

NEW MASSES

DECEMBER, 1928

15 CENTS



Hands to Build

photograph by Tina Modotti

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CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Harbor Allen, Sherwood Anderson, Egmont Arens, Cornelia Barns, Carlton Beals, Ivan Beede, Van Wyck Brooks, Howard Brubaker, Stuart Chase, Glenn Coleman, Miguel Covarrubias, Stuart Davis, Adolph Dehn, Floyd Dell, Robert Dunn, John Dos Passos, Waldo Frank, Joseph Freeman, Wanda Gag, Hugo Gellert, Arturo Giovannitti, William Gropper, Paxton Hibben, Freda Kirchwey, Louis Lozowick, I. Klein, John Howard Lawson, Claude McKay, Lewis Mumford, Scott Nearing, Eugene O'Neill, Samuel Ornitz, Lola Ridge, Boardman Robinson, James Rorty, William Siegel, Upton Sinclair, Otto Soglow, Rex Stout, Genevieve Taggard, Louis Untermeyer, Mary Heaton Vorse, Eric Walrond, Edmund Wilson, Jr., Robert Wolf, Charles W. Wood, Art Young.

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A SILK WEAVER'S SON

(further memoirs of Paterson, N. J.)

By MARTIN RUSSAK

Winters were a long torment of wet shoes, frozen extremities, and eternal coughing. The house stood exposed and thin-walled, inhaling currents of frigidty, and assailed by an incessant wind. We slept all in one bed and had hot irons for our feet. Only the school and the mill gave security against the cold. At home the bedroom door was closed until bedtime and life was restricted to the kitchen and the neighborhood of the stove.

All life was severely restricted in winter. Life, revolving relentlessly about the centripetal mills, moved from the first to the last frost in a radius shortened to the length of a weaver's shuttle or the spoke of a winder's spindle. Harsh, imperative, overwhelming grew the power of the mills. A man or woman who came late by four or five minutes found an unyielding door shut against him and a new worker in his place when he returned at noon. The whip cracked; the lash bit; and under the redoubled cracking of the whip men were terrified out of manhood.

Outside the wind blew incessantly, sharply and bitterly edged with ice. The frost came; the great frost; the old maple groaned aloud; traffic ceased in the street; below the city lay bleak and frozen. The snow came, descending upon the city, upon everything; and rising out of that white beauty in the first sunshine of early morning, the high chimneys seemed to have attained a frank and absolute purity of blackness.

A scuttle of coal was winter's symbol of life. My mother made the fire when she came home from the mills. She had to get down on her knees to light it from underneath, and the act was like a gesture of prayer.

My father sometimes took me on expeditions for coal. We got out the sled, coasted down the hill, and dragged back a sackful of the precious stuff. On fine evenings, with a firmly packed snow underfoot and a moon above that made the world a glittering expanse of green silver, we would boisterously resume our coasting. There under the moon one became conscious of young German and Italian workers, neighbors whose existence was a discovery.

A friend or comrade would come to use our bathtub. Ours was the only bathtub among our people in the hill section. A vigorous discussion would invariably commence between my father and his visitor—a stream of language unbroken while the visitor backed, gesturing, into the bathroom, and adding a few last indispensable gestures through a suddenly re-opened door, until the host stood shouting through the glass panels and the other answered in a muffled voice amid splashing water.

In deep darkness, before dawn, the morning whistles blew for work. In darkness, after day, the evening whistles blew for release. In winter time I never saw my parents in the light of day.

REVOLT

Came the time of struggle and revolt, when the workers matched their strength against the strength of the mills, with the winning of a share of their lives in the balance. A strike mood fluttered like a crimson banner in the air. Old men told thrilling tales of struggle, tales garnered from the rich book of every-worker's memory. Young men raised furious heads from their toil. The whip no longer intimidated them. It impassioned them with revolt.

It was late summer of 1912. The mills were going full blast. All day great clouds of smoke blew out of the chimneys and smudged the sky above the town. At night the smoke was visible only under a clear moon. But in the evening, after work, little knots of men stood about on street corners. I could see them under the hill, I passed them across the river by the crowded saloons, where my grandfather took me and stuffed me with pretzels while he drank with big, loud-voiced strangers. When we walked home I clung a little frightened to his large warm palm. His breath was so strong that I was almost intoxicated by it, and he did not answer many important questions I asked him. One night he stopped on the bridge and, shaking his fist over the rail, hurled marvelous imprecations at the silent mills, vast shadowy cliffs walling in the tumult of swift water.

