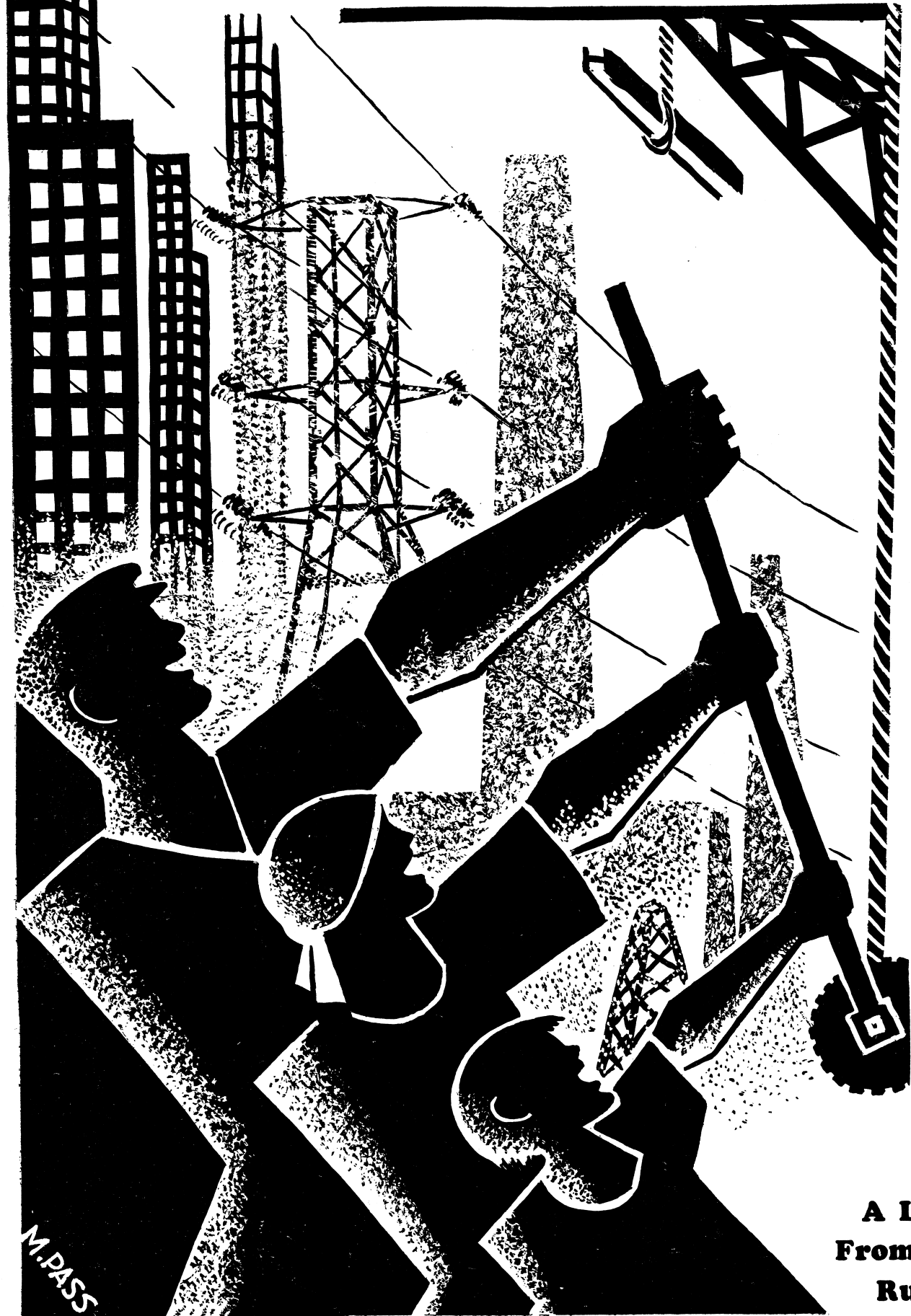


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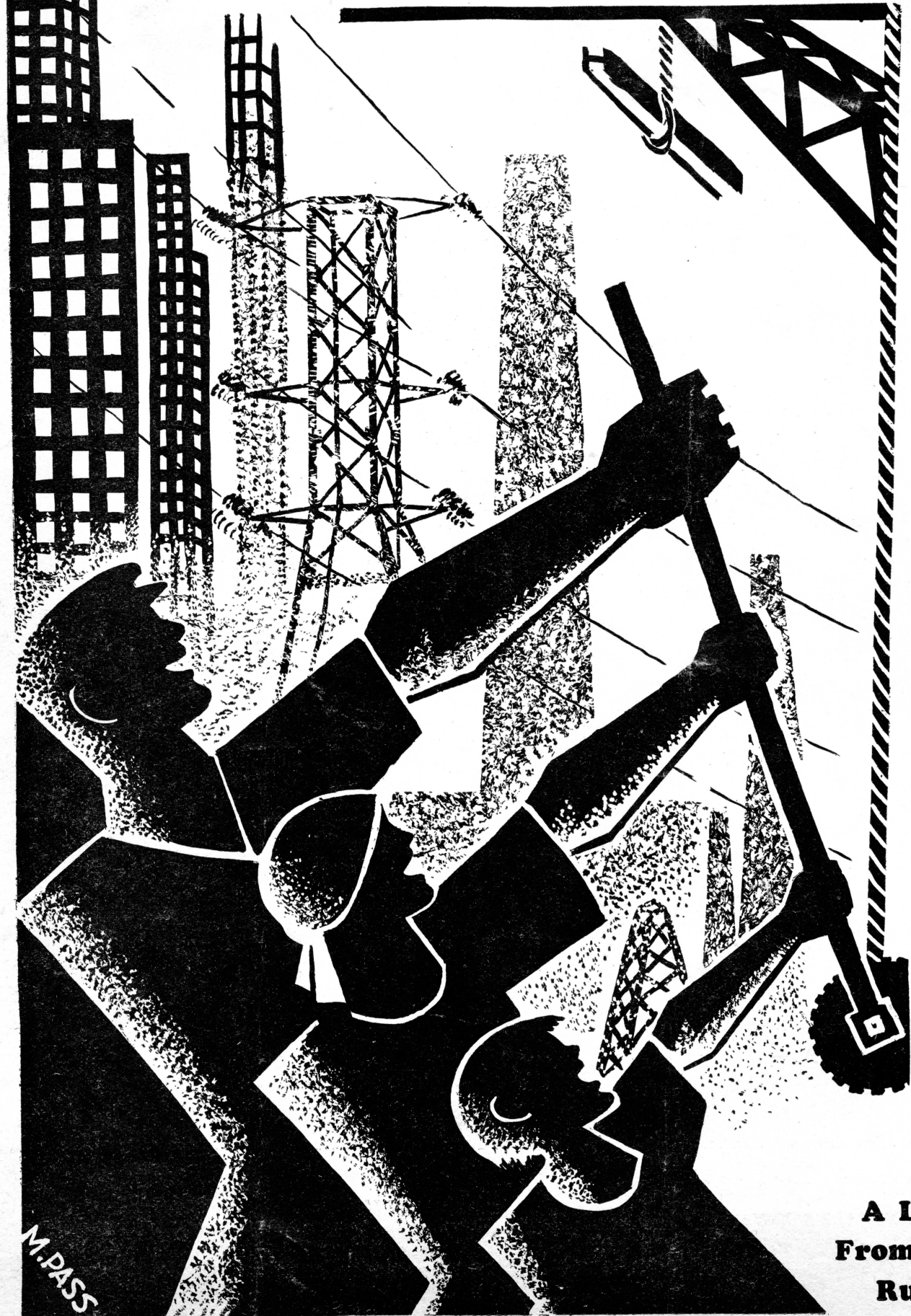
M.PASS

**A Letter
From Soviet
Russia**

NEW **MASSES**

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**A Letter
From Soviet
Russia**

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MICHAEL GOLD

NOTES OF THE MONTH

Some day after the great change, history will at last be taught honestly in the American schools. Many great names will lose their lustre; many obscure names will burst into new red flare.

When the Civil War of 1860, is analyzed by the Soviet teachers of American history, the importance of John Brown will loom vastly over that of Abraham Lincoln. If individuals make history, John Brown certainly contributed more to the drift of events than did Abe Lincoln.

John Brown was the Bolshevik of his time. He did not believe slavery was moral, and he precipitated a chain of events which, less than a year after his hanging as a traitor to the United States, plunged this nation into a war which justified his great, immortal, necessary "treason."

Abraham Lincoln was never that kind of "traitor." He was never wholeheartedly against the respectable and legal institution of slavery. For years he preached the pussyfoot doctrine that the South be allowed to hold its slaves forever, but that it not be permitted to extend slavery practices into other states and territories; a kind of local option.

But when John Brown awoke to the full evil of slavery, he dedicated his life from that time on to its extinction. At the age of 60 he took up his rifles and with his seven stalwart sons went forth to die for his beliefs.

Abraham Lincoln was always more temperate, judicial, tolerant, mannerly. He was a politician perpetually seeking office, the Al Smith of his day. He began his career as a poor backwoodsman, a rail-splitter, lumberjack and farm hand. He became a country lawyer and politician soon after his 21st year, he was never anything but that for the rest of his life. But like Al Smith, the poor Bowery boy and roughneck who lives in Fifth Avenue pent-houses, Abe Lincoln was the professional "railsplitter" for the rest of his career.

Is Personality So Important?

The Lincoln legend is so powerful in this country that it is perhaps blasphemy to whisper these things. Sentimentalists like Carl Sandburg have helped the patriotic legend. Their defense is, perhaps, that Lincoln was an unusual personality. He was. So was Napoleon. So was Torquemada. So were Billy the Kid, and Woodrow Wilson, and Bluebeard Landrau, and Buffalo Bill. So today, are Al Capone, and Peggy Joyce, and Heywood Broun, and Heywood's lighthearted friends, the Four Marx Brothers.

But what of it? The world is overloaded and dyspeptic with personalities. There are personalities in every political camp; human nature runs about the same everywhere. What is important

is principle. Personality gains its only historic importance when it has been the carrier of some great principle. It is this that lifts the poor, paltry, imperfect ego of one man into universality; he has been the tool of an idea, the voice of millions who found in that idea salvation.

Abraham Lincoln was the perpetual compromiser. He was forced into the Civil War by events, not by conviction. Many pacifists believe that the Civil War was unnecessary. It was. A Russian Czar freed all the serfs and there was no war. But there were men in the Russia of 1850 who never rested in their denunciation of serfdom. War was not necessary, perhaps, but this intransigent denunciation was before anything would be done by a Czar.

Abraham Lincoln did *not* denounce slavery when it was inopportune to do so; but John Brown *did*.

And when John Brown was captured after his mad but effectual raid on Harper's Ferry, and was about to be hung, Abraham Lincoln helped the hanging in a speech at Cooper Union, where he said, "John Brown committed treason! This is the act of a mad-man!"

A year later Abraham Lincoln himself was sending forth armies to capture Harper's Ferry and all the other places of the South. And now it was not treason, but patriotism.

Politicians and opportunists have always pursued this familiar course. They are not men like the rest of us; they are always on the right side of the fence.

"Honest Abe" Lincoln was always on the right side of the fence. So today are Cal Coolidge, Al Smith and most of the Socialists. And the "right" side of the fence is the capitalist side, not the workers' side.

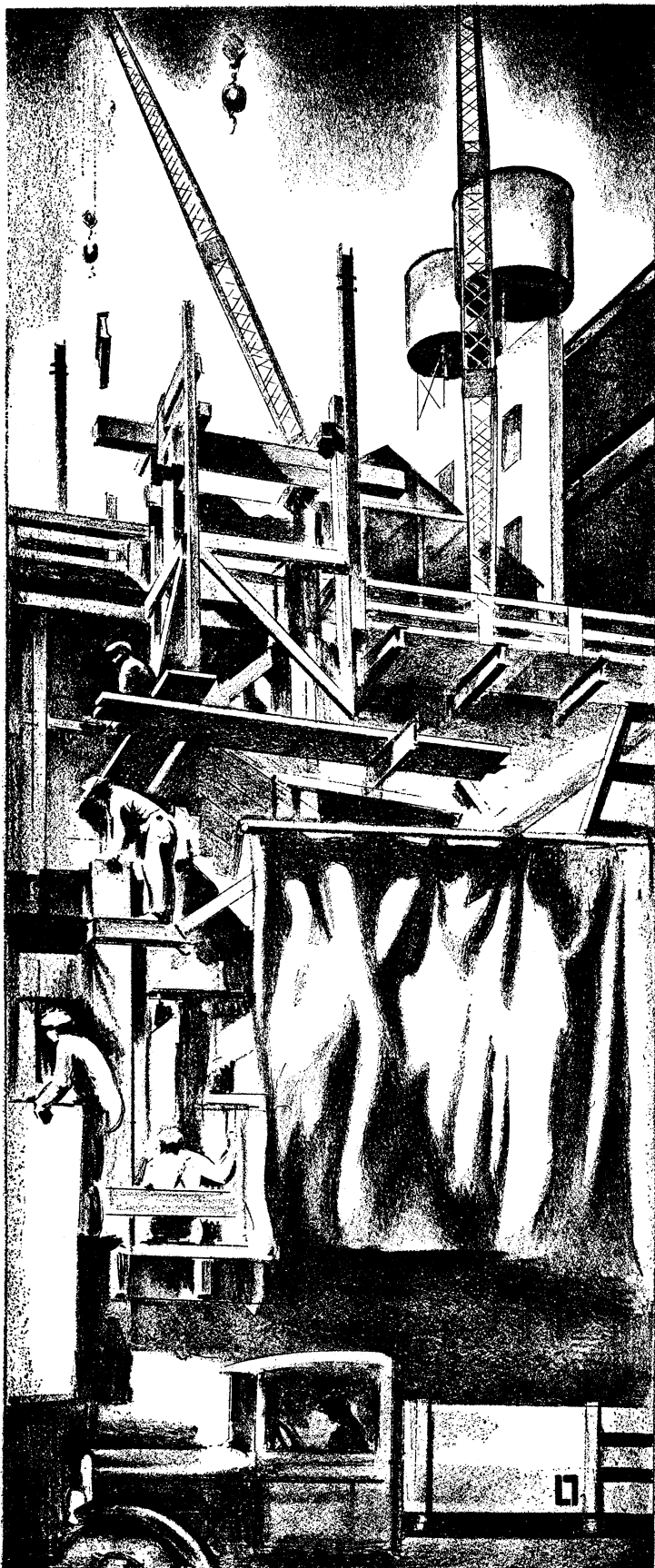
What Are Good Manners—

The Civil War was a conflict between the decaying feudal system of the south, and the rising industrial capitalism of the north. History was not to be cheated; the north won, of course. Chattel slavery was abolished; wage slavery, for labor black and white, thru the entire nation.

Yet, whether it was necessary to speed history on the field of battle, no one now denies that Negro chattel slavery was cruel, indefensible and the last insult to humanity. It had to be fought.

The greatest minds in America fought it. And they fought, those Abolitionists, with many of the methods that are used today by their natural heirs in America, the Communists.

It is uncanny to dip into the pages of American history, and to note this resemblance. These early Abolitionists were bitter,



CONSTRUCTION

Louis Lozowick

determined men, against whom the most frequent charge was made that "they had bad manners."

The same charge was repeated only last week, in almost similar words, by Socialist Heywood Broun against the wage-slavery Abolitionists who tried to talk to Mayor Walker of New York, and were slugged for their pains.

