this field since the revolution, but it is a little disconcerting to find only five pages devoted to architecture, which is more closely allied to life than any other art, and to which increasing attention is being paid as new giant power plants, factories, and workers' clubs by the score are going up, and new communities around them. Music deserves more attention than it is given in the brief chapter with which the book ends.

The disproportion in the amount of space devoted to literature and that to the other arts suggests that this should have been two books—one on literature, the other developing the other arts more fully. But this book does not claim to be more than a preliminary sketch of Soviet culture. And how it makes us want more translations of Soviet literature, more of these plays and movies, more books written about them. Much of the literature that has trickled through in translation, much that is still being written, deals with the civil war period and the first fumbling period of reconstruction that followed. Now a new period has come, the period of "overtaking and outstripping" the most advanced countries of the world. Newspapers, magazines, books and plays are flaming banners of exhortation to greater efforts, vivid chronicles of mistakes and achievements. The Five Year plan has opened up vast new plans that leave one breathless. Books of this kind will tell more of the meaning of this new period than floods of statistics.

A new edition of Nexo's classic *Pelle The Conqueror*, published before in this country in four volumes, has been issued by Peter Smith, Publisher, in a single volume at \$3.50. It can be secured thru the *New Masses Book Service* at the publishers' price, postpaid.



"Unlimited funds to investigate the Reds" —Drawn by I. Klein



I. KLEIN

"Unlimited funds to investigate the Reds" — Drawn by I. Klein

BOOKS ABROAD

Sibirien: Ein Anderes Amerika, by Otto Heller. Neuer Deutscher Verlag. Berlin.

Siberia, usually pictured as the desolate, ice-bound prison of political exiles and criminals, is presented in *Siberia: Another America* in the light of Soviet construction and the Five Year Plan, as a "land of the liveliest present" as well as of a dizzying future. The author, a German Communist, journeyed with the Kara Sea expedition in the summer of 1929 to the inmost parts of Siberia entirely by water routes. The expedition was sent by the Soviet Government to investigate the possibility of a northern sea route from Europe to Asia and a direct sea route from Soviet Siberia to the West. Otto Heller travelled for three months on the icebreaker "Krassin," of Nobile rescue fame, which accompanied the expedition, and on numerous river boats in inner Siberia.

"Another America" is the sub-title of the book. But this America, although proceeding with twentieth century "tempo" characteristic of the United States of America, is using the machines and factories and radio stations and hygiene instruction and political organization "all for the worker." In the United States the Indians were dosed with whiskey, infected with civilized diseases, cheated and practically exterminated. The Czarist governments followed a similar procedure. Now Siberia is dotted with village and district Soviets. Tribal Soviets are well organized. As in European Russia the greatest emphasis is laid on the education of the younger generation. From the most elementary teaching of the use of soap and the toothbrush to young Tunguses and Samoyedes and Yakuts to the three R's and on to the study of the radio and the machine and Marx and Lenin.

By much research, careful observation and first-hand contacts with every variety of person, from native hunters, peasants and workers to engineers, from German war-prisoners to anarchist exiles, Mr. Heller has gathered a mass of historical, geographical, ethnographic, statistical and human material showing the gigantic workings of the Five Year Plan and the animated awakening of the giant Siberia. As one of the first books on this subject it covers in twenty chapters, each a story by itself, a rich field of adventure and social endeavor.

BEATRICE HYMAN.

Derlang Aher die Velt, Burzhoi! by Moishe Nadir. Morning Freiheit Publishing Company, New York. 30 cents.

Moishe Nadir is easily one of the two or three greatest living masters of Yiddish prose. He has worked in all forms and has written much poetry which, while inferior to his prose, is still of a high order. Many years ago he tried his hand at writing in English and contributed to Joe Kling's *Pagan*. But probably he isn't grateful to anyone who recalls those youthful indiscretions. He is a Yiddish, not an English writer. And a writer of amazing fecundity, one of those rare persons who can be called in the fullest sense of the term a creator of language. Unlike other explorers of language, Nadir is never esoteric or arty; on the contrary, his path has been toward closer contact with the spoken language of the masses. His writing is full of the colloquialism, obscenities, the colors and overtones of folkspeech brilliantly quintessentialized.