"We'll show you yet, you monsters, you blood-suckers!" he shouted.

My father was calmer, more calculating. As the time of struggle drew near he became less an individual. He gauged forces and measured the perspectives of victory.

"There couldn't be a better time for a strike," he said to my mother across the supper table; "the bosses have big orders and can't stand a shut-down of the mills."

"We must strike," she answered; "we're starving in the mills and we may as well starve at home."

Meetings took place almost nightly in the house on the hill. The strike was well organized and fell suddenly. The workers emptied all the mills, emptied the air of smoke, emptied the factory neighborhoods of factory din. But the streets resounded with the tramping of police. The whip had become a club.

After a brief struggle the masters gave in. They could not afford the idleness of workers who had nothing to lose by idleness. The masters lured my father and his fellow-workers back into the mills, yielding all demands, and after filling their needs of production they closed the mills against these upstart toilers who had dared grasp at a ray of sunshine. It was the great lockout. It was the winter of horror. The mills opened again only for those who would go back under the dictation of the mills. How

great are hunger and despair! How mighty are the mills that wield such weapons! Men were broken, more terribly than ever before, upon the iron wheels of industry. 1913 was at hand.

1913

1913 is a beautiful name. 1913 is a symbol of pride and love. 1913 is a torch of direction and encouragement. In the late afternoons of work, when the day fails and we turn on the fore and aft lights of our looms, and the weariness of the grinding hours seems impossible to bear, the thought of 1913 often comes to cheer us and to give us determination.

The old weavers who fought the Great Strike of 1913 are our legendary heroes. Big Bill Haywood is our one great epic figure. The irascible, the inaccessible Italian workers are everywhere respected for their leading role in 1913. It is precisely so. The proletariat in the City of Silk was molded into a conscious class in the furnace of 1913. The tradition of 1913 binds all groups of Paterson workers together. In the hush of noon-hour, when the looms are at rest and weavers come out into the aisles, we young fellows had rather listen to an old-timer's memories of 1913 than talk across a winding-frame to the prettiest girl in the shop.

I remember first of all the wonderful presence and friendship of my father that gave a holiday air to every day. He took me to picket lines and to strike meetings. We escaped unhurt from the great meeting in Prince Street, where an assemblage of thousands was assaulted by mounted police. Never were there such picket lines. People rushed to the patrol wagons, eager to get in first, fearful of being left out. Who could keep track of all the arrests? At first it was glorious if your father was arrested; you were lionized by all the boys. Then the thing became too common, hardly a boy whose father had not been wounded or thrown into jail.

When all the halls were closed and we were not allowed to meet anywhere in town, our meetings took place in Haledon Woods. It was a huge picnic. Great crowds fraternized on the hillside and gathered around the farmhouse where, from a second-story porch, our leaders spoke—Elizabeth Flynn, Carlo Tresca, Gene Debs, and the others.

We boys climbed into the trees for vantage points. Our cheers we reserved for Bill Haywood. Not a man in the crowd was bigger than he. He filled the little porch; behind his white shirt with the rolled-up sleeves the green dress of Elizabeth Flynn disappeared; shaking a terrible fist against the sky, he spoke; and his speech was a clarion call. The crowd roared in answer; a thousand fists were raised against the sky; and a great wave of revolt surged from that hillside down upon the smokeless chimneys in the valley.

A fever of ardor and exaltation swept through the town. They had closed the mills, they had come out of their separate slums, they breathed the blue air of morning and the golden air of afternoon, they tasted freedom, and the taste was sweet though there was no bread to eat it with. Dim-eyed, slow-witted thousands; they had been kept apart, hating each other; now they were one, Italians and Syrians, Jews and Pollocks, Germans and Yankees. The proletariat that had not been aware of its own existence, discovered itself. You found yourself the brother of thousands, children of one parentage: sweat and blood.