A Polite Reception—

They went down there, a committee of the 800,000 local unemployed led by Sam Nessin and other Communists. They had asked permission to lay their case before the Mayor at a Board of Estimate hearing. The permission was granted. Nessin spoke. The Mayor grew hot and vituperative. Nessin called him a Tammany grafter. The Mayor shouted to his strong-arm men, "Throw that man out." There were 110 detectives and cops in and outside of the City Hall chambers. They fell upon Nessin. They beat in his skull with blackjacks. They battered at his ribs with their clubs. They closed his eyes with their iron fists. He was kicked from one to the other. When he was down on the ground, his face was stamped upon by many police heels, according to capitalist reporters. Then he was thrown down a flight of steps. Then he was taken, unconscious to a prison hospital, under arrest for "inciting to riot." If he lives, he will be tried for this crime.

Liberal Degeneracy—

All because he was not "polite" in presenting the demands of unemployed to a Tammany Hall Mayor. And the next morning Heywood Broun, and Norman Thomas, and the Civil Liberties Union, and every other liberal and Socialist, deplored the beating, but insisted that the Communists had not been polite.

What degeneracy. In 1914, the unemployed, led by anarchists, raided Fifth Avenue churches as a protest against the great crucifixion of humanity today which we callously ignore by the technical name, "Unemployment."

And all the liberals and Socialists of that day deplored such measures, too, but they did not dare to attack them in print. Their own followers would have called them "scabs" for the act.

Politeness. Be polite. Be polite, as if this were all a gentleman's game, a friendly contest at poker, and not an affair of life and death for millions of humble people.

How are you going to make this cynical upper-class America, this Tammany Hall, Wall Street, Vanity Fair America, how are you going to make it think about unemployment by polite methods?

The very mention of the subject was a vulgarity until a few Communist demonstrations put it on the front page, and compelled even President Hoover to appoint his usual commission.

Polite people are the kind who become successful literary critics, magazine editors, Mayors, Congressmen, undertakers, realtors, and Socialists. But they never rouse the conscience of a nation; and they never make history; and they are never remembered as anything but dillettantes, time-servers and frauds.

And when we say politeness we do not mean the ordinary everyday graces and amenities of life. Let us, gentlemen, take it for granted that even a Communist soap-boxer is gentle with his friends and with his wife and children. And that he helps old ladies across the muddy street, and can even be as gallant and well-bred as John Reed or Nicolai Lenin.

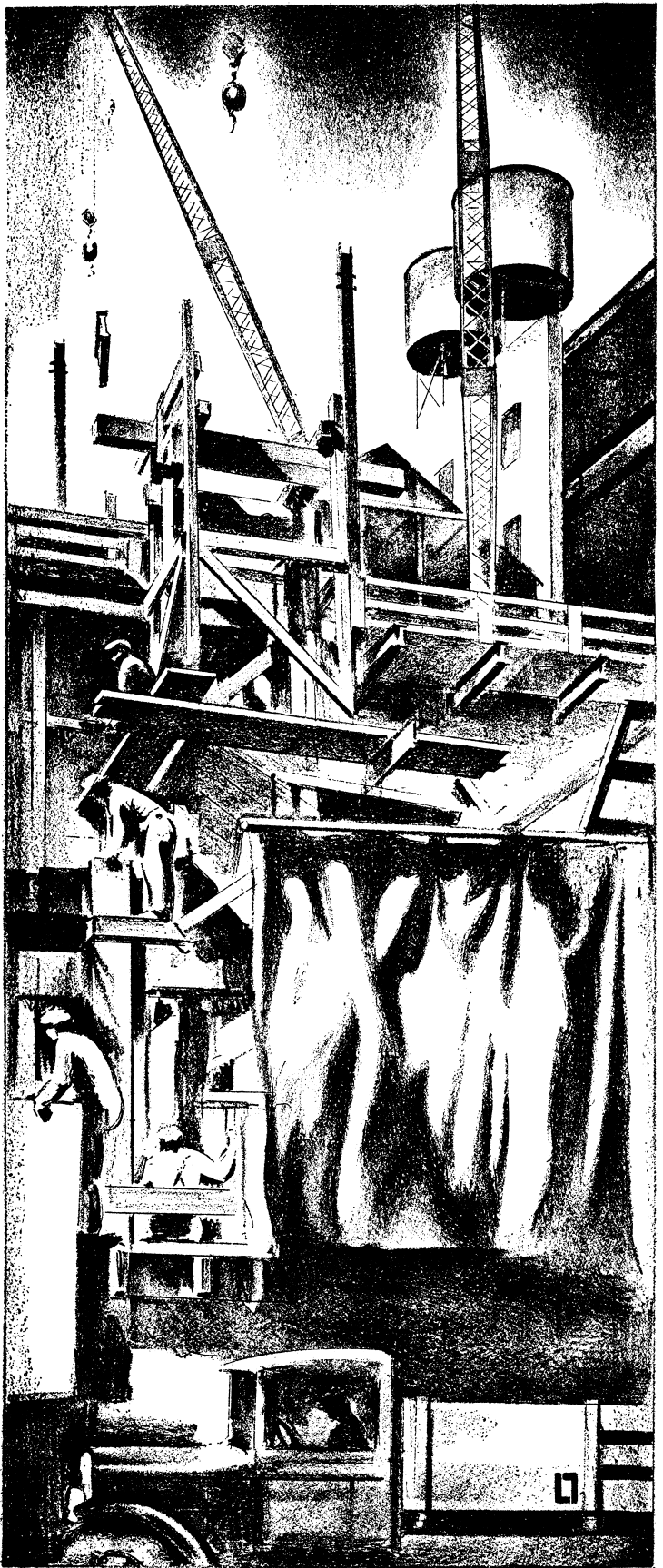
But unemployment, gentlemen, and the way to send the harpoon of shame and publicity into the thick hide of corrupt Tammany and Wall Street, that's another and higher politeness, gentlemen.

And if the truth were told, and if good manners means some profound stirring of the heart, gentlemen, then you yourselves are callous and impolite toward the unemployed, for you are not willing to sacrifice your own dignity for their sake.

And you are polite to Mayor Walker. This is the measure of your liberalism and Socialism.

A Great Book—

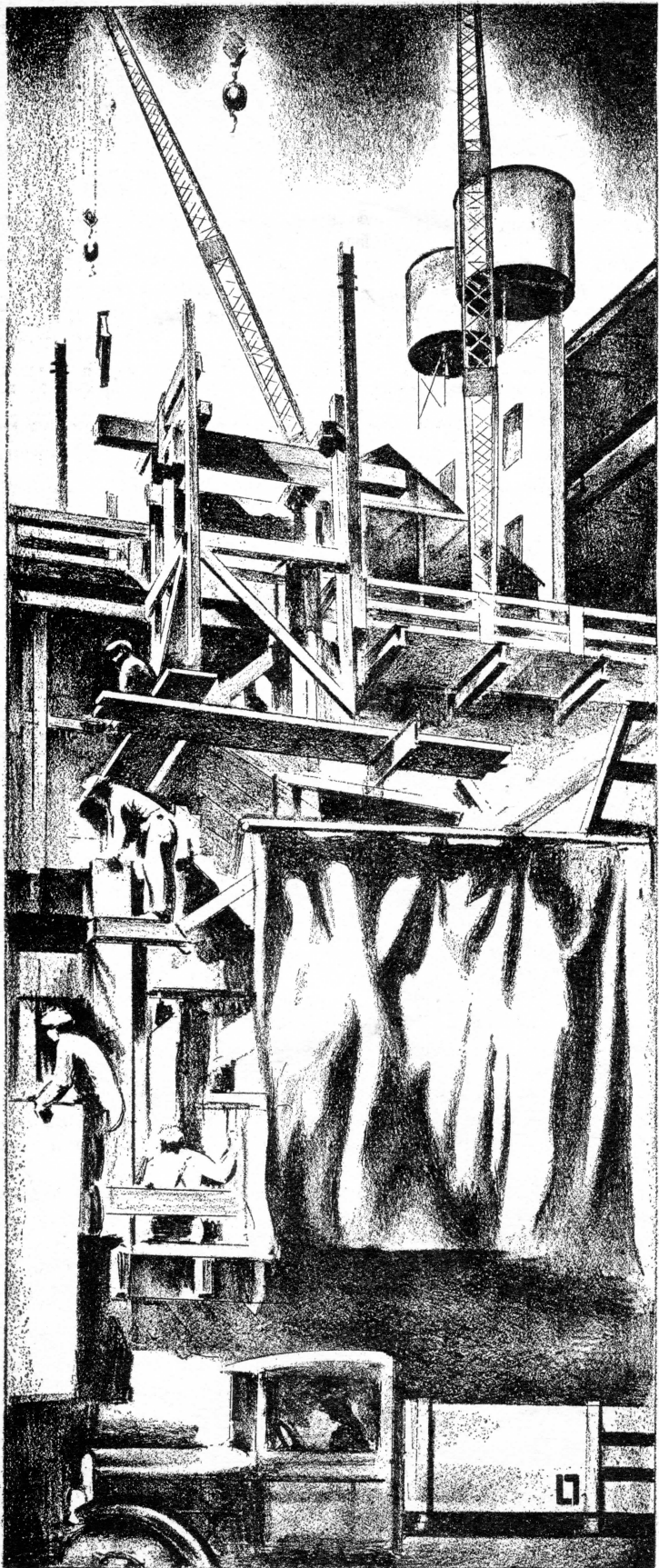
I have been looking into a great book, which to my sorrow, I have not read before this. It is that remarkable epic of social analysis, *Main Currents in American Thought*, by Vernon Louis Parrington. (*Harcourt Brace and Co.*) Though this work won the Pulitzer Prize, it is a classic in American literary interpretation. One is constantly amazed to see how every important critical research in literature or politics published in America during the past five years is nothing but diluted professorial Marx-



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ALL FOR THE SAME GUY

I. Klein

ism. Is there any other fertile method to unlock history? There does not seem to be.

Parrington has this to say about William Lloyd Garrison, the grandfather of that polite, wealthy liberal who edits *The Nation*, Mr. Oswald Garrison Villard:

"His like has too rarely appeared in America. Arrogant, dictatorial, intolerant he might be, as his warmest friends admitted; but it is a foolish judgment that will dismiss him thus. Unyielding as granite, sheer Yankee will driven by a passionate energy, he was born for hazardous leadership. He was a man utterly unacquainted with fear. Lied about daily, threatened, bullied, charged with every sin in the Decalogue and every crime on the statute-book, he could not be coerced or turned aside from his purpose. . .

"He counted property in Negroes and cotton as nothing when weighed in the scales of justice. . . Others might lash the sins of his generation with whips; he would scourge them with nettles and scorpions. He would raise such a clamor about men's ears that the drowsiest must wake . . .

"But comfortable folk do not like clamor, even from the prophets, and are content to leave justice to God. If the tithes (Socialism) are paid, it is a mean and censorious God that will ask them how the money was got. Hence *comfortable* folk, north (Broun) as well as south, (Walker), did not like Garrison; and not liking him, they were zealous to damn him.

"He was made out to be a bogey man, busily engaged in stirring up slave insurrections, flouting the Constitution and seeking to disrupt the Union.

"It was reckoned to him as a major sin that he forgot his manners, for must not the Lord's work be carried on in seemly fashion, and the money-changers be scourged from the temple politely?

"Said the eminent Dr. Bushnell: 'The first sin of the Abolitionists was the sin of ill manners. They did not go to work like Christian gentlemen . . . Their convention which met at Philadelphia drew up a declaration of their sentiments . . . by which they wilfully and boorishly cast off the whole South from them . . .'

(Dammit, doesn't the "eminent Dr. Bushnell" sound exactly like the eminent Dr. Norman Thomas or the poker-playing Rev. Heywood Broun?)

And doesn't Mr. Villard's grandfather, Garrison, sound a lot like

William Z. Foster when he said in a speech on May 14, 1838:

"Sir, slavery will not be overthrown without excitement, a most tremendous excitement."

It may not be all desirable that this should be true, but who talked about unemployment in America until the Communists raised their "most tremendous excitement"?

The Last Depth—

There is a Congressional election around New York at the present time, in which the Socialists are led by Heywood Broun and Norman Thomas.

I have seen posters urging the election of these candidates on which the name of the Socialist Party was very carefully suppressed, so as not to lose votes.

The campaign has been conducted mostly in the theatrical district and the silk-stocking district. The appeal has been mainly to actors, Park Avenue debutantes and welfare work job-holders. The proletarian, the garment worker, the street car conductor, the waiter, clerk, stenographer, or ditch-digger has been ignored. The Socialist Party has become polite. It wants votes—anything for votes.

Texas Guinan, the Marx Brothers, Jack Diamond (no, he was shot too soon) and Alex Woolcott are on Broun's campaign committee. Almost no labor people.

This is the final betrayal of Gene Debs, who preached that a revolutionary party must never compromise its principles and its character to grab off a few votes; who said that the Socialist Party was a labor party, and not a Broadway poker party.

Mr. Broun is a kindly, witty, well-meaning man, but he has helped dig the grave of a great historic movement. How any honest proletarian can remain with this circus now is a mystery. Poor proletarian Gene Debs would twist in his grave with anger and pain could he be informed of the doings of the Thanatopsis Literary and Inside Straight Club and its candidate.

The Socialist movement is some 75 years old, and has an immense literature. Here is a Socialist campaign run by people who have never read Marx or Bebel or Kautsky and are proud of it; who haven't even the faintest conception of the Socialist theory, and boast of it, too. It is a disgrace; and it is death to "Socialism."

Elect Heywood Broun, is the slogan, offered by several partisans, and he will utter wisecracks in Congress. True enough. It is certain he will never mention Socialism, for by his own confession, he has met no one yet around the Socialist Party who dared to tell him what it is.

The Tradition—

There is a great tradition of American revolt, but it is not being carried on by these vote-begging polite people. This is not the party of Tom Paine, John Brown, Theodore Parker, Gene Debs; it is certainly not the party of the workers.

There is no salt, no blood, no action or thoroughness in this dregs of a great movement. Even if several Socialist congressmen are elected, it will be hard to distinguish them from the rest of the talkative Congressional herd.

Really, what is the difference between a Tammany liberal like Al Smith and Norman Thomas? It would take a microscope to find it. The political speeches of both read about the same in content.

A great change is needed in America. We are living in a land that alternates between the starvation and between the inhuman speedup of its workers. We are living in a land without plan, without mercy, without justice. Only men determined about change, and clear about change, can help usher it in. Compromise and vote-trimming may elect a few new George R. Lunns and Millerands to office and a personal career, but will not help, but only delay, that change.

"Our American life is like the water in a river," said Thoreau before the Civil War. "It may rise this year higher than man has ever known it, and flood the parched uplands; even this may be the eventful year, which will drown out all the muskrats . . . there is more day to dawn . . . the sun is but a morning star. We may even shape a new hero—the Man of the Age, come to be called Workingman."

VOTE COMMUNIST!



ALL FOR THE SAME GUY

I. Klein



ALL FOR THE SAME GUY

I. Klein

MARTIN RUSSAK

THE PHOENIX MILL

THE MILL YARD

One street in the city contains within a grim half mile the barbarous history of modern civilization. This is Mill Street. Mill Street presents an unbroken line of mills and dye houses. Some of the oldest mills in America stand on Mill Street. Therefore Mill Street is one of the oldest battlegrounds that American workers can boast of.

The mill-race that used to turn the wheels of work still flows through Mill Street, coming in from the river above the Gun Mill and going back to the river below the Phoenix Mill.

To enter the Phoenix Mill you cross the mill-race by an ancient wooden bridge and pass under a stone archway. The keystone of this arch bears the legend "Phoenix Mill—1821." A heavy gate closes the entrance at night.

On the other side of the archway you find yourself in a great square mill yard. You walk on the smoothly worn inequalities of a cobblestone pavement. You are enclosed on all four sides by the brick walls of the Mill which look as though they were once red in color. Doors and dim stairways lead to the looms and spindles of the interior. Beyond the far side of the Mill is the river. Workers in this part can look out on the river and the cliffs of the Passaic Falls.