Derlang Aher die Velt, Burzhoi!, issued on the occasion of Nadir's 25th anniversary, contains the long title poem and a number of shorter pieces. The flavor and fine insolence of the title is hard to translate. Perhaps the nearest would be: *Fork Over the World, You Lousy Bourgeois!* This is the selfconfidence of a class that knows its strength and is certain of victory. The poem contains magnificent passages, passages that glow with irony and humor and invincible revolutionary faith. It is spoiled a little by being overwritten in parts and by the conclusion which digresses from the central theme. But it remains a powerful contribution to revolutionary literature. The book is strikingly illustrated with drawings by Bill Gropper, Fred Ellis and Morris Pass.

A. B. MAGIL.

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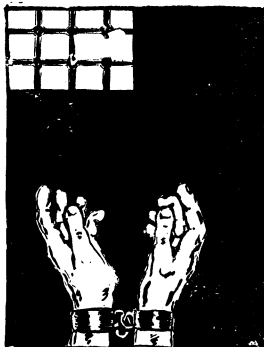
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WORKERS' ART

A monthly department for reports and discussion of Workers' Cultural Activities.

The John Reed Club

Editors *New Masses*:

The John Reed Club has continued active on the workers' cultural front. The splendid May first parade from Rutgers Square to Union Square included not only cartoon-posters designed and made by the artists of the John Reed Club, but also a John Reed Club division. The press committee of the club has done excellent work in support of the International Labor Defense campaign for class war prisoners. The signatures of noted writers, artists and educators were secured to the club's statement later issued to the press. The I. L. D. has been further supported by the John Reed Club in an entertainment arranged by the club on May 14, with Gene Schachner as chairman. Emjo Basshe directed and staged one act of *Singing Jailbirds* with members and non-members participating. Gropper, Klein, Burck, entertained with satirical cartoons. An I. L. D. benefit at Camp Nitgedaiget was attended by Mike Gold, L. Adohmyan, J. Pass and Jacob Burck.

The John Reed Club cooperated with the Proletpen, Jewish Proletarian writers group, in the Freiheit's Moishe Nadir celebration which filled Carnegie Hall to overflow. Gropper's cartoons were well received. Edith Segal led the Red Dancers. Adolph Wolf greeted Nadir for the club. The club joined in hailing the first Chinese Soviet Congress; and in the United Front Conference Against Lynching, called by the New York District of the Communist Party.

Interest in the Club's work is evinced by letters from the revolutionary groups in China and the Soviet Union, and even from remote and esoteric Hollywood.

The members' exhibit of paintings, drawings and sculpture still continues at the Clubrooms.

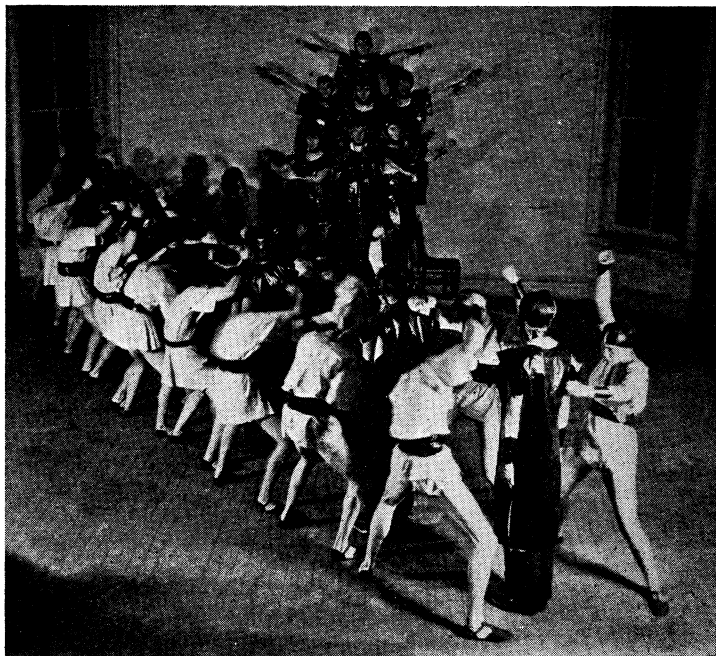
Club members continue speaking at workers clubs. Walt Carmon spoke on Literature and Revolution in America, Joshua Kunitz on Russian Literature, both at the Hungarian Workers' Club. The workers' summer camps will have a number of Club members in their cultural work. The writers are preparing playlets for the workers vacationing in their camps.