Ah, the mighty masters of life! Theirs is the kingdom and the power. Hunger and want, the long and hard clubs of the police, were foes too strong for those angry masses of resourceless workers. Hunger and want crushing the revolt of workers! It was merely for the alleviation of hunger and want meekly endured, for the alleviation of intolerable toil, that the struggle was waged. An insuperable wall confronted those brave men and women; against that wall they beat their heads in desperation; their heads were broken; the wall remained.

The summer wore away amid scenes of downfall and desolation. The bread lines grew long and grim. With a thousand other children I was sent to New York to be cared for wherever possible. The Great Strike drew on to its fatal conclusion. We came back to silent parents and to tragic homes. 1913 was at an end.

But 1913 was an arrow of fear driven into the hearts of the masters. The whip trembled. Within the next few years the ten-hour day became an eight-hour day. But I have lived through the time when the eight-hour day became a twelve-hour day.

THE RIVER

The City Hall is a granite building with a beautiful tall tower. In front of the City Hall stands a statue of Alexander Hamilton, historic founder of the city of Paterson.

It was the Falls at this point of the River that lured Hamilton, toward the close of the eighteenth century, to come here in his

silken hose and upholstered carriage and to endow factories on the site of old Godwin's pioneer fording-post. The Passaic River; the Passaic Falls.

The River comes to us out of the mountains of the west, flowing with a gentle motion around beautiful wooded hills and through beautiful fields of corn and rye, hay and oats. Men, women, and children work in those fields, plowing, cultivating, tending crops of delicate vegetables. Cows come down to drink and stand knee-deep in the water. Then the River grows wider; for miles its banks are over-arched by green loveliness of willow, hickory, oak. A region of sunshine and still water, with bungalows on the riverside under the trees, with people canoeing, with laughter echoing in the mild air.

Soon a ribbon of asphalt appears and follows the stream. It is the road; ponderous trucks and swift autos roll on it all day long. Now the River is brown, wide, and deep; it has lost its air of laziness; it has many bridges behind it; it flows with easy but impressive power. Here scattered factories, rectangular masses of sooty brick and an upward chimney, begin to appear.

The River enters the town with a prodigious leap over a precipice of trap-rock. There is a glorious splash, a flinging of spray that falls back to earth like a heavy rain, and enough foam is churned out to last for two miles of tumultuous swiftness.

From the bottom of the Falls to the point where the town is left behind, the River flows through factories. On either bank, rising directly from the stream, is a wall of sooty brick, each section of wall with its sootier upward chimney. Before the River leaves the town it must pass under nine bridges.

The dye shops are all along the River. They empty their refuse, streams of yellow, black, green, red liquid, into the River. Before the River has left the town it is a sewer of powerful odor and varied hue.

The River is black by day and blacker at night. In the daytime its blackness is smitten by golden quiverings of sunlight, in the nighttime by yellow quiverings of street-lamps.

No one notices the River. Trucks and autos rattle over the nine bridges all day long. Crowds of people file over the nine bridges going to work and coming home. No one stops for a moment except to spit into the stream.

But the workers who work in the old factories along the banks love the River. For them the River is a vision of marvelous beauty. At noon-time they eat their sandwiches on the windowsills and gaze down at the River with wonder and love. They never tire of watching this strange flow of water that comes from afar and ceaselessly hurries by them, flecked with foam, and bound for the open sea. They study all its fluctuations, all its changes of color, its floods and hurtling fragments of ice in spring, and grow sad to see it wither away in the heats of summer. In winter they peer through grimy window panes to glimpse the fall of white snow into black water. They love this stream that rushes so hopefully into the invisible distance, they feel a kinship with its abandon, its foaming recklessness, its passage onward, ever onward, by day and by night, time without end.

The River enters the town flowing directly north. Halfway through, it makes a complete turn and quits the town flowing directly south. The town stands on this great bend, embraced by the encircling arm of the River.