I first worked in the Phoenix Mill as a helper boy in the old entering shop. I sat on a bench behind the heddles and passed threads of silk to the enterer who hooked them in from the other side. We worked with a swift, machine-like rhythm that kept our hands busy and left our minds free.

Joe, the enterer with whom I was teamed, possessed an implacable hatred of all bosses—"the bourgeoisie" he called them, or "the bourgeois hounds." Whenever we mis-threaded an end and had to go back through the section, Joe would curse the bourgeoisie and spit on his reed-hook, which he called "my little Surplus Value." "The bastard," he once explained, "that was born out of my blood after the bourgeoisie raped me."

Joe took me into his confidence and made fiery speeches to me, speeches which were a multiplication of his five or six phrases. He was a "Wobbly"; he was prematurely aged; a hard, embittered man; big veins stood out on his hands and arms.

Joe liked best to talk about struggles to come.

"I'm ready," he would mutter as he worked along rhythmically; "been ready a long time. But the others, damn 'em! Fast asleep. But they'll wake up. Wait . . . wait! Can still make a living, get by. Watch when those weavers have to slave it for three cents a yard—still better, for a penny a yard, like in China. By God, the bourgeois hounds can't cut wages fast enough to suit me! But these little strikes! Pooh, I give you all of them. It's the General Strike we want, all of us out together, all over. Then we've got the works. Wait . . . wait . . . just watch!" And he rattled his brass reed-hook against the steel heddles as I hooked the threads on from the other side and he pulled them through.

"Got to hurry along today, kid," he exclaimed, interrupting himself; "boss wants this warp and that next satin warp by four o'clock. To hell with his orders . . . let's get some speed on . . . Just wait . . . The General Strike will do the trick."

At noon time workers from the four sides of the Mill loafed in the air and sunshine of the yard. Chattering girls strolled across the cobblestones arm in arm. Fellows called to them from the windows. Boys playing ball on the other side leaped and shouted at their game. A group of men in shirtsleeves sat smoking and talking around a doorstep. From an open basement came the stench of silk yarn in soak. A loomfixer's hammer was heard clanging on steel. In a sunlit corner a man in overalls sprawled flat on his back, a cap covering his face, his hands clasped over his stomach. The tense languor preceding the long and weary afternoon lay over the whole mill. Suddenly the whistle blew—like a growl of some huge beast—and all sought the doors, filing reluctantly into those opening on darkness. Heads were drawn in, windows slammed down, and from all four sides the din of crashing looms filled the deserted yard.

"Come on, kid," said Joe, "we've got to be robbed some more at the point of production!"

FLUTE MUSIC

During the noon hour the half-dozen rebel workers of the Phoenix Mill gathered on the sunny side of the yard. I mostly sat with them during that drowsy pause in the day, alongside of Joe or my grandfather who worked those years in the top floor back weave-shed—the one that looks out on the river.

They were a strange, separate group. They were different from the other men and women by a sense of energy and tacit understanding. They mistrusted the vague hundreds who passed over the cobblestones between the four mill walls; they bickered and argued interminably; but a common satisfaction and a common ecstasy—as though they were the appointed guardians of some wonderful regenerative secret—held them together on a plane that seemed far above the little miseries of the day's work.

A copy of the *New York Call* went from hand to hand. Events of government, politics, commerce were discussed with an air of authority and omniscience. Zestfully and with relish they spoke of millions and of mysterious, world-shaking social forces, intoxicated by a liberating assumption of power and empire. When the conversation turned to tactics of organization and struggle they disagreed to the point of anger. Diamond, the uncompromising disciple of De Leon, sneered at the others. He just mentioned the name of De Leon and his little body became animated, he could not be interrupted, he stuttered helplessly under the too rapid flow of his thought.

"You'll all h-have to come around to-to De Leon," he exclaimed. "There's n-n-no other way t-to Socialism!"

"Direct Action—the General Strike, that's the only way," said Joe scornfully. "Now look, what can we do in Paterson when half the mills are over in Pennsylvania? Get to Easton and Allentown, organize the Pennsylvania Dutch, then we'll strike together and have the bosses eating out of our hands."

"And what will you say if Debs gets a million votes in the next election?" put in Westy, flipping away his cigarette butt. "I'll bet he does!" "Do you know," he added, telling us the story for the hundredth time, "my dad lost out in the election for Alderman in the fourth Ward by one vote. He was a Socialist too, don't forget."

"Oh, you windbags, you hair-splitters, you water-treaders," said my grandfather, taking the cigar out of his mouth, "you make an old man feel that it's all a long way off and there will be no last few years of peace and rest in his life. Get me a pail of beer, Mart, there's some consolation in that!"

I brought the beer back foaming to the brim. He drank deeply and heartily, and wiping his thick mustache with the back of his hand, he looked at his watch and got up from the doorsill with a sigh.

"Go, go, you philosophers," he said, "go back to work! Never fear. The Revolution will come, this poverty of ours will be rubbed away like you rub away the rough grain on your shuttles with a piece of sandpaper. In the meantime your children need bread and soup—and there goes the whistle!"

Occasionally Joe and I would have to come back to the mill after supper to enter a warp that was needed for the next morning's weaving. Frank, the hunchbacked night watchman, let us in through the little door in the gate. Under the green-shaded lamp that hung over our harnesses, the bald spot on Joe's head glistened as he bent forward to the work. His brass hooks rattled against the heddles with an exalted resonance in the dark and empty shop. We worked on, lulled into silence by that masterful rhythm.

When we went out the moon was up and had cut a broad, pale angle out of the dark yard. A slice of mill-wall, retrieved from profound gloom by this intrusion of moonlight, seemed transformed into liquid silver, as if by an internal glow, and its grimy window panes glittered upward like living and enraptured eyes toward the starry square of sky.

Soft flute music floated down to us out of an upstairs weave-shed, marvellously sweet in the warm, still night. Frank was playing one of his old German melodies to ease his lonely vigil.

Utterly fagged out after the long day's work, we stood there hushed and overcome until the last notes died away.

Joe whistled softly.

"Coming, coming," Frank called back.

"Nice night," he said as he rattled his keys and let us out through the gate.

"Yes, nice," said Joe. "Well, another day gone, and tomorrow's another day too."

"O yes, so it goes! Good night."

"Good night. Good night."

ASPIRATIONS TO POWER

Out of the vague mass of workers in the Phoenix Mill there appeared a new face, a new individuality attaching itself to our group and assuming human distinctness against that background of men and women tumultuously confused with the din of machines and the regimenting monotony of toil.

He was a short, thick-set man, blond and blue-eyed—the clear, frank eyes of a child. He wore a brown khaki shirt. The rolled-up sleeves revealed powerful arms. He always had a cap on his head, a soiled grey cap, and he wore it with the peak pushed high up over his brow. He chewed tobacco, spitting cleanly and accurately without staining his lips. He was never without something in his restless fingers—a piece of gear, a broken shuttle, a little ball of silk thread, an empty bobbin. His left index finger was gone at the second joint.

He worked on the next set of looms to my grandfather's. He was a newcomer in the mill, a stranger, no one knew him. One day he showed my grandfather a new adjustment of the pick-wheel. The old craftsman was delighted. They became friends, helping each other set up warps and roll off finished cuts of cloth.

Charley Somers was his name. He spoke in the slow, soft drawl and the accent peculiar to Negroes.

"You must be from the South," said Joe.

"Yeah, so I am. Up North three years now," Somers replied.

The South! That land of dark mystery and fierce oppression! That land of glamour and terror! The formidable images leaped through our minds: bent figures toiling in fields under a blazing sun; Negroes shrieking at the stake; men, women, and children

trooping wearily in straggling files toward a huge and gloomy mill.

"How do you find it up here?" asked Joe.

Somers picked a stray thread off his trouser leg and wound it slowly round the ball of silk in his hand. He had the air of a man who wished to avoid explanations.

"Well, now," he answered, "there's really lot's to say. Sometimes I'm a-hankerin' to be back home. Mostly I'm that glad to be away from down there." He gave Joe a look of finality, as though the subject were closed.

"Any of you folks got a chew?" he asked shyly after a pause. "I'm all out of 'baccy today."

No one else chewed.

"All we chew is gall," said my grandfather; "bosses give us plenty of that to chew on."

Somers grinned. He pushed the cap further back on his head and spoke reflectively, turning the ball of thread in his fingers.

"All the mill-hands down South chew. Cotton mills down there, no silk. A dern sight of lint always flyin' around in the air. Got to keep it out of your throat, so you chews 'bacy and it gets chewed up no more'n it comes into your mouth an' then you spits it out. Even kids like this 'un here chew."

He seemed satisfied to have found a subject on which he could talk freely.

My grandfather brought Somers to our house. He took one of the attic rooms and had his suppers with us. At table he was a quiet, diffident figure amid the arguments, discussions and petty quarrels that passed back and forth between my father, mother, grandfather, and Nathan.

He liked my grandfather's company and the two spent many evenings together in the little parlor, the old man in his rocking-chair under the gaslight, a newspaper open on his knees, Somers hunched on the sofa upholstered in faded black imitation leather.

They talked of looms and machinery, they discussed technicalities of work with the eagerness of craftsmen over whom tools and methods exercise a fascination that makes the product itself insignificant.

"So you don't have to fill the shuttles by hand in the cotton mills," murmured the old man, wonderingly.

"No sir! They've got automatic looms—the filling goes in by itself through the magazine. One weaver runs twenty-four looms and sometimes more on some plain jobs," said Somers.

"Do you think that could be done on silk looms?"

"Why not?" Somers replied. "More than that—a loom could even be fixed so as to stop by itself every time the warp threads break out of a heddle. Great things could be done, but the bosses don't give a damn. They own the looms, they don't care if we never know a thing about machinery so long as we keep them looms a-running and production up big. But the looms—that's our tools, if we had them we could use them like tools. Great things could be done with a loom."

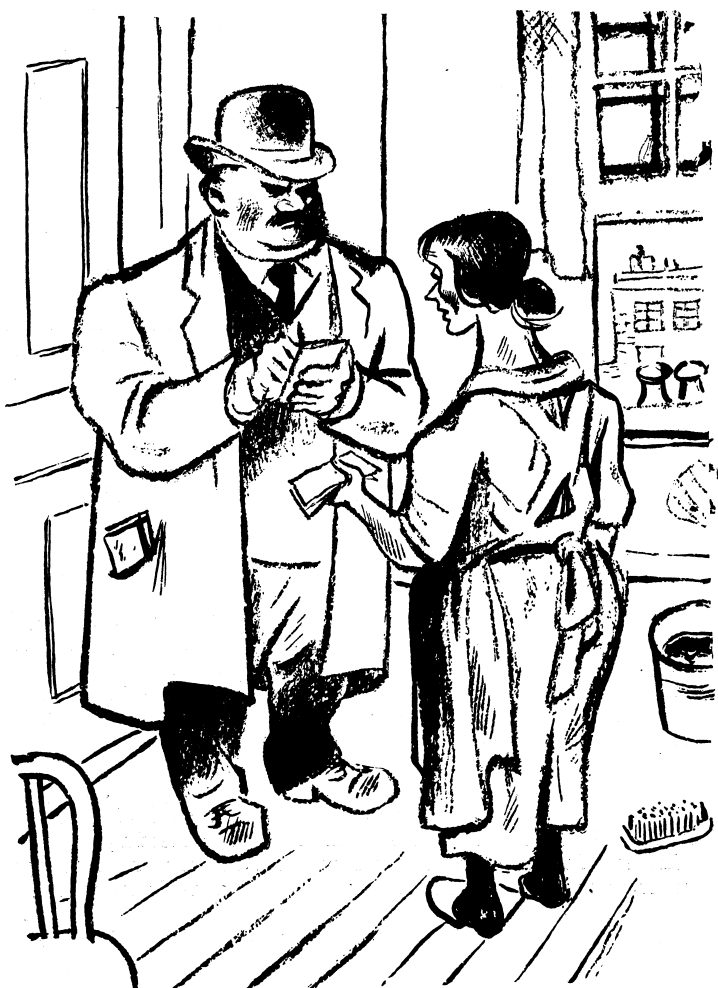
"But the way things are we weavers are really the tools of the looms. Yes, we are the tools of the bosses' looms!" said my grandfather, rocking himself slowly and puffing at his cigar. He gazed through the windows into the noisy street for a moment, then spoke slowly:

"I tell you, my friend, there is no work more wonderful, more interesting than the weaving of silk. Those soft, lovely taffetas with their threads too delicate for steel, coming to meet the shuttle through cotton heddles; those golden crepes; the satins and georgettes; the jacquards with their flowers and patterns and beautiful colors! But what do the bosses know about these things? They have made our work of wonder a torture and a misery. Wage-cuts, speed-up, ten, twelve hours a day. Very well! I'm not afraid of hard work, never have been. But look, they have taken all the joy out of man's work. And there's nothing left to work for but bread. Bread! Let them choke on it . . . When I was a boy back in the Old Country my grandfather used to tell me about the old days when a loom was a simple wooden thing run by hand. You threw your shuttle across the warp with your own hand and stepped on a treadle to lift the shafts. The weaver was a master workman—built his own loom, did everything from the spinning and winding clear through to the finishing and dyeing. Two, three yards a day was a good day's work. And the weaver was a man of high honor among the people. Especially the weavers of silk. They were exempted by special order of the Czar from all military service. These modern looms! Iron above and below, and gears and hurrying wheels and rods of iron—you pull a handle and some secret force that you don't know anything about drives the loom. All we know is that a man better watch



THE RENT COLLECTOR

William Gropper



THE RENT COLLECTOR

William Gropper



THE RENT COLLECTOR

William Gropper

out or—a flick of shuttle or wheel will put an end to his weaving days. Two looms to a weaver, twenty yards a day on each loom; and we count the pennies—so many pennies a yard! Mind, I'm not talking against progress. I'm forever trying to work out new devices myself. But all these modern contraptions, in the hands of the bosses, have meant degradation for the weavers and have made slavery out of work. The looms obey that secret force like us who are flesh and blood and obey the blind will of the boss . . . Well, let's have a drink."

He got up, fetched a brandy bottle, cakes and glasses from the bureau, and poured for both.

"A fine bit of brandy," he said as they tossed it down. "Now tell me some more about your ideas on looms."

"There's one thing I never yet told anybody," said Somers. "It's an idea for a new loom."

He came up close to my grandfather and lowered his voice.

The old man stopped his chair abruptly and took the cigar out of his mouth.

"What! A loom without shuttles! How? How?"

The two men became excited and spoke rapidly, interrupting each other at every second word. Then a paper and pencil was brought from a drawer in the bureau and they began making sketch-plans on the table under the gaslight.

"It's all in the levers," said Somers. "You have a lever on each side of the loom instead of the picker-stick and shuttles.

"There's a hook on top of both levers. The filling is on big revolving cones on the loom. First one lever comes in, the hook catches the filling, and your lever pulls it back through the warp. Then the other lever comes in from the other side and does the same with the second-twist filling. The cones can carry enough silk for half a day's weaving instead of the quills we have now that only run about twenty minutes. And the loom should be able to run twice as fast—up to 200 maybe 250 picks a minute. The only thing I haven't worked out yet—and its the big thing—is how the lever is going to come through the shed."

"It can be done; by God, it can be done! The greatest invention since the power loom came in!" exclaimed my grandfather.

He took off his spectacles, stood up, and put his hand solemnly on Somers' shoulder.

"My boy, do you know what this will mean to us if it should get into the hands of the bosses? The end of what little skill is left—the worst slavery—fortunes for the mill owners—thousands of men and women thrown out on the streets to starve."

"I know," said Somers bitterly. He pushed the paper and pencil away. "Many's the time I was fixing to bring my scheme to them, but then I thought what it would mean for us, and held back. And I've learned how them boss folk laugh at a mill hand when he comes to them with an idea. 'You stick to your work,' they say, 'I'm running this mill.'"