The cultural work will be furthered in a worker's film movement being organized, which will carry over to the U. S. A. a force now active in England, Denmark, and Germany. Beginnings are being made by members writing on films—especially for the *New Masses* and the *Daily Worker*; in member's activities in the making and editing of workers' films; in talks to workers' clubs; in cooperation with working class organizations like the Workers' International Relief and the International Labor Defense; and in the support of meritorious pictures, such as that given by the Club to the Vostok—kino's *Turksib*. The work will be correlated and integrated this coming fall, and a film group will be mobilized for the study of the technique of picture-making and the education of workers in the cinema as an ideological and artistic medium.

Publishers are adding to their lists the work of Club members. Charles Yale Harrison's *Generals Die in Bed* has appeared in England, Canada, and is issued by William Morrow in New York. It will appear soon in Soviet Russia, Germany and Japan. Michael Gold's children's story, *Charlie Chaplin's Parade*, with illustrations by Otto Soglow, is on Harcourt, Brace's list for the fall. William Gropper's circus story told in drawings, film-style, comes out this fall with Coward McCann.

Many of the revolutionary writers and artists have migrated for the summer to work on paintings for fall exhibitions and forthcoming books.

HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN, *Secretary John Reed Club.*



—Photograph by the Labor Defender Camera Group.

The Red Dancers in a scene from their machine dance-pantomime. The group is led by Edith Segal. In the past season they have participated in various working class affairs and are now assisting at the workers camps around New York City.

Worker Photographers

The Labor Defender Photo Group was organized in New York City only a few months ago, thru the efforts of the I. L. D. and the Nippon Camera Club. The Group is composed wholly of workers who use their spare time for taking pictures. Its main objective is to get pictures of the class struggle for use in working class papers and magazines. Our members are ready with their cameras on the picket line, demonstrations, street meetings, in factories, unemployment lines, and in the homes of the workers. During the May Day parade our group took several hundred pictures and movies of the splendid May Day parade in New York City, which were extensively used in the radical press.

On June 14 the Labor Defender Photo Group opened its first Workers Photo exhibit at the Japanese Art Center with an evening of interesting entertainment. The admission tickets were very novel, each ticket being a photo in itself.

All workers are invited to attend this exhibition at the Japanese Art Center, 7 East 14th St., New York, which will be open every evening until June 29th.

We also ask all workers who have cameras to join our group. We have an excellent dark room for printing and developing, an enlarging machine apparatus and lighting effects for inside pictures, a good slide and two motion picture cameras. All these are for the use of all members.

If you can't join the group but can give us pictures depicting workers life we will gladly see that they are distributed and published in the workers' press.

We want also to establish a picture exchange and will gladly cooperate with other groups or individuals in this country or internationally.