LAW AND ORDER

*Policemen are potential crooks
and clumsy things
with the backing of capitalism
behind them, no guts
no stamina and nothing of their own
to stand on.
they cannot reason their cussedness
and layt on man, tram, hobo
the bitterness in their hearts.*

INTERVAL: GEORGIA

*the negro has left is leaving
but he will come back.
sit on your haunches of prejudice
and deride the progress of the world
and the advancing negro.
people so stalemate are the fungus decadent
and gone.*

NORMAN MACLEOD

UNDEFEATED

*His tattered crimson flag sank and went under,
Obscured by all the black-shirt hosts of Night
Who with blood-darkened blades had cleft the shaft asunder
And closed at once the battle and the light.*

*They armed to awe the vanquished, hidden, waiting,
The Mameluke Moon with two twin scimitars;
And set behind the vaulted dungeon grating
The cold, pale-eyed espionage of stars.*

*Yet though the Darkness hold a hemisphere,
The foes seem smudged forever from the field,
Still One remains—although not here, not here—
Who loves and dares all things—except to yield.*

*Where grass-thatched huts are framed of split bamboo
He raps and whispers at a canny door;
At cabins crouching in the snow, there too
He strengthens words but dimly heard before.*

*Workers and peasants at their shops and farms
Are taught strange tactics by a secret guest,
To meet the common foe with force of arms,
Yes, arms—locked grimly on a naked breast.*

*Till Dawn shall lift again the ragged banner,
As red and rent as in the time before;
At eve to flare again in its old manner,
Though furled, to be forgotten never more.*

*Then shall the stars be innocent as wheat,
The workers soon forget the toil of noon,
And, as the symbol of a world complete,
The Hammer hang beside the Sickle-moon.*

KENNETH W. PORTER.

AN ESTHETE

*He told his friends of angles cut in space,
Of destined pattern set to make an age,
Till things seemed winnowed, milled, and set to place
All numbered like the whiskers of a sage:
"The church was not quite what it might have been
Yet represented vast untempered urge
Of mankind rising at a symbol seen—
Then lost in wrack of atavistic surge."
"REVOLUTION!!!"*

*(He donned his highest hat)
By Whitehead, Spengler, Apples of Cezanne!
True Art," he cried, "demands too much for that!
Beauty will save . . . The Marseillaise of Pan!"
He left them happy, bird-limed in a myth,
And carefully went out and voted—Smith!*

PORTER MYRON CHAFFEE.

THE EVENING HOUR

*Dusk gathers its heavy folds
Over the city Darkness.
Street lights twitch nervously
In obscure places The lull
Of evening moves listlessly.*

*Suddenly, as if by stealth,
The metallic shrieks of factory whistles
Leaden the air Doors boom!
And a thousand toilers
Are vomited into the street.
Men, women and children
Are going home from work.
Their weary bodies lurch forward,
Beating heavy rhythms as they pass
Into the obscurity of night*

JIM WATERS.



drawn by William Gropper

Portrait of a Liberal

Trying to steer a dignified middle course in American politics, at the same time preserving the balance of his Olympian soul. He is the funniest clown in American life. He voted for Al Smith, but when any fundamental social change is suggested, he whimpers, "But oh dear, the facts are not all in yet."



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LOVE ON A GARBAGE DUMP

(32nd attempt at a short story)

By MICHAEL GOLD

Certain enemies have spread the slander that I once attended Harvard college. This is a lie. I worked on the garbage dump in Boston, city of Harvard. But that's all.

* * * * *

The Boston dump is a few miles out of town, on an estuary of the harbor. Imagine a plain 200 acres square, containing no trees or houses, but blasted and nightmarish like a drawing by Dore, a land of slime and mud, a purgatory.

Hills of rotten fish dot this plain; there are also mountains of rusty tomato cans. The valleys are strewn with weird gardens of manycolored rags, of bottles, cracked mirrors, newspapers, and pillboxes.

* * * * *

Garbage gives off smoke as it decays, also melancholy smells like a zoo. The pervading smoke and odor of the dump made me feel at first as if all America had ended, and was rotting into death. Buzzards lounged in the sky, or hopped about, pecking clumsily at the nation's corpse.

I was young and violent then, and must confess this image of America's extinction filled me with Utopian dreams.

* * * * *

Working on the dump were 30 men, women and pale children. Unfortunate peasants of Italy and Portugal, they sat in sleet and wind on each side of a conveyor.

This moving belt was an endless cornucopia of refuse. As it creaked past them the peasants snatched like magpies at odds and ends of salvage. Bits of machinery, and wearing apparel, rubber goods, etc., were rescued from the general corruption.