"It won't be forever like that," said my grandfather with a smile. "Some day the workers will take the mills away from those swine who don't know how to run things anyway. That will be the time for your new loom, the time to make work lighter for all."

"That's what it is, sir," Somers assented. "They don't know how to run the mills."

After a pause Somers raised his blue eyes intently to my grandfather's face.

"I'm going to tell you about myself," he said.

The old man sat rocking himself in his chair, listening meditatively while his friend paced back and forth in the little parlor. It was growing late. Outside, the noise of traffic and the cries of people were dying down.

"My folks were jest hill-billies before we come down to the mills. I don't recollect much about that. Fifteen years I worked in the mills down Greenville way. We was ever a-moving on from one mill to the other. Reckon I was jest natural smart to the work—rose up from the pickers in the card room to a weaver and then a fixer. Yes sir! There wasn't hardly a thing in the mill I couldn't do. Then I got to hearing yarns about the North. The mills up North; the workers all sticking together in the Unions, telling the Company how to run the mill; the big cities with a wonderful sight of big mills in 'em; and how the mills in the South really come from up North, like kids from a mother. Then one day I heard about Fall River. How it was the oldest and biggest cotton mill city in the country—Fall River!—the mother of all the cotton mills. Years long I was thinking about Fall River—dreaming of Fall River—till I knew I must go there, see Fall River with my own eyes, work in the mills of Fall River with my own hands. I don't know if I make it clear to you, sir."

He halted in his pacing in front of the old man and stood there a moment with his thumbs thrust into the front of his trousers-belt.

"Perfectly," my grandfather assured him. "I understand. You make me feel young again. Go on."

"My wife had died in childbirth and I never married again, 'cause I knew I was fixing to head North. Then I cut loose from my folks and set in to work up through the mills, always going North—Greenville, Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Danville. Everywheres the same misery and hard times, same driving boss-men, people tied down by debt to the company store. Being as I know all the jobs in the mill I could get work, and I learned to put something by. At last one evening I was on the Fall River boat putting out of New York, all them tall buildings shining with a million lights like as if you was right up close to heaven and all the stars around you. But I reckon you've seen that."

"Many times, from the ferry," said my grandfather. "So you got to Fall River?"

"Sure did. I was on deck afore sun-up, and as the boat come chubbing through the bay and into the grand river there it was in front of my eyes, all fresh and lit up like in the first morning light. A grand sight—all them mills and high black chimneys along the river—the steep hill covered with houses and houses—church spires a-pointing into the sky. And when I was in the streets and seen the big crowds of mill folk pushing along to work with the lunch baskets on their arms, I felt kind of strong and powerful like. Then for the first time I heard the whistles of Fall River blow—it seemed like the voices of all the mills I ever worked in all going off at once. I got a job soon as a doffer in the Durfee Mills, then I went to weaving in the Ironworks—that's the American Printing Company, but folks up Fall River call it the Ironworks. There's where I lost my finger, got caught between belt and pulley wheel one day."

He sat down on the sofa and leaned back out of the light. My grandfather sighed.

"Charley," he muttered gloomily, "you went to Fall River and I came to America. Well, we were both cheated."

"It isn't that, sir," said Somers after a contemplative silence. "I seen—I felt—the great numbers and power of the workers. And I mighty quick got used to the furren people—the French Canadians, the Portuguese, the Polocks. And now—ain't I living with you Jewish folks 'mongst the niggers all round us here?"

"We're all workers, Charley. Therefore, brothers," interrupted my grandfather in a grave voice.

"That's it, sir. But I found the bosses in Fall River a-fighting the bosses of the South. Northern mills fighting agin Southern mills! And in both places the rich bosses trampling the poor workers. Workers North and South unbeknown to each other, cut off, separated. Good Lord, all them thousands and thousands of mills are surely just one glorious mill run by the workers—and so it will be when once't the workers git together. But the bosses—the swine, as you call 'em, sir—they've got to be cleared out clean. They don't know how to run the mills, they don't care to run 'em proper. Only the workers know how. The workers will have to take over the mills in order to save them. A Union that will unite us North and South to do such a thing—that would be a Union I could die for happy!"

He had spoken in distinct, impassioned tones. The old man leaned forward in his chair.

"Ach, I wish I were as young as you make me feel," he murmured gently. He poured the brandy. They drank and munched cakes.

"In the Pepperell Mill I learned silk weaving," Somers replied. "I heard about Paterson, the City of Silk, the city of strikes and Unionism. Two years I was in Fall River."

Outside the street was dark and empty. In the house all was quiet. The women and children were sleeping upstairs with their weariness and their dreams. The heavy silence of early morning brooded over the city.

The street door was heard softly opening and closing, and clumsy footsteps on the stairs reverberated through the house. My father was coming home from the Union meeting.

Charley Somers went away from us suddenly one fine spring morning with a muttered "Got to go back to the South, got to go" to my grandfather.

But I was to meet him again many years later when we both came back to Paterson for the great Convention of the National Textile Workers Union—both organizers of the Union, Charley Somers in Gastonia and I in Pennsylvania.

EX-POLICE CHIEF
ARTHUR WOODS



BURCK

HOOVER'S UNEMPLOYMENT COMMISSION

Jacob Burck

EX-POLICE CHIEF
ARTHUR WOODS



BURCK

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LAWRENCE GELLERT**NEGRO SONGS OF PROTEST**(North & South Carolina
and Georgia)

The music for most of the lines that follow is simple, spiritual, poetic and elusive. A New York musician is arranging them together with some fifty others I've gathered in the Carolinas and Georgia for early publication.

A plantation chant of other days. Simple and archaic. One of the very few slavery songs I came across. Strangely enough the score looks for all the world like one of the early Semitic wails. Old Ben who sang it served slavery eighteen years. He still lives within a mile of the place he was born in. He explained, after he finished the song in a quavery cracked voice typical of ancient Negroes, that if a fellow on a plantation saw a girl he wanted, he'd have to see her Master. He'd feel his muscles. If they were powerful and stout the Master would be pleased. Yes, he'd like to have some of his stock. Come over next Friday for an hour or so. Tell your Master I'll pay him for your time.

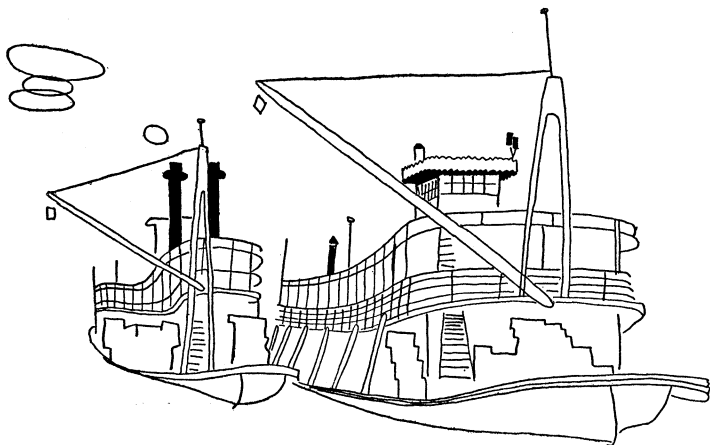
*Belinda she love li'll Joe
Belinda she itch fo' li'll Joe
Belinda she wan' jump broom with li'll Joe
But Marse he say no*

*Marse he raise bes' horse an' cow
Marse he raise bes' nigger an' sow
Marse he sho' know jes' how
An' Belinda she cain has Joe*

*Big black nigger Marse gwine buy
Big Black nigger wit' Belinda lie
Big strong nigger'll open her eye
An' she forgit 'bout Joe*

The Negro's joy and exultation in the new found freedom was short lived. He could leave the old plantation if he wanted to. But where was he to go? And how? His worldly possessions wouldn't fill his ragged bandanna. And starving Negroes were already drifting about in thousands. An old Negro in the Greenville, S. C. poor house sang this song for me. The tune is lugubrious, dirgelike, replete with pathos, grief and despair.

*When Marse he gi' me freedom
F'om de plantation—f'om slabery
When Marse he gi' me freedom
Ah wants to go free
But ah ain' got no ready made money
So ah cain' go free—Lawd ah cain' go free*



MISSISSIPPI RIVER BOATS

Douglas Brown A'se neber happy

*Nigger got no places to go where
Nigger got no shoes to go wit' dere
Nigger got no corn to eat when he git dere
Poor nigger he stay*

*Ain' it a shame, shame, shame,
Nigger slabe fo' forty year—ain' got penny to his name*

This one I heard a group sing on a plantation near Hamburg, S. C. The tune is "mulatto"—traces of the English ballad very much evident in the score. Yet the variations of pitch, glides, curlicues, flourishes and intentional striking of notes off key by the singers marked it for their very own.

*Went to Atlanta
Neber been dere afo'
White folks eat de apple
Nigger wait fo' core*

*Went to Raleigh
Neber been dere afo'
White folks wear de fancy suit
Nigger de over-o*

*Went to Charleston
Neber been dere afo'
White folks sleep on feather
bed
Nigger on the flo'*

*Went to Heben
Neber been dere afo'
White folks sit in Lawd's place
Chase nigger down below*

In Georgia as elsewhere in the South the white courts are open for Negroes as well as the rest of the population. But should a Negro lose his case and be unable to pay costs, the chain gang for him. Consequently in a District Court near Oglethorpe to the records of which I had access, I found that less than ½% of the civil actions were brought by Negroes. (They comprise about 60% of the entire population). Thus he is cheated with comparative impunity. They withhold wages. Turn back clocks to get more work into a day. One, a barber, told me he deposited \$50 at the local bank and it was entered by the cashier as so many cents. They kicked him and his account out when he protested. The song following is a lament in this vein:

*Nigger go to white man
Ask him fo' work
White man say to nigger
Get out o' yo' shirt*

*Li'll bees suck de blossoms
Big bees eat de honey
Nigger raise the cotton an' corn
White folks gits de money*

*Nigger threw off his coat
Went to work pickin' cotton
When time come to git pay
White folks give him nothin'*

*Here sit de woodpecker
Learnin' how to figure
All fo' de white man
Nothin' fo' de nigger*

*Slabery an' freedom
Dey's mos' de same
No diferece hahdly
Cep' in de name*

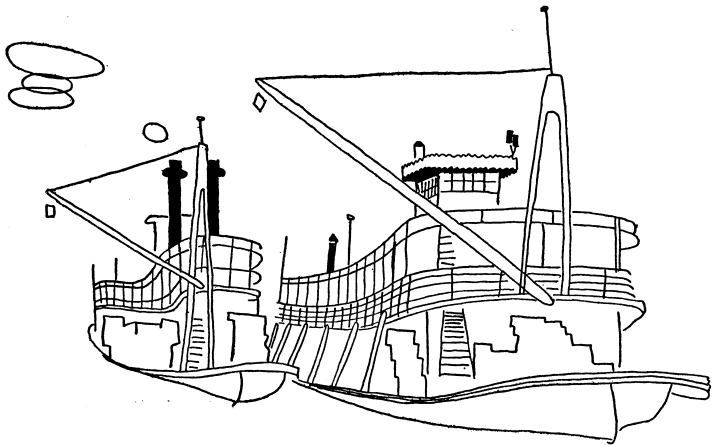
I heard a Georgia chain gang near Augusta sing this one. It's very popular—or would be because of the exceedingly slow tempo affording more rest than usual between strokes of the pickaxe or shovel. But, complained one of the convicts, "Guard, he don' low us sing it much. He say it damn lull'by and put us all to sleep on dis heah job. Wants we should sing songs dat go faster. But ah tells him if ah work fas'er dat don' make mah t'ree year sentence up no sooner, an' he done got mad."

*U-h, uh Lawsy
I wonder why
I got to live
Fo de bye an' bye
De sweet bye an' bye.*

*U-h, uh Lawsy
Don you bother me
A'se neber happy*

*Cep' ah's on a spree
Cain' you see.*

*U-h, u-h Lawsey
U-h, uu-h Lawsy
U-h, u-h Lawsy
U-h, u-h Lawsy
Pore me.*



MISSISSIPPI RIVER BOATS

Douglas Brown

Here's a chain gang number I heard on the highway near Spartanburg, S. C. A lugubrious chant—the rhythmic phrases punctuated by the steady thwack, thwack of half a hundred pick-axes creates the cheerful atmosphere of a grave digging party.

*Clothes all tore
Toes on the groun'
Got no job
None to be foun'*

*Poor man sho'
Am hahd 'nuff
Poor man an' nigger
Law' dat's tough*

*Ah'm hungry an' col'
Got nowhere to go
In mah face
Folks slam de do'*

*Mammy been taken
Frien's gone too
Law' ah'm lonely
Don' know what to do*

*Hear me Law'
Let me be gone
How soon oh Law'
Oh Law' how long*

There are thousands of drifting Negroes. Homeless, half starved. Some with wives and children. They rove about the South seeking work—a day here, a day there—wherever they can find it. The song is about them. A young Negro chopper in a lumber camp near Anderson, S. C., sang it for me. A wistful, haunting little lay.

*Diamond Joe wants sack o' flour
Diamond Joe wants sack o' flour
Diamond Joe wants sack o' flour
Diamond Joe he don' work by the hour
Drive on Diamond Joe*

*Sometime he work in de country
Sometime he work in de town
Sometime he take a good notion
To jump in de ribber an' drown
Drive on Diamond Joe*

Here's an ode to Christianity. I first heard it in Charlotte, N. C., from a young Negress school teacher. She got it from her father. It was he who enabled me to get the musical score. The tune is wistful and charming.

*White folks use whip
White folks use trigger
Eart' fo' de white folks
Sky fo' the nigger*

*While nigger he busy
Wit' Bible an' pray
White folks dey's stealin'
De whole Eart' 'way*

*White folks apointin'
Jes' up high anywhere
Fool nigger he stretchin'
His neck fo' what's dere*

*White folks use whip
White folks use trigger
But 'twere Bible an' Jesus
Made slave of the nigger*

A veteran of the World War and former Pullman Porter now a tenant farmer in North Carolina near Hendersonville wrote this down for me. The militant chord in these lines is rather unusual for that section of the country. He may have picked it up else where. He didn't remember. The tune is martial guttural and snarlish.

*Stan' boys stan'
No use arunnin'
Look up yonder hill
White trash acomin'
Is Acomin'*

*He got knife in one han'
Pistol in de odder
Stan' boys stan'
Brother stan' by brother
Stan' by brother*

*Nigger don' you run 'way
White thrash acomin'
Is acomin'
Get dat whackin' stick in yo' han'
Ruckus boun' to happen
Boun' to happen*

At the A. F. of L. Convention in Boston (October 13, 1930)—by WILLIAM GROPPER

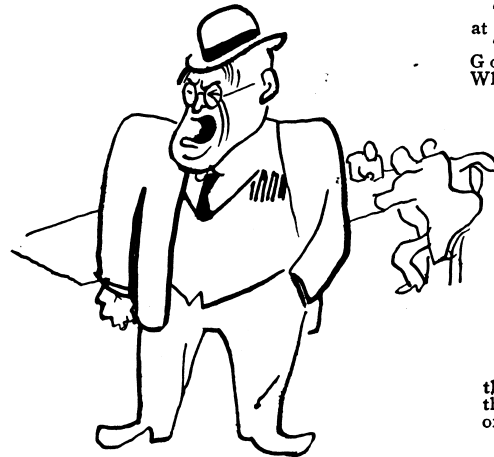


"Fellow delegates, I move we adopt the resolution for 2.75% beer to relieve unemployment"

Gropper



The American Legion met at the same hotel. "Here goes, boys, for God and Country—Whoopee."



Courteous John Leary of the N. Y. World whom I thank for the warm greeting of: "Get the hell outa here!"



And these are just a couple "representatives of Labor."