ISABELLE, A. KLEINMAN, *Sec.*

799 Broadway, Room 410, New York, N. Y.

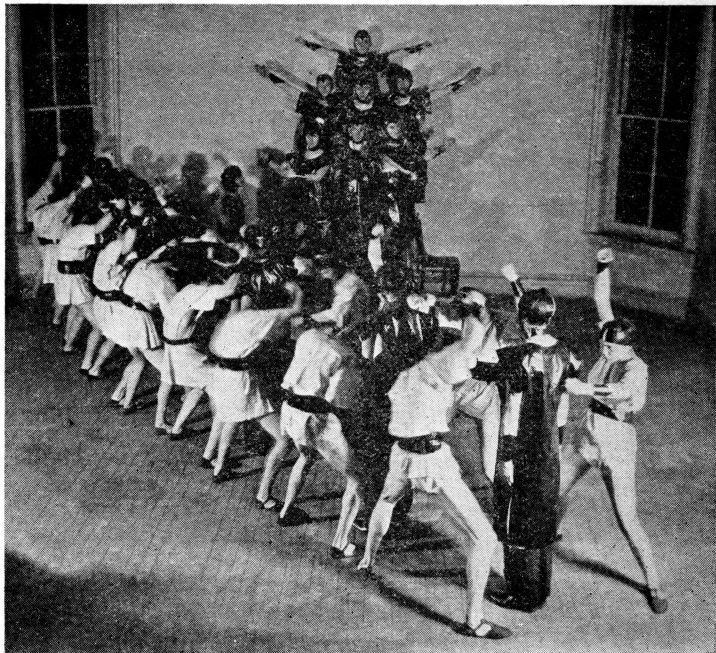
Proletarian Drama

Editor *New Masses*:

The Elore Dramatic Club and the Bronx Hungarian Workers Club of New York have been very active during the past season in the dramatic field.

Each of these groups has presented a one-act play every month and a full length play every three or four months.

All members and the directors of both groups are workers from



—Photograph by the Labor Defender Camera Group.

The Red Dancers in a scene from their machine dance-pantomime. The group is led by Edith Segal. In the past season they have participated in various working class affairs and are now assisting at the workers camps around New York City.

the shops.

The last three act play given by the Elore Dramatic Club was *Kanacker*, A German play by Frunz Yung, translated by a club member.

The Hungarian Workers Club presented *Gods of the Lightning*, also translated by a club member.

Both plays were well done. However, since they did not present a working class viewpoint sharply enough, a great deal of criticism was made.

In view of the critical attitude of the membership of the clubs, both the Elore and the Bronx Hungarian dramatic groups combined in the presentation of a new version of Upton Sinclair's *Singing Jailbirds*.

The technical arrangements proved easy; there were 3 reflectors and one spotlight, all connected in five minutes. "The hole" was a wooden pyramid; the judge sat on a square double platform and the cell consisted of wooden bars. Everything could be put together in 15 minutes and the whole set cost but a few dollars.

The play was given twice in New York. Then the combined groups went to Bethlehem, Pa., Passaic, N. J., and Newark. The season was too far advanced for trips to other towns.

The cast of 30 people usually left Saturday afternoon in a moving truck and returned immediately after the performance.

Every performance was a success. The steel, textile and other workers, were aroused by every scene. We were congratulated on all sides for the smoothness of the performance, the directness of the play. We believe our version of Sinclair's play was made into the first clear Communist propaganda play presented in this country.

WILLIAM WEINBERG, one of the players.

Workers Art in Summer Camp

The scene is the social hall at Camp Nitgedaiget, a workers' summer camp at Beacon, N. Y. A drum beats out a rhythm and on the stage a group of workers go through staccato motions—slaves on the belt. A boss with a cigar in his mouth speeds up each worker while the drum beats faster. On the wall is a sign: \$16. A worker drops out; from the unemployed workers who answer the Help Wanted sign another takes his place at \$14 a week. So it goes on—speedup, wagecuts, unemployment. And then the revolt. The mannequins spring to life. *Strike!* An A. F. of L. faker to the rescue. The boss and the faker embrace. But the Trade Union Unity League leads the workers, both employed and unemployed—the Trade Union Unity League and the Communist Party. The two moving groups of factory workers and unemployed workers join and the boss and A. F. of L. fakers are crushed between them. The audience bursts forth in spontaneous applause while actors and audience join in singing *Solidarity Forever* and the *Internationale*. Out of the singing group of actors a speaker for the TUUL steps forth. Make believe merges into reality and the speaker makes an appeal for the TUUL.

It is pantomime, simple, elemental, amazingly effective. The occasion was the beginning of Trade Union Unity League week at Camp Nitgedaiget, for the benefit of the militant trade union center of the American workingclass. The pantomime, the central feature of the evening's program, was arranged by V. I. Jerome, educational director of the camp. The rhythms were the work of Lahn Adohmyan, a member of the John Reed Club, who is in charge of library and musical work. The actors were drawn from the campers. Among them were six hard proletarians from Seattle, who only a few hours before had driven into camp in their third-hand car on their way to the Seventh National Convention of the Communist Party. They were tired and hadn't had a decent night's sleep for two weeks, but they were glad to take part in the pantomime. Later one of them, a lean lumberjack with graying hair, addressed the crowd and told of conditions in Seattle.