Later the Salvation Army and other profiteering ghouls received this salvaged ordure, and re-sold it to the poorest poor.

* * * * *

I will not be picturesque, and describe the fantastic objects that turned up during a day on this conveyor.

Nor will I tell how the peasants whimsically decorated themselves with neckties, alarm clocks, ribbons, and enema bags, mantillas and other strange objects, so that by the evening some of them resembled futurist Christmas trees.

It was their mode of humor. As I have said, I was too young and violent then to appreciate such humor.

Seeing them at their masquerade, I was sometimes sickened, as if corpses on a battlefield were to rise and dance to patriotic jazz.

* * * * *

I worked in the paper baling press.

Two Italians stood on a Niagara of old newspapers, and shovelled down newspapers to another worker and myself.

We distributed the tons of newspapers inside a great box eight feet tall. When the box was full, we packed it tight by means of an immense wooden lever from which we hung by our arms. Then we roped up the bales, and wagons hauled them to the boiling vats.

Shovelling newspapers all day, jumping on them, kicking them, was not an unpleasant job for one who hated capitalism.

When my muscles ached I would sometimes rest, and pore over muddy scraps of newspaper.

As I meditated on the advice to the lovelorn section, or the bon mots of famous columnists, or as I studied the Broadway theatre gossip, and the latest news of disarmament, my anger would rise and choke me.

Then I would be glad my job enabled me to trample on these newspapers, to spit upon them, and to shovel them contemptuously into great bales meant for the boiling vat.

* * * * *

My working partner was a dark, gloomy man of about 50, with queer black eyes, a saffron face, and a hawk nose. I thought he was an Italian immigrant, and could speak no English. For the first three months we exchanged no word of conversation, but grunted side by side like truck horses in harness.

One day as I cursed at the newspapers, he muttered in slow but accurate English:

"I would like to kill all them."

"Who?" I asked.

"The editors of garbage," he said, and bent again to his shovel.

* * * * *

So we became friends. After that my days were filled with discussions with this man on the horrors of American civilization.

He was not an Italian, but a Crow Indian, and his white man's name was James Cherry. It is unusual to find an Indian in the eastern cities, but there are a few.

Cherry's story was an odd one. He had been born on a reservation in Montana, and had attended the Carlisle Indian College maintained by the government.

This James Cherry had been gifted with a mind. But the U. S. government has never admitted that Indians have minds. At Carlisle the young students are taught only manual trades. This was Cherry's chief grievance.

* * * * *

James Cherry had graduated as a carpenter, with a hatred of the white government that denied him a real education. After years of brooding his hate turned into a mania. He became firmly convinced that he was a great inventor, who was on the way to inventing a death-ray machine that would kill all the white tyrants.

Cherry had an enormous craving for wholesale murder, he longed for the day when his machine would be perfect enough to wipe out by secret and terrifying means, whole regiments of congressmen, bankers, college presidents, automobile manufacturers, and authors.

I tried to point out to him that this would be of no avail, that other capitalists would rise to take their places. I quoted Marx to this madman, to prove to him our remedy lay in changing the economic system that produced such men. Only by organizing the working class for a final assault on the system could anything be accomplished, I argued.

But he was a fanatic individualist, and our debates were long, furious and without avail.

As well quote Marx to Coolidge as to this Indian whose powerful mind had coiled in upon itself, like a snake in the throes of suicide.

* * * * *

I am always sorry for these mental freaks one meets among the workers. There are many of them. It is the result of the ferocious ideals that are taught them in public school. They are urged to aspire to the Presidency of the United States, they are enabled to read and write, and then, with this dangerous combination of Napoleonic ambition and kindergarten learning, they are shot into factories, mills and mines, to be hopeless wage slaves for life.

Well balanced intellectuals among the workers become revolutionists. The others become freaks and madmen.

Bill Shean, my sailor friend, who is a connoisseur of such types, once told me of an elderly dishwasher he knew. This man was obsessed with the idea that he was a great orchestral leader.

Every night he would lock himself into his hall bedroom in a cheap rooming house, and turn on a Victrola. Then, with a baton, for hours he would passionately conduct symphonies and operas. If anything displeased him, he would stop the phonograph, and in stern accents, order his orchestra to go back to a certain passage. They did so, of course. These rehearsals went on for fifteen years.