November 7, 1917

Hugo Gellert

A JOB IN THE KRAFTMILL

By Joseph Kalar

It was vacation time again, school was over now for three months. Time now for breezes to pour into my blood with a nickering and galloping of colts; time now for clouds and blue skies, for trees and rivers and lakes; time now to lie buried deep in dandelions spilled over the green face of earth like a yellow stain of jaundice; time now for us kids to hike to the cool river and lie in it all day, maybe.

I forgot, you see. I forgot that I was a proletarian's son; I forgot that for proletarians there are no vacations; I forgot that I had left a small comfortable unreal fairy-world school for a hard cursing sweating brutal school; in short, I forgot that I had to work.

Times were quite good, then. Men were at a premium, but men rejected the premium. Only school kids accepted the \$3 day wage; and the jobs were nearly all bad jobs, tough jobs, dirty jobs, that men turned up noses at, but that kids took because they would last only three months. Youth can stand much for three months. Especially if there's a big family at home and an old man you can't help feeling sorry for, walking to work day after day, noon-time, night-time, and day-time, always walking, always working to keep you in shoes and your behind inside of your pants. I forgot that it was vacation time, I remembered my father with the harrassed weary look in his eyes, and asked for a job. I got one, in the kraftmill.

The kraftmill is a stinking place in which to work. A month, no, two weeks, inside of it and your clothes stink with a sour acid smell; people are too polite to hold their noses, but they fidget and squirm as your work-stink hits them in the nose like a fist. Different jobs have different stinks. An iron-ore miner, a teamster, a fireman; but a kraftmill worker has a special sickening stink, penetrating as ammonia, nauseating as chloroform. My clothes, my body, my spirit, absorbed the kraftmill stink as hungrily as a dry

sponge absorbs water. I didn't have to tell my friends where I worked; they'd come to me, look at me with a sudden watery filming of the eyes and say "well, you got a job in the kraftmill, aint you?" I didn't have to answer, even.

I was given a long narrow handtruck. That was to be my tool. My job was simple, all I had to do was to push the truck from the pressers to the scale to the boxcars, where a couple of bohunks would pounce hungrily on the bundles of pressed kraft weighing, some of them, as high as seventy pounds, and pile them in a boxcar. The two bohunks were fine fellows. I was a bohunk, too, but of a different sort, so we had to talk in a broken English, leaving a great deal unsaid. In spare moments we'd sit dangling our feet over the edge of the door, talking. I was only a green kid, the world was for me bound by the limits of our little town, but these bohunks had been places and had seen things. They liked to talk to me. I am a good listener. My eyes light up when workers sit around and talk of their jobs in this town or that town or that state, and I always agree with them when they say, "say, kid, that was one hell of a job, what?"

Sam was the guy I liked best. He was a Bukhovino, or something like that, with the peculiar walk of a Bukhovino; a small, slender, dark guy who liked to drink a little too much, perhaps, and who wouldn't take sass from anybody. He saw I was a green kid, that my arms were thin and my face pale, so he took me under his wing, so to speak. When he had a spare moment he'd help me, other times he told me about the workers' world, the world of the roving workingstiff, and that helped me too.

One day something went wrong in the guts of the kraftmill, the wheels stopped, the presses sighed and coughed and then grew still, the rattle and roar ceased, and everything was quiet except for the cough of an exhaust far back in the mill. We weren't sent home, so it meant we could lie around and take it easy. I was only too willing. It was the graveyard shift, I was sleepy and tired, and here was my chance. I crawled to the top of a pile of kraft, and stretched out. The presserman, a big gawky Swede we called Ole, came once or twice and looked at me. I had never yet bumped against the louse that is of the proletariat and yet feeds from the back of the proletariat, the potential strawpush,

in line for promotion to timekeeper, eventually to eat his way like a worm through the ranks of his fellow workers to the honored position of "Push." And I never suspected Ole. I thought he was a fine guy, though he did have weasel eyes and his laugh was a running of mice-feet up my spine. I watched him through half-closed eyes, waiting. I didn't wait long. "Say," he howled at me, "what the hell you think you're doing? Get a broom and sweep up, this isn't no place to sleep." I didn't object, because you see I was green and for all that I knew he really had the authority to order me around. So I went. I took the broom and started to sweep, though the floor wasn't in very bad shape. I hadn't swept for five minutes when Sam came to me, looked at me, asked me: "what the hell you sweeping up for? Don't you know this a good chance to catch a five? Who told you to sweep up?" I told him. He got mad. He walked up to Ole, grabbed him by the neck, and shouted, "Say, you big sonofabitch, what you think you are, what? You tell that kid to work again and me'll tie you in a knot, see, you damn' scissorbill!" I went back to the kraft pile, and fell asleep almost at once, and when it was time to go back to work, Sam woke me up, grinning. "Just tell me kid when that big baster try to make you work, me'll fix him," he told me, I looking at him like a little puppy getting patted on the back.

A week or so later a contractor took over our end of the kraftmill. That meant that Sam and I would be laid off if we didn't scratch up a transfer; so we went to the "soop" and asked, "what about it?" He looked at us and said, sure. I've got jobs for you. Go with that redfaced fellow, he'll place you. (I remember the "soop"—he was a college boy; a year later he drowned somewhere in the Pacific ocean.) We followed the redfaced fellow. He took us into dripping rooms, through dark doorways, through rooms where men stripped to the waist worked, far into the bowels of the mill, to the smelters. Sam and I knew what that meant. Men that work in the smelter-room they call firemen, a hightoned name to make one forget that he's really no better than a frying greasy imp in hell shoveling sulphur. Sam and I looked at each other, our eyes talked, our eyes said, "sure, we'll try it, if we don't like it we can bunch it . . ."

The push gave Sam a wheelbarrow in which cement had congealed to almost a foot in thickness. It weighed a ton. He was supposed to haul cordwood to the smelters. I was given a long-handled shovel, had the coalpile pointed out to me, and was told to go to it. The kraftmill stink is, I think, concentrated into one hideous stupefying smothering stink in the smelter-room, from which, diluted, the usual stink seeps and flows into the other rooms. I just looked at the shovel a minute or two, hesitating. The molten sulphur gave off a nose-pinching smell, particles from saltcakes floated in the air making me sneeze, the room was foggy with coke-smoke. A big Negro came to me, shaking his head mournfully. "Jesus, boy, this sure is a tough job. My poor arms are burning up." I looked at him, he had on a blue denim shirt with a stiff white collar. He looked funny, so I snickered to myself, thinking he was kidding, maybe.

But he wasn't. I opened the boiler door and a hot red hand swooped out slapping me hotly on the face. I nearly fell over with pain and surprise. Well, I thought, maybe a guy gets used to it in time, I'll try it anyway. I threw in four shovels of coke and each time the long red arm with the hot hand slapped me sharply on the face. I shut the door with a clang and heaved my shovel far into a corner. I looked for Sam. He was outside sitting on his wheelbarrow, a scowl on his face. I went out to him. He knew I was just about through. "Here, kid," he said, "heft of this baster wheelbarrow, just once." I did. It weighed easily a ton. Sam and I looked at each other, and grinned, our eyes talked, our eyes said, "To hell with this racket, I guess we're through."

Somehow or other we found our way back to the office. I felt brave and strong when Sam was around. When he left me to get his junk together, I didn't feel so good, and when the "push" asked me what the matter was, I nearly cried, thinking of the bawling out I'd get at home, and maybe a kick in the slats from my old man. For you see, all at once I had forgotten the harrassed weary look in my father's eyes and his patient plodding to work. But I went through with it. I quit. Sam quit.

When I got home, I told my father what the matter was, and he understood. How I loved him then! I'd go out tomorrow and look for another job. Cripes, how I'd look!



November 7, 1917

Hugo Gellert



November 7, 1917

Hugo Gellert



ARMISTICE DAY, 1930

Phil Bard

A LETTER FROM SOVIET RUSSIA

October 1, 1930.

Workers, Readers, Editors and. Contribs:

I am now in Moscow: Never in my wildest dreams have I imagined myself capable of such intense yet sustained joy as I feel here. Naturally, I do not rush along the streets, throw up my cap, and shout hurrah. I am a little spoiled by Anglo-Saxon reserve; I am too damned self-conscious to be so direct, so immediate in the expression of my sincerest emotions. But the impulse, I confess, is there. I ache to laugh, to shout, to shake everybody's hand, to embrace every worker I meet in the street, to tell all these wonderful self-sacrificing, heroic comrades of the glowing hope they have brought to us who are doomed to live and struggle in the dark lands of rampant capitalism.

Now these are not the naive, sentimental outpourings of a youthful enthusiast. I am no youngster. Nor are they the result of superficial impressions gathered by a tourist luxuriating in the Grand Hotel. I have been here a few times before. It is almost three months that I am here now. I don't live on American dollars—I haven't any. I do not take advantage of any of the privileges granted the foreigners here. I live as the Russians live. I eat where the Russians eat. I stand in line as the Russians do. And I am at times as hungry as the Russians are. During the three months, I have been sick twice. And even as I write these lines, my fingers are stiff with cold—this, because the Moscow Soviet has decided to economize on fuel, and instead of the 1st of October the buildings here will begin to be heated on the 15th. Yes, pimples and boils have broken out all over my face (change of diet, the doctors say)—a catastrophe sufficient to cool the ardor of any gay Lothario! I have recounted all my troubles in order to convince the doubting Thomases (although I doubt that there are such among the comrades who read the *New Masses*) that my enthusiasm does not spring from any subjective condition

of well-being, but from palpable living, throbbing objective realities.

What are these objective realities? I mentioned some of them in my letter of August 2nd. (Printed in the September issue—Ed.) Since then I made a trip through the country, all the way to the Caucasus, lived on one of the oldest collective farms—a Commune, which is the highest form of collective enterprise—and have returned to Moscow just in time to see the splendid home-coming of the Moscow regiments of the Red Army from their fall maneuvers. Since August 2, I have seen hundreds, yes, hundreds, of new factories built all along the road from Moscow to Mineralnye Vody, I have visited eighteen collective farms, I have talked to a countless number of people, I have looked into schools and childrens homes and nurseries in some of the remotest nooks and corners of the Union, I have snooped about and listened, and observed, and the result is a mine of facts that would fill more than one volume, and a burning faith that would wither the sneers of a million bourgeois jackasses.

Facts? Here are some facts.

Despite superhuman difficulties, despite malicious interference of the capitalist-imperialist nations, despite the lying campaigns against the Soviet Union organized by the Pope and supported by all the forces of darkness throughout the world, despite the indescribable harm done here by the scheming, plotting, counterrevolutionary hirelings of the foreign capitalists and the supporters of Soviet kulaks, despite the Lefts and despite the Rights, despite bureaucracy, inefficiency, and psychological conservatism in many quarters, the second year of the *Piatiletka* (Five year Plan) has been brought to a successful finish.

Failures in some places have been compensated by unexpected successes in other places.

Who ever imagined, in whose plans was it ever mentioned, that within less than one year one-quarter of the poor and middle peasants would be organized in collective farms? And the end is not yet. The movement into the collective farms is unabated; indeed, it is growing, it is gathering momentum. By next year fully fifty percent will be collectivized. These are cold figures. But just think what it means. The economic implications of this change are obvious; think now of the psychological changes. One visit to a collective farm would convince you that it is here, on the psychological front, that some of the most glorious victories of the Revolution have been won. Of these I will tell you in the next letter—hundreds of little episodes illustrating the profound changes in the psychology of the peasant. In the older collective farms, the peasant has lost altogether his ancient peasant characteristics: he dresses, and behaves, and talks, and thinks like an industrial worker. He is incredibly urbanized, this peasant. He is much less provincial, much more cosmopolitan than some of our professors in New York, and certainly than some of our Congressmen in Washington. It is with the aid of this collectivized poor and middle peasant that the grain problem has been solved.

Moreover, in comparison with last year, the industrial crops—cotton, flax, beets, soy-beans, etc.—have increased tremendously. This will in great measure solve the hunger for manufactured goods—(Darn it, everybody wants to be dressed up in Russia!)

To liquidate the meat crisis countless government cattle farms have sprung up all over the country. During the collectivization campaign last year, many kulaks slaughtered their cattle for fear that it might be taken without compensation. There were virtual meat orgies. The kulaks would stay up late into the night so that they might squeeze in another extra meal. They would rather burst gorging themselves than give up their cattle. This explains the meat crisis. The kulaks have miscalculated. Their sabotaging simply acted as a stimulus for a more rapid development of modern cattle raising. Within one year, the meat crisis will have passed into the domain of legendary.

But what's the use, I have neither time nor space to tell you everything I have seen and learned here. I understand that Mike and Bill and Harry are coming soon.* Well, let them come and check up on everything I say. In the meanwhile, Comrades, take my word for it that I'm not kidding—the proletariat is certainly getting there by tremendous strides! Tell that to the infamous Fish and all the little fishes to cheer them up on November 7th!

With comradely greetings,
Moscow, U.S.S.R.

J. Q. NEETS.

* Michael Gold, William Gropper, Harry Alan Potamkin and A. B. Magil, on the contributing editor's board of *New Masses*, have gone to the Soviet Union as delegates of the John Reed Club for the International Congress of revolutionary writers and artists to take place in Charkov, November 1st. J. Q. Neets and Ed Falkowski, two *New Masses* contributors now in Moscow, will join the delegation at the Congress. *New Masses* readers will hear from them in following issues.



ARMISTICE DAY, 1930

Phil Bard

MOVIES

By HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN



FACTORY LUNCH

Walter Steinhilber

THE RACKETEER PARAMOUNT

The present hero, "good bad man," of the film is not the frontier racketeer of the Wild West. That was a rural contribution to American populism or mythology. This does not mean that the "good bad man" of the past no longer exists in the movie. On the contrary, the advance of the talkie has renewed the stay of that spurious man of courage. He is, to be sure, somewhat more sophisticated, and speech has bestowed on him the semblance of suavity. The city-fication ("civilizing") of America is making a boulevardier of the movie-rustler. Even at that, he cannot compare with his 100% city cousin: the hootch-and-vice racketeer. The latter's romantic appeal is much more thoroughgoing. It is one with the emotion of patriotism.

The attraction of the white-hearted western blackguard was "the enchantment of distance" in time and place. The glorification of a moral moron like Billy the Kid, whose "saga" has been immortalized in the movie by King Vidor, is not so simple to condone, since Billy has not been sanctified with a love of the poor as has Jesse James. Are we getting tougher?

The sentimentalizing of a Dion O'Bannion, the florist-bandit of Chicago, and the glorifying of his opponent are a nostalgia towards the present. By reducing the theme of gang-strife to a love-triangle, the personal romance is heightened. The burden of the social guilt is shifted and dissipated. *Underworld*, Ben Hecht's roseate picture of why gangsters kill, transformed the Dion O'Bannion episode into a vindication of the American scoundrel and a benediction on the society that breeds him. Paramount produced *Underworld*. Fox, nosing for the direction of the business-wind, followed with a more insinuating *Dressed to Kill*. The racket of the racket-film is continuing in the vociferous movie, with Paramount leading in surer, and politer, accents.

Streets of Chance discovered the glib tongue for the racketeer-movie. Arnold Rothstein became an altruist sacrificing himself for his brother's soul. A suavest of honorable gamblers—once these were localized on Mississippi boats—was presented in the person of William Powell, elegant and detached. Rothstein was vindicated, and, by inference, the New York police, Grover Whalen, Jimmie Walker, the president of the United States, Wall Street, and competitive society. Paramount was the producer of *Streets of Chance*.

The Lingle murder was anticipated by the Paramount company, through the prophetic Ben Hecht, in *Roadhouse Nights*. Not a word was whispered in it of the reporter's fraternal connections with his murderers. The slain newspaperman died for the glory of the *Chicago Blare*, the Amalgamated Press, and his honor as

an immaculate conception—a servant of the people. The second reporter, foredoomed, taps his plight on the telephone—there's a great deal of tapping in these States. The atmosphere of the liquor-war, as pervasively imparted by the newspapermen, is a synthesis of the aroma of Scotch, the fragrance of love, the tang of heroism and danger, and never an ulterior stench.