There will be many more such evenings at Camp Nitgedaiget this summer. Cultural work is regular part of the camp activities. "Artef", the remarkable Jewish workers' dramatic organization, is going to produce plays and Fritz Brosius, another member of the John Reed Club, will do the scenery. And this year, more than ever before, cultural activities in the English language will occupy a leading place.

A. B. MAGIL

Beacon, N. Y.

A Debate!

JOSHUA
KUNITZ

VS

MICHAEL
GOLD

"Are we forever doomed to relish the flat, grey stuff dished out to us by so many of our writers? We must learn from the bourgeoisie just as the bourgeoisie had once learned from the aristocracy."

"Nothing but academic banalism. There is no "style"—there is only clarity, force, truth in writing. If a man has something new to say, as all proletarian writers have, he will learn to say it clearly in time: if he writes long enough."

Can We Learn Anything From the Bourgeois Writers?

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LETTERS FROM READERS

For Workers Movies

Editor *New Masses*:

The other night I saw the latest Soviet picture *Turksib*.

Before the main film, we were treated with "Newsreels." One was of Mrs. Mayo. In the face of a growing revolt she tells us that the only thing that is wrong in India is the fact that girls marry at 14 years of age and earlier. Then she adds that the best government possible is the British government because the people of India are not ready to take care of themselves. How stupid, ridiculous.

Then we saw president Hoover reviewing the fleet and Grover Whalen shake hands with Mulrooney giving over his post as chief of police.

Why must the workers of New York be forced to swallow this nonsense every time they want to see a revolutionary picture from the Soviet Union?

Why could not some cultural organization like the W. I. R. or I. L. D. or John Reed club, establish workers' movies without the additional hokum? I am sure that if you will raise this question there will be many a comrade who will be only too glad to help you with the enterprise. Let's have workers movies.

Comradely,
MICHAEL FRIEDMAN

Bronx, N. Y.

NOTE:—Steps toward the organization of workers film groups are being taken now. Those interested can write our movie critic, Harry Alan Potamkin, care of the *New Masses*.

In a Buddhist Monastery

Editor *New Masses*:

I know of course, that *New Masses* is known in the great cities of the Far East. But imagine my surprise when I learned it had penetrated the fastness of a Buddhist monastery in Ceylon.

I visited a friend there, a priest in the monastery. Some of these fellows are well posted. We were discussing American magazines and I mentioned the *New Masses*. I admit I smiled a bit. I was trying to picture you fellows in New York if you knew the *New Masses* was being discussed in a Buddhist monastery of Ceylon.

But try and picture me when the priest said he knew the *New Masses* and liked it! It seems that a friend of his in Honolulu had sent him a copy only a few weeks before I arrived. He was impressed with the magazine as a whole and especially with the cartoons. Western names are not easy for the people of Ceylon. But he recalled and praised William Gropper highly. He mentioned other contributors.

I make all the ports in the Far East and meet many friends of the *New Masses*. There's a hard-drinking Malay friend of yours in Singapore, but that's to be expected. I thought, however, that you ought

to share the shock of finding that a Buddhist priest was one of your readers. These fellows in the Far East are awake. I'm leaving copies of the *New Masses* along my way now. More power to you.

J. CECIL.

Tokyo, Japan.

A New Subscriber Disagrees

Dear Miss Strauss:

Listen, Comrade! I met Mike Gold the other night and I think he is a grand guy. But when he said that Walter Pater wrote like a fairy for a fairy, it seemed to me that he was merely doing the Humanist idiocy from the opposite angle.

No matter. I am sending \$1.50 for a year's subscription to the *New Masses*.

Yours sincerely,

SINCLAIR LEWIS

New York, N. Y.