Bill Shean also told me of a shipmate, a giant stoker who went on a long drunk in Yokohama, and staggered back in two days with a large butterfly tattooed on his forehead. He had had it done while drunk. He was a serious person and so humiliated by this folly, now permanent like the brand of Cain, that he grew morbid and read books and eventually became a Theosophist.

* * * * *

I was 19 years old, and a fool, and in love with two women. One was Concha, a Portuguese girl who worked on the garbage dump,

and the other was a New England aristocrat who lived on Beacon Hill.

I had never seen the latter, nor did I even know her name. To reach the street car from the fat Armenian's rooming house where I lived, I had to pass along a certain street on Beacon Hill. At night, returning rankly odorous and sweaty from work, I passed the same street.

From the window of a beautiful old colonial home on this street, a girl played Mozart in the dusk. I would linger there and listen with a beautiful confused aching in my "soul."

Behind the yellow shades, I could see in candlelight the girl's silhouette as she sat at the piano.

That's all, but I was madly in love with her.

* * * * *

I believed then in two opposing kinds of love, the physical and the spiritual, and that one was base, and the other noble.

Concha, I knew definitely to my shame, I wanted physically. I had heard a Portuguese worker boast he had gone home with her often and stopped with her. This, in my loneliness, inflamed me, and I wanted her, too.

* * * * *

She spoke little English. She was 18, swarthy, tall and vital, as handsome as a wildcat. Life burned in her full breasts, and radiated from her rounded hips, legs, arms. She had too much life, and could not contain it all. She danced, joked, sang, her eyes sparkled, she was full of dangerous electricity. Concha had not yet been beaten by the gray years poverty brings the worker. She was the crazy young clown and melodious lark of our garbage dump.

She seemed to like me. All the men flirted with her, and Juan, the boastful young Portuguese, was considered her favored suitor. But at lunch time, she let me take her behind the tomato can mountain, and kiss her. This happened many days. It thrilled me with adolescent joy and pride.

One day I asked her to let me come to her home sometimes like

Juan. She smiled mysteriously, and patted her gorgeous blue-black hair.

"Maybe yes," she said. "Bimeby, you see it."

* * * * *

Juan grew jealous of me, and I was jealous of him. Once he caught me with Concha behind the tomato cans, and scowled at us and plucked his fierce black moustache.

"Sonofagun!" he said to me. "You take my girl, huh!"

"Ah, go to hell," I said, bravely drunk with "physical" love.

The whistle blew just then, and Juan walked sullenly back to work. Concha laughed as if she had enjoyed the joke.

"Juan, he crazy man!" she whispered. "No good man, you come anyway bimeby to my house, next week, maybe."

I cannot tell how marvellous this seemed to me, in my adolescent fever. Concha loved me, evidently. She preferred me to all the other men on the garbage dump. I could not sleep nights thinking about my beautiful Concha. I could scarcely wait.