And now we have reached the heights of the underworld—does one go up or down?—the lawyer. In *For the Defense*, another Paramount picture, William Powell, as smooth and self-contained and relentless as in *Streets of Chance*, portrays, we are advised, an attorney resembling the late W. J. Fallon, criminal lawyer. Mr. Powell is a completely criminal lawyer, though the film ennobles his crime to a sacrifice for a woman, and of the woman for him, and vindicates his support of murderer and thief as a love for the poor. A new Jesse James! The acute observation of fact is evinced in the lovely dame's words: "You know how juries hate a rich man!" It is this hatred of the rich by his peers, as the jury-box sees equality, that will be expressed shortly in the election of a poor man out of Wall Street to our democratic presidency.

Underworld, *Streets of Chance*, *Roadhouse Nights*, *For the Defense*, are part of America's celebration of her corruption. They are all Paramount films. This is interesting, not because Paramount alone expresses the movie's portion in the American apology, but because Paramount, the best of the Hollywood shops, anticipates this expression and polishes the lie to a brighter, more insidious, gleam. Therefore Paramount is the best subject for a clinical study of the movie. Paramount gives us the theme-songs for the racketeer: *Underworld*—he did it for the girl! *Streets of Chance*—he did it for his brother's soul! *Roadhouse Nights*—he did it for his paper! *For the Defense*—he did it for the poor!

To this idol we must establish as a positive antithesis the authentic folk-heroes of the class-struggle. Dialectics against populism. This populism takes many forms: the racketeer paramount, Negro spirituals, the "each blow a caress, each caress a blow" treatment of the worker in the film. Either he is a swashbuckler, flattered by those who commandeer him; or he is a benighted soul being duped into a hatred towards those who love him. This latter attitude is today not so bluntly put; it has been more and more converted into forms of flattery and cajolery. Its history in the film is as old as the popularity of the film. First expressed in delusive aphorisms of loyalty—class-collaboration—by 1914 it was put forth more dramatically thus—I quote from the novelization of the Lasky film, *The Only Son*:

(Schmidt is an agitator)

"He knew that Schmidt had been arrested several times in and about New York for attempts to blackmail contractors, and that he was suspected of complicity in a number of dynamiting outrages."

(Lasky was not concerned with exposing "misleaders of labor." This play by Winchell Smith was good movie stuff for Jesse Lasky because, while pretending an attack on a scoundrel, Jesse could disparage the validity of the claims of labor. It was necessary to soft-soap an "organized" group, therefore:)

"The Unions were not to blame for Schmidt's power. The man was one who possessed unquestionable ability . . . The men trusted him . . ."

(An admission:)

"Schmidt managed, cleverly enough, to get a show of a reason on his side. He did not arbitrarily call a strike. But he managed to make the men believe that the profits of the plant were much larger than they actually were . . ."

Should one begin to think that Lasky was truly attacking a labor-racketeer, like John Mitchell or some other eminent, the conclusion of the picture will dissipate that notion. The film terminates with a justification of scabbing, praised by the strike-breaker! In 1930 the labor-racketeer is another "good bad man" awaiting his panegyric in the film: he did it for the worker! There have been pictures recently just skirting the edge of that theme. Lasky's Paramount is again indicator: *Ladies Love Brutes*.



FACTORY LUNCH

Walter Steinhilber



FACTORY LUNCH

Walter Steinhilber

BOOKS

Reviewed by

Robert Evans, Bennett Stevens, Helen Black, Walt Carmon, Emanuel Blum, Samuel Brody

Al Capone: The Biography of a Self-Made Man, by Fred D. Pasley. Ives-Washburn. \$2.50.

The era of muckraking is as dead as the democratic dogma, and it is no longer news, even to a child, that capitalist politics are corrupt from top to bottom, and that politicians, racketeers, gangsters and newspapers work hand in hand, sharing the profits of a system based on force and fraud. The "public" knows all this and is cynical about it. The forces of "law and order," which all the year round get their rake off from crime and corruption, keep conveniently silent until the election campaign rolls around, when they stage grandstand plays. If the Republican and Democratic parties cannot give the masses bread, they at least give them circuses. It has been "discovered," shortly before Mr. Tuttle was about to throw his hat into the political ring, that Tammany sells judgeships. From the west, where men are men and corporations robbers, we hear that the Department of the Interior has (again) been handing out oil lands "illegally," this time involving property worth forty billions. This is "news," although the history of the railways, the oil companies, the coal trusts et al, is full of similar incidents. The "public" is cynical; a large part of it accepts capitalist ideology that everything is O. K. as long as you can get away with it; and the writers have abandoned the muckraking tradition for the "new" biography of journalism, jazz and adulation. At the heels of Rockefeller and Morgan the "magnificent," Al Capone, self-made man, titan of racketeering, stalks through American literature, his heroic exploits celebrated by a *Chicago Tribune* reporter.

There is logic in this, for Capone belongs not in the criminal class, but among industrial and financial titans. The criminal is an anti-social being, often a sick man, hunted and broken or killed by a backward society, cured by a more advanced one; the racketeer is *part* of capitalist society; he obtains its highest reward, a large income; for his ambition and achievements he is esteemed; the great and near-great hobnob with him; the police is on his payroll; he runs city administrations and rotten A.F.L. labor unions; he is banquetted and feted by leading citizens who are his allies. In short, he is a success.

Pasley's book tells the story of that success. It is the story not of ordinary crime but of an industry, of men who organized vice and beer-running the way Rockefeller organized the oil trust and Morgan the steel trust; who led military expeditions like General Butler in Nicaragua; who partitioned "spheres of influence" like the imperialist powers. Self-made, successful men, whose funerals are attended by legislators, judges, senators, as before conquerors whose incomes run into the millions. Here we find Big Jim Colosimo, vicelord of Chicago and votegetter for the politicians, friend of Galli-Curci, Tetrizzini, Caruso, George M. Cohan; Johnny Torrio, his successor; and, greatest of all, Al Capone, who with gat, sawed-off shotgun, and machinegun, built up his bootleg empire, netting him \$125,000,000 a year; Capone, the "mayor of Crook Country," completely controlling Cicero and the Chicago politicians, never punished for his murders although the police chiefs again and again admit their certainty that he committed them. There are dozens of minor lights, most of them bumped off in the course of the story.

When the aviator De Pineda, representing Mussolini, came to Chicago, Capone was appointed a member of the reception committee so that his presence might prevent an anti-fascist demonstration. He was the first to grasp De Pineda's hand. Mayor Thompson, Senator Deneen, other politicians are mixed up with the gangs, Jake Lingle, *Chicago Tribune* police reporter is bumped off, and is revealed to have been part of the racket, along with dozens of other newspapermen. In city hall, the police department, the labor unions, the court room Capone and his ilk are powers. Nightsticks, billies and the pen are for workers and

"agitators," not for self-made men. This week, for instance, the Chicago police, with the elections a month off, picked up several Capone henchmen on charges of "vagrancy," put them under \$10,000 bond. Clarence Darrow, eminent liberal lawyer, emerged from his retirement to defend the gangsters against "unfair" bond. Where was Darrow during the Gastonia trial? during the Foster-Minor trial? That's a different story.

The important element in Capone's position in capitalist society is not his use of the machinegun against enemies. The story of the acquisition of oil lands in Mexico by American companies is full of violence; the American fruit companies in Central America could teach Capone a thing or two about private armies and handling politicians. Latin American owners of ranches having oil or bananas have been wiped out; entire towns have been burned and razed to the ground; papers were falsified; "legitimate" children have been bastards and bastards have been made "legitimate" on the records so that they might, under the pressure of bribes or guns, sign away oil or fruit rights. What makes Capone a subject for books now is merely that he is a new name in big business and that his business is a new one, built up under the prohibition law. It is characteristic that Pasley's book is written not as an attack on capitalist society, which cannot exist without its Capones, its private armies to suppress the workers, its coal and iron police, its industrial espionage, its gangster-controlled labor unions; but as an attack on the Thompson administration (the author is a *Chicago Tribune* man) and a defense of his fellow-reporter Lingle. Capone, as often happens with Big Shots, is more frank than the bourgeois literati. As cynical as Morgan, the Chicago vicelord says: "They talk about me not being on the legitimate. Nobody's on the legit. You know that and so do they." Capone recognizes his kinship with other capitalists.

ROBERT EVANS.

A Book for Boston

Mental Radio, by Upton Sinclair. Pasadena, California. \$3.00.

Upton Sinclair is here at his worst. He has always been a medical faddist; in this book he champions claims for his wife's telepathic and clairvoyant powers. Mental telepathy is a legitimate field for scientific inquiry even though the primary results of inquiries, which have thus far been made, have been to dispel the pretensions of charlatans, frauds and self-deluded believers. But when Sinclair designates this book as a scientific document he is being incredibly naive. The entire tone of the book smacks of the ballyhoo artist engaged in dispensing little liver pills. The experiments upon which he makes his claims were not conducted with the elementary controls that scientists demand; the analysis of their implications full of contradictions, far fetched inferences, pious irrelevancies and syrupy sentimentalities. His "witch-wife" may have "it" as he contends but Sinclair does little else but show that he is not competent to tell us about it.

Sinclair's reputation as a radical intellectual leader will not be enhanced by this book. Not only is it puerile in its reasoning but its hasty endorsement of telepathy and clairvoyance encourages mysticism and spiritualism and so augments the reactionary forces arrayed against a dynamic, mechanistic, scientific world view. In fact, Mary Craig Sinclair has extravagant claims for her method. "You can use it not only for such experiments as telepathy and clairvoyance, but for improving your bodily health." A priestess of a new faith cure has come out of Southern California, and Upton Sinclair is her prophet and apostle.

This book will not be banned in Boston.

BENNETT STEVENS.

Ex-Countess

The Runaway Countess, by Herminia zur Muhlen. Cape & Smith.
\$2.50.

Herminia zur Muhlen (whose name is consistently misspelled on the jacket, cover and title page of her book) is known to *New Masses* contributors, and to other American writers, as their indefatigable German translator. Thanks to her, most of the radical writers in this country have become known in Germany, often more widely known than in their native land.

Having thought of Herminia zur Muhlen always in this role, it is surprising to have her introduced now as an ex-countess, one who deserted the most exclusive and aristocratic circles of Europe to cast her lot with the revolutionary workers. To one reading her book without any previous knowledge of the author, it will seem remarkable to find such a social viewpoint as hers developing in a woman born and bred in the ranks of courtiers. To one who has known her as a radical, her book is disappointingly uncritical toward her past. It is pleasant and entertaining but it lacks the punch one would expect from such a fighter in the class struggle.

The Runaway Countess (American title) recalls the most memorable incidents of the author's life from childhood to her separation from her husband, in the early days of the world war. She was an Austrian countess by birth; father and uncles were high in the diplomatic service; grandfather and great uncle held posts of honor in the army. From a dearly beloved grandmother, with whom she made her home for years, she gained incentive to independent thinking and developed strong republican sentiments at an early age.

Her life was a sheltered, luxurious existence far removed from the practical problems of ordinary people. Yet the aristocrats had certain obligations to the poor. And "in our greenhouse," says the author, "the sanguine hand of my grandmother had cleaned a little spot in the glass through which I could look out at the truth, and then as a child I glimpsed the problem of all problems—riches and poverty."

But not for many years did she come any closer to this problem. After school days when she and her chums argued with adolescent enthusiasm, and lack of knowledge, on socialism and literature and philosophy, she spent several years traveling with her father. Part of the time he was in the diplomatic service and she was his hostess; later they traveled simply to help him escape boredom.

Then she married; married a baron (a mesalliance deplored by her family) who was an owner of great estates in the Baltic provinces of Russia. She lived with him six years in what seemed to her then primitive isolation; and gradually it all became so unbearable that she ran away. She escaped to visit her sick father; but she knew she was actually leaving forever—not only her husband, but all her old life. "It was not easy to take the last step, to sever the final link which bound me to that useless, easy life." But she took the step. "I learned to work, to stand on my own feet."

Of course it was not an easy break from such a background. It is surprising that the break was made at all, since at that time so much of her socialism was purely emotional, not clearly reasoned or well informed. But now after so many years of valuable service in the revolutionary labor movement, it is surprising to find her so uncritical of all this old life. These reminiscences never get under the surface. They are purely objective recollections. There is no attempt to reveal the true nature of this old aristocratic class. In fact the general impression is that something very fine was lost when this class passed away. ". . . the old serene cultivated light-heartedness is gone; the pursuit of money—the arrogance of the bourgeois, since he too may now become a millionaire—has taken its place."

Thruout the book there is this distinction between the old aristocrats and the new bourgeoisie, with a sympathetic attitude toward the former and a contempt for the latter which is aristocrat in its vehemence rather than revolutionary.

The Runaway Countess is unquestionably an interesting book; but with such unusual and colorful experiences to draw upon, Herminia zur Muhlen might have made a much more significant book if she had used a scalpel instead of a quill to penetrate into those days and ways which passed with the great war.

HELEN BLACK.



CHARLIE CHAPLIN'S PARADE

MICHAEL GOLD wrote the story.
OTTO SOGLOW, of "New Yorker"
fame, did the colored drawings.

"GENUINE healthy magic . . . A funny fantasy in terms of reality—hot dogs, skyscrapers, subways, carousels, saxophones—to stir a peculiarly contemporary imagination. Here is a hero for children's books out of a new gallery. The book is gorgeously illustrated by one of the funniest of artists."—WILLIAM SOSKIN, N. Y. Post.

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Strike!

Strike, by Mary Heaton Vorse. Horace Liveright. \$2.00.

Ever since I can remember people have argued whether *The Jungle* was "literature" or "propaganda" or "art" or "proletarian art" and they still argue and read *The Jungle*. I am sure they will argue this way about *Strike*.

When I finished reading the book I was moved by the same warm feeling I had when I read *Pelle, Growth of the Soil* and *Daughter of Earth*. I'm not trying to compare *Strike* with any of these books.

What I want to say is that *Strike* is a true story about the workers. It's as true as those letters written in pencil on the back of all kinds of paper that come into the *Daily Worker*.

The book is written by a first rate writer who has seen many strikes, including the Lawrence strike as far back as 1912. It is based on the strikes of last year in Gastonia, Marion and Elizabethton which she also witnessed. Mary Vorse has simply put these events into a story and let the southern mill workers speak for themselves.

She tells how the mountaineer folk are lured away from the hills to work in the mill towns. How they are crowded into miserable shacks, living on grits and fat, slaving at the mill from sunup to sundown. All the suffering, bitterness and resentment finally boils over and then "all hell broke loose."

Then the strike comes into their lives. Then come picket lines, bullets, kidnapping and murder. And all the proletarian heroism that made Lawrence, Passaic and Ludlow becomes part of this living novel.

Yet with all the genuine pleasure in reading *Strike*, I felt that Mary Vorse hadn't told us all of it. We know the Communists were in Gastonia. In *Strike*, Bolsheviks, "nigger lovers", "northern agitators and reds" are mentioned; and the mill owners fear them. They do not fear the few who are leading the strike alone, but "it's what's behind them they're scared of."

"What's behind them" does not appear in the story.

The communist drive that ignited the smouldering fire into roaring flames in Gastonia is missing in Mary Vorse's book. Yet it was this dynamic logic that made the Carolina textile worker stand up in his proletarian dignity with a copy of the *Daily Worker* in his hand. And it happened so quickly, that often he still held the bible in the other.

We should have had that too. The New South without this iron in the red blood of the strikers is a Lawrence without the I. W. W., Bill Haywood, Ettore and Giovanitti. Had Mary Vorse given us this too, *Strike* would glow with a revolutionary significance.