Yes and No

Dear Mike:

Your correspondents who advise Upton Sinclair to study Thornton Wilder rate a lot more abuse than you gave them. The advice Upton needs is: Study your own style, and see what you can do to clear up its muddy bottom, to make the current run faster.

Incidentally, I think Sinclair has been doing that and doing it to good purpose. The style of *Mountain City* is far away better than anything Sinclair ever wrote before. In fact it approaches perfection in its medium in a good many places. I say it, who never could abide Sinclair's earlier turgidness.

If he keeps up the improvement he is going some day to be classed a stylist, though he will never be classed—I am happy to say—with Wilder and the pensive pullulations of the *Bridge of San Luis Rey*.

What I think of Upton Sinclair's war record is going to take several more Jed Rushers and a real crisis in public relations to wipe out.

Yours,

HAYS JONES

New York, N. Y.

Gilbert Lewis—is a young Negro worker, now Communist organizer in Birmingham, Alabama. He makes his first appearance in the *New Masses*.

Don McKenzie—worker-poet, has just left the University of New Mexico for Germany. First *New Masses* appearance.

Jessica Smith—has spent a number of years in Soviet Russia. She has contributed to many publications and is author of *Women in Soviet Russia*.

Joseph Freeman—is author, with Louis Lozowick and Joshua Kunitz, of *Voices of October* just published.



Langston Hughes—writes of himself: "I was born in Joplin, Missouri, February 1, 1902. Soon after my birth my father went to Mexico, and before I reached high school I had lived in Mexico City and in many different towns in Kansas, Colorado, Missouri, Ohio and Indiana. I went to high school in Cleveland, worked for two terms, and then I went to sea, working as mess man and ordinary seaman, to Africa, Holland and various ports of the Mediterranean. Back to this country, where I worked for more than a year in hotels and restaurants in Washington, then to Lincoln University, a Negro college where I graduated A.B. in 1929. Two books of poems, *The Weary Blues* and *Fine Clothes to the Jew*, various contributions in *The Workers Monthly*, *New Masses*, *The Crisis*, *The Nation*, *Vanity Fair* and other publications. My first novel will appear July 24." An installment of this novel *Not Without Laughter*, appeared in the June number of *New Masses*, another appears in this issue.

In This Issue

Charles Yale Harrison—is author of *Generals Die in Bed*, just published, parts of which first appeared in the *New Masses*. The book has been well received in this country, but is being attacked bitterly in England and in the Canadian parliament. The story in this issue is part of a new novel to appear this fall.

Philip Bard—19 year old artist, makes his first appearance in *New Masses*. He attended the Evening School of Industrial Art in New York, worked as commercial artist and movie cartoon animator. Contributed to the *Daily Worker*, *Labor Unity* and the *Young Worker*.

Art Young—was one of the first contributors to the *Masses* when it began in 1910. He is author of the illustrated autobiography *On My Way* and a book of drawings *Trees At Night*. He is now doing a book of those delightful drawings of hell—with all modern improvements.

Walter Steinhilber—of New York, makes his living as commercial artist.



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Let Us Master Our Art!

Editor *New Masses*:

I am glad to see that my review of Upton Sinclair's *Mountain City* and Wilder's *The Woman of Andros* has created a little controversy. This is a good sign. Such discussions are bound to result in a clarification of issues. And let's do it frankly. I'm glad Mike Gold does it. If in the discussion one of us hits a little too hard, occasionally, what of it. After all, we are not tender Humanists.

Henry George Weiss' objections are not fundamental. It is of course, possible that in my eagerness to make a point, i. e. to impress our proletarian writers with the importance of acquiring technique, I have been a little too censorious of Sinclair's craftsmanship and a little too laudatory of Wilder's. Since, however, Weiss himself admits that Sinclair's writing is "not as good as" Wilder's, mine was not a very greivous fault. I feel that Sinclair's writing is superficial and journalese. As to Weiss' eulogy of Sinclair's ideas, I think it rather too lavish. According to him, what makes Sinclair a great novelist, what makes him "belong to the future", despite his "shortcomings" which "spoil everything he ever wrote," is his "spirit of revolt," of "flaming idealism." I fail to see the potency of this argument. First, I am not at all certain that "flaming idealism," however revolutionary, is in itself sufficient to make a great novel. I have read too many "flaming" manuscripts to entertain such a fatuous belief. Secondly, in the light of the present trends in the American revolutionary movement, Sinclair's "flame" seems "not so hot." Indeed, an objective analysis of his work convinces me that *ideologically* he expresses those sections of contemporary American society whose "spirit of revolt" and "flaming idealism" are expressed *economically* by some of the wishy-washy labor unions and *politically* by the Socialist Party. If these belong to the future, then Weiss is right—then Sinclair "belongs to the future."