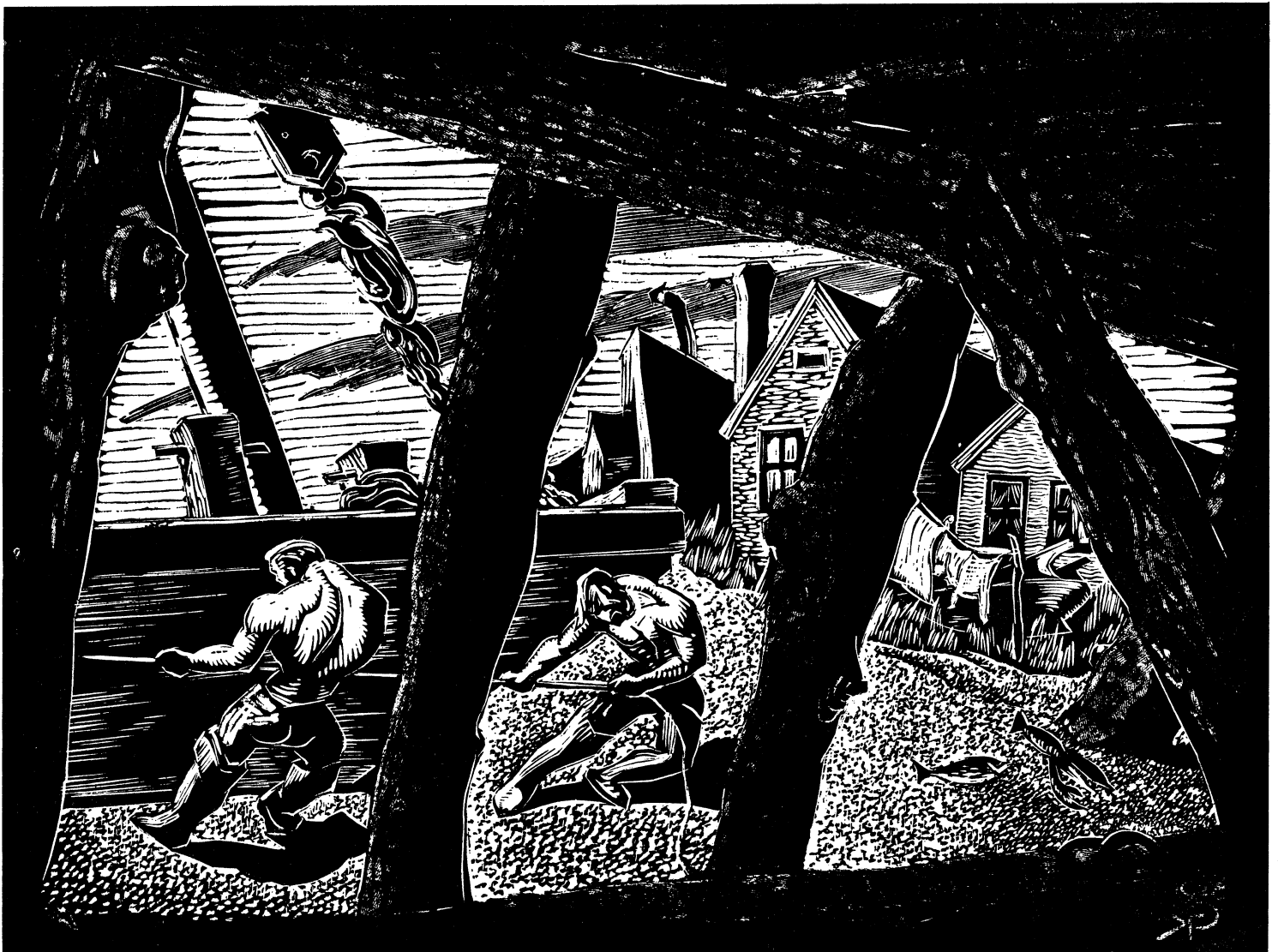
* * * * *

It was quitting time, and I was stripping off my overalls behind the paper press, when James Cherry glaring about him to make sure no one was listening, confided to me another of his strange, dismal secrets.

"I have just invented a new machine!" he said, his black eyes burning holes in my face. "Listen, this time it the radio-eye machine! The scientists have been hunting for it, but I have found it! I can turn it on, and penetrate into any house, see everything that is happening all over the world."