However she has written a powerful and exciting story. It is infused with a genuine feeling of the class struggle. It is one of the best things written about working class life in America. If we are critical of *Strike* it is because we feel that it is our own. Readers of *New Masses*, read *Strike* by all means.

WALT CARMON



William Siegel

Expensive

Whither Whither, or After Sex What? Edited by Walter S. Hankel. Macaulay. \$2.00.

This volume, which satirizes certain phases of capitalist ideology, was produced by thirteen writers. The writers do not receive any wage; their return is to be secured by royalties against the sale of the books. While the volume was being written, presumably, the risk of production was carried chiefly by the writers themselves who, in that sense, are minor capitalists. However, the writers are only a part of the group who produced the book; typesetters, pressmen, clerical workers, salesmen, errand boys and others also entering into the work of production.

The ideology satirized embraces the contributions of Sigmund Freud, Charles Beard, Stuart Chase, J. B. S. Haldane, Schmalhausen, V. F. Calverton, Gorham B. Munson and John S. Sumner. The effect of the satire is to shift acceptance of the capitalist economy from a smug and pretentiously scientific one to an acceptance less pompous and better grounded logically. In fact, the butt of the satire, from the viewpoint of the authors, is the lamentable confusion of certain capitalist thinkers; the work, by implication, would produce a higher type, intellectually, of capitalist leadership.

Taking this tentatively as a basis, it becomes necessary to estimate the cost at which this improvement in leadership is produced.

The first, most obvious cost is the labor of writing. There are thirteen authors and an editor, who created a total gross product of 178.5 pages. There are approximately 56,000 words, probably written at the rate of 1,000 words per hour, which gives 56 hours of such labor. At the rate of \$1.50 per hour (average social value of skilled labor-power, this would amount to \$60.)

Each author, no doubt, went to college for four years at (according to university catalogues) an estimated cost of \$2,000 per year, including living expense. Childhood rearing need not be considered because it was not devoted specifically to the creation of minds which would produce books of this type. Fourteen writers at \$2,000 per year for four years involve an expenditure of \$112,000 as the total cost of college training. Making a round number we can add \$8,000 for that incidental loafing which is a pre-requisite of certain kinds of authorship. Now this cost must be written down for amortization. The reason is that other works have been produced which were based upon the same training and these must be deducted from production cost. (Similarly, any investment trust writes off a part of the cost of the securities it owns from the income derived from them). Our calculation, deducting amortization to date, is \$75,000. (Training minus past income less living expense).

There is nothing in this figure to suggest that the book will actually produce a higher type of capitalist leadership. Its purpose is to satirize certain capitalist ideologies and the effect of the satire, in turn, is to elicit a sense of complacency in the minds of



William Siegel



readers, with capitalism. It is estimated that the book cost \$75,000 probably reaching 5,000 consumers. Assume—a large estimate—that each reader is complacent for two hours. This amounts to \$7.50 per complacency-hour (\$75,000 divided by 10,000 hours equals \$7.50 per complacency-hour). There is no guarantee on the part of the authors, that this complacency will be created during a time of revolution, when its exchange-value would be at a premium.

This is one of the numerous examples of the waste which takes place under capitalist economy. \$150,000, cost of producing the book plus cost of producing the authors, judiciously apportioned to the Department of Justice and to organized gangs, in times of imminent class war, would have netted more tangible assets. Further, the production of instruments of capitalist ideology by Charles Beard, Samuel Schmalhausen, et al. would certainly have been less wasteful; for the latter utilized plants specially equipped for speed-up in the manufacture of ideologies. It is doubtful that the authors of this book will ever attain the highly developed technology of their competitors.

EMANUEL BLUM.

Television

ABC of Television, by R. F. Yates. Norman W. Henley Publishing Co. \$3.00.

This is the most exhaustive of all the works on the subject of television, the new science of picture broadcasting.

Yates traces the history of television in its painful and slow development from the pioneering of the German Nipkow to the recent contributions of Baird and Alexanderson. The gradual overcoming of technical difficulties such as the problems of synchronization and the "light microphone" are told so simply and with such splendid diagrams that the layman with even a superficial knowledge of electricity and physics will find it easy to study and follow the text.

Television at its present stage of development is, contrary to general belief, a comparatively simple science. The greatest impetus to its development in the United States has been the feverish search for new and improved weapons for the coming war. The diabolic usages of the photo-electric cell on the battle field are described in this book. Even the most "objective" of bourgeois scientific brains quiver in delight at the thought of being able to annihilate whole enemy armies sighted miles away from the actual scene thru the magic eye of television.

SAMUEL BRODY

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STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST, 24, 1912. Of New Masses, published monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1930.

State of New York: County of New York

Before me, a Notary in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Frances Strauss, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the Business Manager of the New Masses, and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are:

Publisher: New Masses, Inc., 112 E. 19 St., N. Y. C. Editor: Michael Gold, 112 E. 19 St., N. Y. C. Managing Editor: Walt Carmon, 112 E. 19 St., N. Y. C. Business Manager: Frances Strauss.

2. That the owner is: The American Fund for Public Service, 2 West 13 St., N.Y. C. James Weldon Johnson, Pres., 2 West 13 St., New York City; Rob't W. Dunn, Sec'y, 2 West 13 St., New York City; Morris L. Ernst, Treas., 2 West 13 St., New York City.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgagees, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner, and that affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by her.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 20th day of October 1930.

FRANCES STRAUSS, Business Manager.
Wm. E. Wimpey, Notary Public.
(My commission expires March, 1931.)

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WORKERS'

ART

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Lithuanian Art Federation

Comrades:

The Lithuanian Federation of Proletarian Art was organized about seven years ago and was an outgrowth of an Alliance of Singing Societies organized in 1912. Today it has about 2,000 active members in various cities.

The bulk of the membership is in Brooklyn, Chicago and around Boston and most of the activity is centered about 10 theatrical groups and 34 choruses.

The Federation does not satisfy itself with the carrying on of organizational work only but it arranges lectures on proletarian art and publishes plays, songs and poems. So far it has issued 14 various publications.

Recently the Federation published a 3-act operetta *The Unfinished Struggle* written by Senas Vincas and with music by Helen Rich. It is based on the Russian revolution of 1905. Another musical play is now being published—*Spartakas*—written by Mikas Rasoda. Music by Bernice Shellan, another young composer and chorus leader.

Besides revolutionary and Lithuanian folk songs, every chorus sings the *International* and lately the Federation published a translation of the famous Russian folk song *Dubinushka (Vezdelis)* which has been arranged by Shellan for the mixed choruses and which is very popular. Yurchukonis composed splendid working class songs *Salute Laisve* (to our Lithuanian Daily) and *May First*.

Each of the choruses presents about two concerts a year. In addition, the choruses sing at various affairs for other working class organizations: demonstrations, mass-meetings, social affairs, etc. Income derived from these affairs goes to the workers' press: *The Daily Worker*, and our Lithuanian dailies—*Laisve* of Brooklyn, and *Vilnis* of Chicago. At the present time the Federation groups are carrying on a campaign for the *Daily Worker*.

We are glad to note the cultural activities of other workers groups. We still think that closer cooperation should be established between us for a greater revolutionary usefulness.

The Federation looks toward *New Masses* as the organ, for the development and unification of American revolutionary working class cultural activities. We want more plays, more songs, more poems, more stories dealing with the daily working class struggles in the United States. We are looking towards that time when the workers will maintain their own theatres in every industrial centre of the U. S. At the same time that we realize the hardships and obstacles we are confronted with, we are also certain they will be overcome.

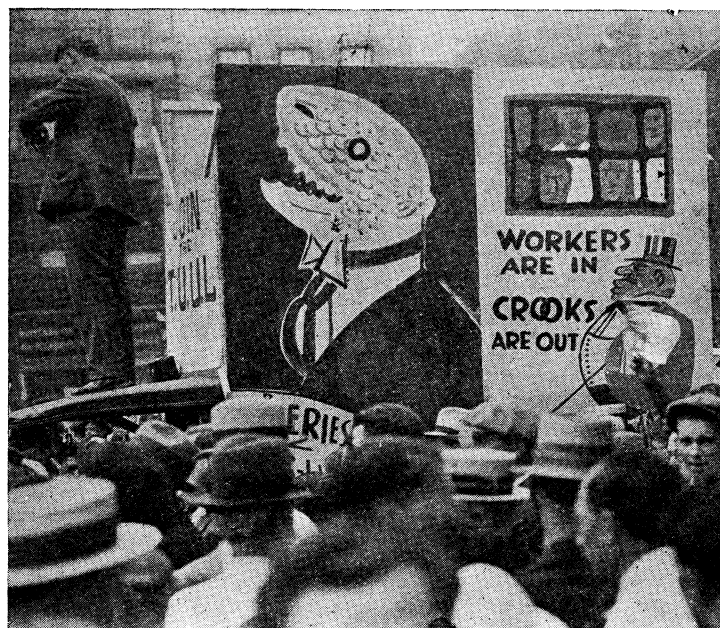
The Federation urges its units to arrange lectures on proletarian art and its role in the class struggle. We will have to ask you, comrades of *New Masses*, to aid us in this respect. Besides we agitate our comrades to read the *New Masses* and ask other workers to do the same.

Fraternally,

Brooklyn, N. Y.

J. NALY.

Secretary of the Lithuanian Federation of Proletarian Art



One of the gay posters, satirizing the Fish Committee, done by the artists of the John Reed Club for the unemployed demonstration held in New York City under the auspices of the Trade Union Unity League. (The photograph was made by a member of the Labor Defender Photo Group—note another member in action with his camera to the left of the poster).

The club artists also did posters for the Communist Election Rally at Madison Square Garden, October 21, welcoming Foster, Minor and Amter, just released from prison.

A meeting on the occasion of the 10 anniversary of John Reed's death, was held under the joint auspices of the Club and the *New Masses* at the Central Opera House on October 17 and drew an attendance of 1,200. It was featured by a spontaneous demonstration for Louis J. Engdahl, just released after arrest for his protest at the City Hall in behalf of the unemployed. Tamiris, dancer, the Hall Johnson Negro Choir, and artists and writers assisted in the program. Michael Gold, *New Masses* editor, and Alfred Wagenknecht of the T.U.U.L. were speakers, Walt Carmon chairman. The John Reed Club delegation to the revolutionary writer's conference left for Soviet Russia directly from the meeting.

The John Reed Club artists are preparing for an exhibit to be shown at various workers clubs and arranging other activities for the winter season.

Worker-Photographers

Comrades:

The Labor Defender Photo Group reports continued activities:

In addition to supplying the *Labor Defender*, *Daily Worker*, *Labor Unity* and the revolutionary press at large with photographs of demonstrations, picket lines, evictions, etc., has extended its activities to include a regular photo exchange abroad.

In October, the group was winner of a prize for one of their contributions to *Der Arbeiter Fotograf* workers' photo publication of Berlin.

On October 25, the group held a successful social evening including moving pictures, revolutionary dances etc. One of the features was an exhibit of photographs taken by members, covering all phases of working class life and revolutionary activities.

The group, composed now of about 20 active members has a studio, darkroom and all facilities for their work. Workers wishing to join can communicate with the

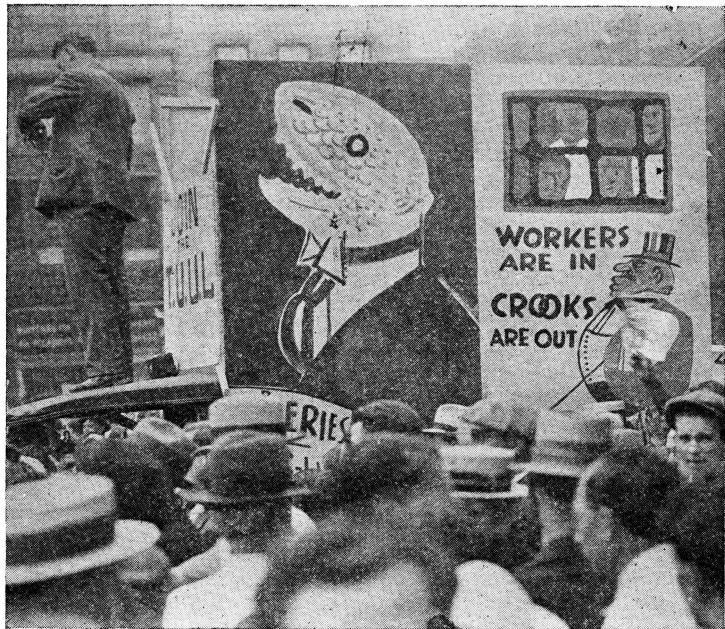
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One of the gay posters, satirizing the Fish Committee, done by the artists of the John Reed Club for the unemployed demonstration held in New York City under the auspices of the Trade Union Unity League. (The photograph was made by a member of the Labor Defender Photo Group—note another member in action with his camera to the left of the poster).

WORLD CONGRESS OF WORKERS THEATRE GROUPS

Comrade Editors:

There has been no mention in *New Masses* of the recent Conference of the International Workers' Theatre Union in Moscow; as the only publication in the English language devoted to Proletarian Art this must be rectified. In every country the workers are turning more and more to the stage as a means of expression, and what is more important, as a weapon in the class struggle.

Ten countries were represented at the Palace of Labour in Moscow: The Soviet Union, Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, France, Switzerland, Belgium, England, Norway, Denmark, and Japan. Here is the germ of a proletarian movement which already in Germany and Czecho-Slovakia—with 200 groups respectively—is a thorn in the side of the capitalist state. No less than two million workers in Germany witnessed performances by Workers' Theatre groups last year, and this number will probably be doubled for the coming year.

The discussions at the Conference showed that the general line of development in all capitalist countries was remarkably similar, although the stages reached differed widely. The line can be summarized as:—First, the Cultural Theatre for the workers, performing plays from bourgeois sources (especially those showing the misery of the workers' lives). This is gradually superseded by, or grows into, the Propaganda Theatre, which develops its own revolutionary playwrights within the framework of a naturalistic stage. But in no capitalist country can the naturalistic stage be considered the ideal propaganda weapon of the proletariat. It demands too much in the way of resources, it is static, it invites the workers to come to it instead of going where the workers are to be found. So there has grown up what is called for want of a better name, the "Cabaret" form, for which a stage, curtains, and lighting are unnecessary, whose properties can be transported by hand, and a performance of which can be given literally anywhere.

It is an entertainment of short sketches, parodies, speaking chorus, knock about, etc., performed by a troupe of about 10, with always a political and propaganda content to each item. The items are always abreast of events, being modified or dropped as the situation demands. Thus an active troupe can lead its audiences in the class struggle, instead of merely commenting on the past, as naturalistic plays would compel them to do.

In England, small as we are, we had independently arrived at this form in our Revue *Strike Up* performed in February of this year, while in Germany and Czecho-Slovakia the leading Workers' Theatre groups, as well as the agit-prop. troupes numbering several hundreds, have been working with it for several years, and have achieved amazing results artistically, in front of anything the bourgeois stage can show in this form. It speaks to the workers in their own language, about their own problems, their own lives, and shows the solution of their difficulties.

Experience has thus shown that this flexible, vigorous, mobile, inexpensive form is the one best adapted to Workers' Theatres in capitalist countries, if they wish to play their part in the class struggle and to be more than working class dilettantes (curse the breed!).

As to content. We agree with Mike Gold in the September issue. "Proletarian Realism" or better still, as it includes and defines 'Proletarian', "Dialectic Realism"; the realism that sees beyond the things that are, to the forces that are destroying them. Defeatism, Mysticism, individual psychology, as an end in itself, art-for-arts-sake, these are bourgeois virtues and proletarian crimes. Crimes that the workers wont commit if they hold on to "Dialectic Realism" as a watchword.