More fundamental, though scarcely more logical, are the objections to my review raised by Mike Gold. In his argument, Mike first puts up a straw man, then heroically struts forth to slay him. He confuses "studying" with "imitating"; he fails to distinguish between "technique" and "style." For instance, who ever said that "a young Jack London . . . give up his natural instincts and make himself over in the image of a William Dean Howells"? Obviously, when I suggested that "a wise proletarian does not pooh-pooh the very real technical achievement of the bourgeois writer," that "he attempts first to *master* it and then to *transcend* it," I did not—not even by the remotest implication—mean to say "give up" or "make himself over" or any such balderdash.

Mike, I suspect, has not the faintest notion of the dialectic of the historical process. His is a childish nihilism, a blind, impetuous, irrational, almost mystical revolt against anything that savors of the past, of "old" culture. This is a dangerous tendency in a revolutionist. For revolution does not mean indiscriminate negation and wholesale rejection, revolution does not mean, we hope, a reversion to barbarism; on the contrary, it means, in its creative phases, affirmation, cultural acceleration, a new synthesis.

A new life and a new art? Certainly! But not without a very definite utilization of those elements of the old culture that have vitality, dynamism, and a promise for the future.

It is foolish to sneer at "dead splendors." After all, each generation, even the most revolutionary, adds but a few bricks to the colossal cultural pyramid built by the "collective" effort of all preceding generations. If Jack London, or Mayakovsky, or Lenin had been raised in a jungle, among savages, their "natural instincts" would have most likely expressed themselves in forms which even Mike could not wholly relish. These men were what they were, and they wrote as they wrote largely because they had been anteceded by countless millions of people, creators of language and ideas and cultures. Garin-Mikhailovsky tells the pathetic story of an old Ghetto Jew, a mathematical genius, who spent the major part of his life on the discovery of what proved to be calculus. When the old man was told of the work of Newton, he died of a broken heart.

The proletariat cannot afford to waste its geniuses.

Would I tell a young worker, an aspiring composer, to study theory, harmony, counterpoint, orchestration? Would I tell him to study Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, Frank, Moussorskys, Stravinsky, or Schoenberg?

By all means!

These specialists have solved a multitude of technical problems

in their art. It would be sheer stupidity to ignore this fact. Moreover, the impact of all these different and profound personalities would help our young composer to find himself. Our characters are always defined more clearly as a result of stimulating contacts with other personalities. Living, experiencing, is learning. Does this mean that our young composer is to "give up his own natural instincts and to make himself in the image" of any of these men? No! The bee gathers pollen from all kinds of flowers, but it makes its own honey.

This applies to all branches of human endeavor—science, philosophy, technology, art, literature, and so on. Thus, it was not Sinclair, and it was not Wilder, and it was not anybody in particular that I had in mind in my review. These were illustrations, symbols. Sinclair was a symbol. Wilder was a symbol. Instead of Wilder, take X or Y or Z, take any specialist, in any field.

Mike Gold is right in one thing. If a man really has something to say, he will say it in his own way, that is, in his own *style*. But what I maintain is that he will say it more significantly, more convincingly, more penetratingly, if he has mastered the *technique* of his particular art, if he has benefited by the "collective international research" of the other workers—past and present—in his field.

This may be "academic banalism" and "class-room nonsense," as Mike calls it, but it happens also to be the opinion of Lenin, as well as of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. I am mentioning this not as incontrovertible proof of the correctness of my position, but simply as a rebuke to those comrades who tend to indulge in futile epithets and in irrelevant spoofing of "professors."

Here is what Lenin said:

"We are much too much 'iconoclasts.' We must retain the beautiful, take it as an example, hold on to it, even though it is 'old.' Why turn away from real beauty just because it is old? Why discard it for good, *instead of using it as a starting point for further development?* That is nonsense, sheer nonsense."

And here are a couple of paragraphs from the Resolution on Literature adopted by the Politbureau and quoted in the *Voices of October*:

"Since the Party sees in proletarian writers the future leaders of Soviet literature, it must fight against all frivolous and contemptuous estimates of the cultural heritage of the past.

"The Party must fight in every way against a frivolous and contemptuous attitude toward specialists in style."

Revolution and Culture—this is a vast and intricate subject.

A little less conceit, and a little more perspective! "We have all the resources of power, but we do not know enough" (Lenin). Let us learn! Let us make ourselves worthy of the great task that lies before us! Let us be ready—culturally, as well as economically and politically! This is our road to victory!

J. Q. NEETS.

NOTE:—I'll answer this next month—not enough space this time. Hold your judgement friend reader until then.—MIKE GOLD

A Request From Japan

Dear Comrades:

Accept our hearty greetings to American comrades in the struggle. We greet also those in the cultural field. The *New Masses* deserves great credit for its work in this field. We are proud to advise you that the work of the *New Masses* writers, poets and artists appears in our publication.

Senki, (*The Banner*) is the only popular proletarian magazine in sympathy with the Communist Party of Japan. At the moment it has about 30,000 readers, about 40% of whom are workers, about 26% peasants.

We wish to establish closer relations with foreign workers. We ask that American comrades write to us. Tell us of American working class life, all phases of cultural activity. Address all communications to Senki-sha, Tokyo, Kojimachi-ku, Yurakucho 1-4, Japan.

With proletarian greetings to all American comrades, workers, artists.

Fraternally,

THE SENKI—Editors

Tokyo, Japan.

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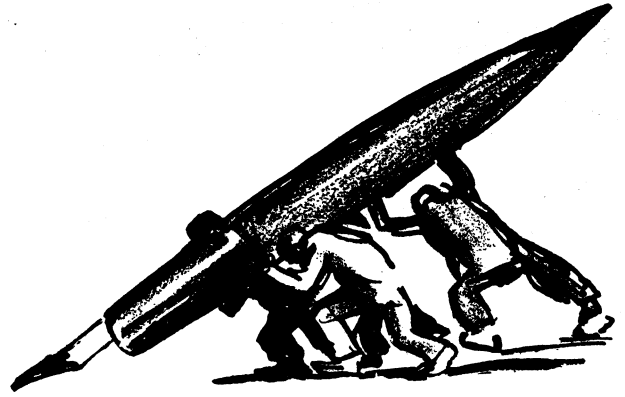
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Drawn by Fred Ellis

The Autobiography of THE NEW MASSES

(We're getting older, a few subs will cheer us up!)

1910-BORN

(In the basement of a restaurant in the Rand School)

1912—INSPIRED

(John Sloan, Maurice Becker, Art Young, Louis Untermeyer, Max Eastman and others take over the Masses from a cook who lost his shirt on it.)

1917—SUPPRESSED

(Art Young on trial for his life falls asleep in the courtroom)

1918—CHANGE NAME

(The Liberator—Jack Reed in Russia reports Ten Days That Shook The World—Lenin writes the introduction when the book comes out.)

1924—CHANGE AGAIN

(The Liberator becomes the Workers monthly)

1926—OLD TRICKS WITH NEW WRINKLES

(In May, The New Masses appears)

1930—LAFAYETTE WE ARE STILL HERE!

(New Format—New editor)

Meanwhile we printed some stories, poems, reviews and drawings. You can find a good many of them in books, anthologies, histories of literature and the art galleries.

The next 20 years will be the hardest unless we get a few more subs.

On our 4th and 20th birthday we offer a 4 months trial sub for 50 cents.

(If you must destroy the cover of this issue to use the blanks, we'll be glad to send you another copy without charge. Just mention it.)



Drawn by Fred Ellis