The Theatres, and particularly the Workers' Theatres of the Soviet Union demand a whole article for themselves and must be left for the present, but developments are now proceeding, both in practice and theory, which should be of the greatest value to the Workers' Theatres of the outside world. For instance, one of the "Tram" (Theatre of Working Youth) groups of the Soviet Union is engaged in socialistic competition with "Rote Sprachrohr" troupe of Berlin, after an interchange of visits, and from what I hear "Sprachrohr" will give them a run for their money (as

we say in England), by their recent developments of the "Cabaret" technique.

Are there any groups in America who are developing along these lines? In any case, all working class Theatre groups based on the class struggle should get in touch with the International Workers' Theatre Union, at Dvoretz Truda, Solyanka, Moscow.

In England we find it very useful to parody the popular piffle purveyed in the "talkies" you send us over. The workers know the tunes (your song-pluggers see to that) and we get them to sing our words. I'm sending a few copies, to show what I mean. Some of the writers to *New Masses* should try their hand at writing material for the potential "Cabaret" troupes of America, as given good satirical material you'd soon find people getting together to perform it.

There is a wealth of ability in the working class for propaganda of this vital and interesting type, which has hitherto been untouched. *New Masses* can reveal and organize this ability into the service of the workers' movement by means of the Workers' Theatre and its new method of "Cabaret."

Yours fraternally,

London, England.

TOM THOMAS.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

IN THE COLLEGES

College Has Compensations

New Masses:

Your observations in the October *New Masses* on the American college coincide with observations of my own as a student in one of them. It is true, I believe, that there could scarcely be a more sleek, complacent, selfish group than the student group. There is superfluity of perfunctory teaching in cultural subjects that the bulk of college students neither want nor need; in fact they would probably turn out better business men and better components of the capitalist system in general if they received less Plato, Shelley, Rousseau, Ruskin, Marx, and other thought-provoking literature and philosophy.

I cannot agree, however, that a person who has "no hankering for the training of a dull stockbroker or a duller college professor . . . doesn't need the conventional college." There is abundant culture and knowledge, even wisdom, that can still be obtained from a college—despite the capitalist grip on it—that a labor college does not offer, and that could not be found in roaming the country in a box car, valuable as these latter experiences undoubtedly are.

Despite their too prevalent pedantry, limited vision, and nauseating social philosophy, many professors have an equipment of knowledge, a certain degree of impartial authority in a given field, and a rare ability to throw light on a subject from various angles which cannot be disregarded.

There is an incalculable amount of joy and inspiration resulting from college studies that is indispensable in working for a social cause in a country where so little sympathy exists for them as in America. If one has the material resources plus the self-control to spend four years in classes consisting ninety per cent of illiterates, and with usually utterly lifeless professors, I would say do it. The compensations are invaluable.

Yours sincerely,

RALPH PRESTON

Swarthmore, Pa.

College Not Boxcars

Dear Comrades:

As one of your modest college readers of the *New Masses* will you permit me to ask a few questions a la Ezra Pound?

What sort of experiences made Gold an authority on college education? As a man who "worked his way thru college" and thus spent his last nine years in three different universities I often wondered over this question reading his highly emotional statements.

Please suggest answers to a few questions: How many months on a boxcar will enable a man to plan a single turbine? How many years to lay down the plans of Dnieprostroy? How many months in a Ford

factory will teach you to invent a cure for tuberculosis? What strike experiences will inspire you to devise the theory of relativity, the planetary system within the atom, or the quantum mechanics?

Don't you think that college is a place not only "for the training of dull stockbrokers and duller college professors" but also for Einsteins, Darwins, Newtons and Pasteurs; and also for less famous but not less useful scientists, engineers, physicians, etc.?

Yours for less emotion and more judgment, comrade Mike. With comradely greetings.

STAN BROOKS

Washington, D. C.

More Academic Freedom

Editor New Masses:

Dr. Bernhard J. Stern has just been dropped from the faculty of the University of Washington, and the words "academic freedom" have just been redefined, so that there will be no misunderstandings in the future.

Academic freedom in this man's university seems to mean freedom to teach capitalist economy, Christian tradition, race prejudice, and loyalty to the boss. It does not mean freedom to discuss either religion or Big Business without the proper genuflection.

The university has given economy as its reason for dismissing Dr. Stern, but it is interesting to note where this economy axe falls. It inevitably falls on any one who goes poking around for facts, who commits the unspeakable indecency of leading young people to examine critically the stereotypes taught by church, school, and state. It almost never falls on the incompetents of Business Administration, on the English instructors who are found in the same pew every Sunday, or any instructor—no matter how dimly endowed—who teaches what the powerful interest groups want taught in their university.

Yours very truly,

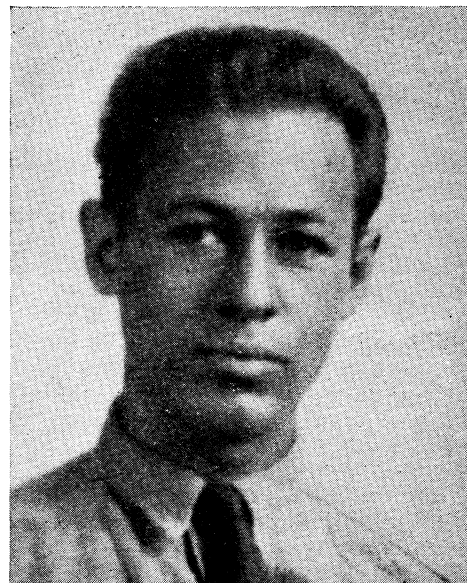
J. R. McCULLOCH

Seattle, Wash.

J. Q. Neets—*New Masses* critic, together with Ed Falkowski, miner-writer, both now in Moscow, will form the "New Masses Moscow Reception Committee" to welcome Michael Gold, William Gropper, Harry Alan Potamkin and A. B. Magil, all *New Masses* contributors, on their way to the Charkov international conference of revolutionary writers and artists in Soviet Russia.

Hugo Gellert—is now engaged on a series of lithographs, the first of which will appear in a forthcoming issue of *New Masses*.

Walter Steinhilber—is a commercial artist living in New York and a contributor, years ago, to the *Masses*.



Martin Russak—was born in 1906. Family for two generations back have been textile workers in Paterson, N. J. and active in the labor movement there. Himself went to work in the mills at the age of 13. During the past two years he has been an organizer for the National Textile Workers Union in Paterson, Pennsylvania and New Bedford. Is a member of the National Executive Board of the Union. His story in this issue is part of a book of a silk weaver's life, on which he works in any odd moments which his job and his activities in the union may permit. His first work in print appeared in the *New Masses* about two years ago. Contributing editor to *New Masses*. At present working as a weaver in Paterson.

In This Issue

Morris Pass—artist who designed the cover of this issue, is a member of the John Reed Club, now living in New York.

Louis Lozowick—contributor to the magazines, painter and critic, will exhibit his work in the various galleries this winter.

Lawrence Gellert—journalist, making his first *New Masses* appearance, is now in the South again, gathering additional material for his collection of Negro songs.

I. Klein—contributing editor to *New Masses*, is a New York artist, painter, contributor to many publications.

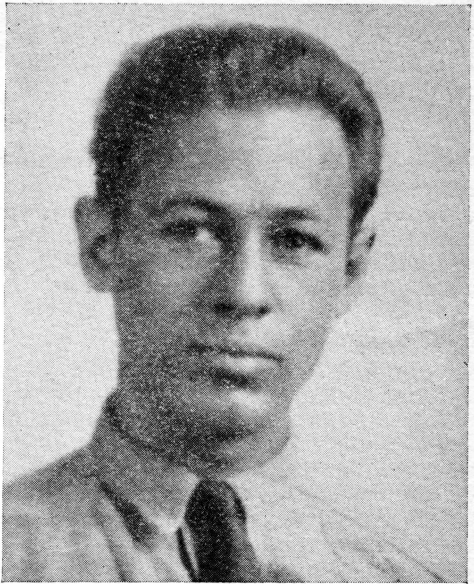
Joseph Kalar—Minnesota lumber-worker, is among the unemployed now since "his" mill shut down.

Phil Bard—young New York artist, has just completed a story in cartoons for publication.

Helen Black—contributing editor to *New Masses*, has just completed the music for a book of cowboy songs, edited by Margaret Larkin and being arranged for early publication.

Douglas Brown—whose work first appeared in print in a recent issue of *New Masses*, spent a couple of years painting and drawing around New Orleans. He is now exhibiting his work in New York City, at the Contemporary Arts Galleries, 12 E. 10 St. until November 15th.

NEW MASSES



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THE FILM AND REVOLUTION

A Discussion

Individuals—Not Soviets

New Masses:

Commenting on my reply to the John Reed Club in a recent issue of the *New Masses*, Mr. Potamkin speaks of my "treachery" to the "cult of the Soviet film."

My admiration for the Soviet film has nothing to do with my feeling towards the Soviet. I have been a movie reviewer too long to have any admiration for the mass mind—and here by the way—I should like to take up another of Mr. Potamkin's points. He speaks of the "superiority of collectivist control over capitalist control" in the matter of making films. Now can anyone in his right mind claim that the American movie is anything but a product of the democratic or popular control of this "art"? The American movie is the most ghastly and flagrant example of the democratic principal at work. For example, *Common Clay* (about as bad as they come) delighted some five hundred thousand members of our American working classes in one month at the Roxy. I am not saying that this is not all right. I believe in people enjoying themselves even if their amusement bores me. *Common Clay* represents the *real* American mass taste, not the "capitalist" taste. In a few years the Russian audiences will undoubtedly become weary of film lectures extolling the virtues of the Soviet scheme (which, by the way are now becoming as pat and smug as any American flag-waver or patriotic orator)—and will, Mr. Potamkin, demand the "fake experiences" which the rest of the world calls "fiction."

As to my admiration (and that of many other writers) for the Russian films, it has very little to do with the Red doctrines. To me it seems that Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Dovzhenko have an extraordinarily clear understanding of what can be done with a camera—an understanding which at times amounts to genius. They are amazing dramatists, working in a comparatively new medium. These men are individuals—artists—and while they are using the amazingly vital material immediately before them, they will soon weary of this monotonous theme and look for others. Anyone can see that Dovzhenko, for instance, is more interested in drama and beauty than in the political situation. These men are personalities—so powerful that even the Soviet has not been able to smother them and make them lose themselves in the "mass."

Yours,

CREIGHTON PEET.

October 9, New York, N. Y.

What Will Mr. Peet Do About It?

Creighton Peet confesses to the charges in my letter. The devotion to the ceremony without regard for its motivation is cult. Mr. Peet's treachery was not to the cult, but to the Soviet film, whose art he accepts—though with a sense of guilt. The treachery is an expression of the cult. The cult is an expression, in Mr. Peet's instance, of equivocation. He despises democracy and the films reflecting it, but will not accept Sovietism, though he admires the film reflecting it. To validate his rejection of Sovietism, he confounds "collectivist control" with "democratic control." And defines "democratic" as "popular."

If Mr. Peet has followed my work, he will know my insistence upon the fact that "the film reflects the social mind that has created it." Does Mr. Peet subscribe to this deterministic view? But, the social mind is coincidental with capitalism, and capitalism accords with democracy. Capitalist society creates the social mind, the social mind creates the film. Capitalist society also perpetuates itself by deliberate persuasions, using the film frequently as purposeful propaganda, underhandedly and sometimes—as in the imperialist wars—boldly. The symptomatic propaganda and the deliberate unite to sustain the social mind born of capitalism.

It is Mr. Peet's aristocratic pleasure to find social corruption inherent in the mass mind, rather than in the social economy of which the mass mind is a result. Therefore he prophesies the degradation of the Soviet film by that mass mind. He even presumes to see that that film is becoming "as pat and smug as any American flag-waver or patriotic orator." The facts do not support Mr. Peet, nor does his own admiration for the Russian films. Is *Turksib*, as compared to *The End of St. Petersburg*, "pat and smug?" Is the enthusiasm of *Old and New* and *Fragment of an Empire* smug? If Mr. Peet has really observed the progress of the

Soviet kino—instead of merely enjoying picture by picture, the ceremony of reviewing—he must have noticed a process toward reflection, penetration and inference. It is perhaps this improvement in idea and structure that Mr. Peet shies from. Does he prefer the more patently persuasive film of the *Potemkin* period? Is he after all one who likes out-and-out propaganda of the physical category? Let me tell Mr. Peet that Pudovkin, whom he likes so much, exists by virtue of the revolution and the revolutionary idea, and wherever he is truly successful, his method satisfies the material of his revolutionary idea. Pudovkin falls short of full attainment because of the inadequacy of his method in converting this idea into a form. Eisenstein achieves stature because his every film is a distinctive solution of a problem: the conversion of the revolutionary, collectivist idea into a persuasive motion picture. Dovzhenko is a lyricist who needs more discipline in propaganda—persuasive filming—to make him a great compelling artist rather than a poignant elegaic one. Yet, the method he has evolved in *Arsenal* and *Soil* is a product of the evolution of the Soviet film from the muscular to the reflective, induced by the need to express a more inferential idea: collectivist control. Does Mr. Peet, as a critic, know Eisenstein's theoretical description of this evolution, which anticipates the development of the intrinsic cinema the world over, from the "metric" to the "overtonal?"

It will be seen that I am, after all, not so much the enthusiast for the Soviet film as is Mr. Peet. Not being able to separate for worship the "aesthetic" from its social source, I must be critical of that "aesthetic" in relation to its source. There is no "art" without social impulsion—Mr. Peet would admit that, though he blames the mass-mind. And because the mass is so horrible, its "art" must be put into the italics of contempt. Yet Mr. Peet is not above urging this "art" upon those who read his reviews. A pitiful dilemma, indeed. A typical one in the "capitalism" which Mr. Peet, as one above control, italicizes as non-existent. Mr. Peet and his president, the Washington fat-boy, agree. "There ain't no capitalism," says Mr. Peet—"there's only the wicked people. But I'll be good to 'em, let 'em like the rot if they want to, and I'll encourage 'em."

Let me make a deduction from Mr. Peet's statement on the Russian directors. He admits "they are using the amazingly vital material before them," but this "amazingly vital material" is a "monotonous theme." Is vitality monotonous? These men, Mr. Peet thinks, are great entirely because they are above the "smothering process" of the Soviet. These men, I answer Mr. Peet, have had their individual greatness fostered by "the amazingly vital material before them," and that material is the creative energies released in the masses by the revolution. What were Russian directors doing before the Revolution? The films to follow from the U.S.S.R. will be increasingly less muscular in their impact, because the problem of collectivism is much subtler than that of the moment of physical struggle. And Mr. Peet will find these films "pat and smug" though they will be profounder, more penetrating, more demanding of thought, more sensitive in their rhythm and beauty. He too—being a tired middle-class intellectual of a kind—wants to be struck on the head and kicked in the belly—wants to be excited. He is one of a multitude: hating democracy, but denying its true cause to avoid the discipline of the only way out that concerns the future. Can we wonder at the invalidity of movie criticism here, which lacks a point of view and calls a sustained viewpoint in a particular national cinema "formula," as a colleague of Mr. Peet's has done. Consider the diversity of treatment in films like *New Babylon*, *Turksib*, *Old and New*, *China Express*, *Soil*, among recent pictures, and then say an intense social standpoint contradicts variety!

What is Mr. Peet going to do about his predicament? Will it peter out in petulance? I was with him at a showing of a splendid film from the U.S.S.R. Its excellence called forth from him this amusing defense: Russia can commandeer a huge population for mass-scenes, whereas America cannot afford to pay so many extras. Delightful in full view of the \$4,000,000 *Hell's Angels!*

Will Peet succumb to the masochistic pleasure of cultivating a mellow despair? That is the way of emigres from life. It's a pity a man as young as Creighton Peet should be one of them.

New York, N. Y.

HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN.



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