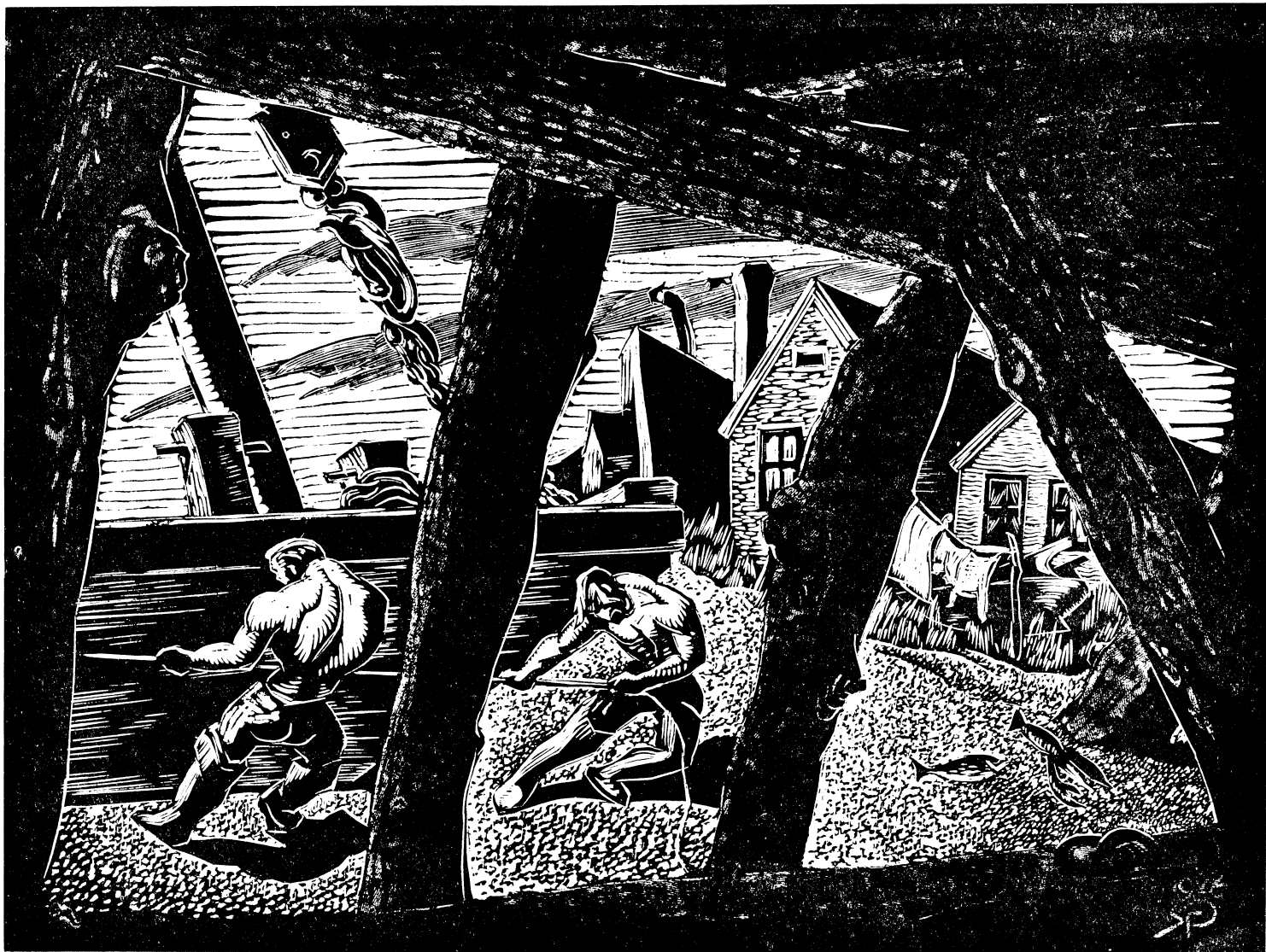
"Can you see Queen Mary taking her bath?" I asked casually, to show some interest.

"Certainly, but that is nothing, it is trivial," he whispered. "I can see the Wall Street bankers at their plots. I can see the government stealing the land from the Indians. I can see the white men who murder Negroes. I will bring them to trial! I will tell the truth to everyone!"



Fishermen at Dusk

Drawn by G. Kolska



Fishermen at Dusk

Drawn by G. Kolska

"That's fine, Cherry," I said, "keep it up!" I shook his hand and left him among the tons of soiled newspapers, sunk in his Olympian fantasies. In ancient times the madmen among the poor dreamed of revenging their wrongs through God; now they dream in machines.

I hurried home, and washed up. Then I ate at my beanery, and walked slowly toward the North End, sunk in fantasies as crazy as James Cherry's, perhaps, but more exquisite.

That noon, behind the tomato cans, Concha had smiled quietly, and said: "Tonight maybe you come by my house." She gave me the address scrawled in a pathetic childish hand on an envelope flap. Now I was on my way there.

It was spring, I was 19 years old, and on the road to my beloved. Every nerve quivered with a foolish delight. I can never forget this all.

She lived in one of those wooden tenement shacks in the North End, near the tavern where Paul Revere mounted for his famous revolutionary ride.

She greeted me at the door with a shy little smile. The rooms were low-ceilinged, stuffy and lit by a kerosene lamp. They were exactly as they must have been in 1850—no modern improvements. An old woman and two children stared dully at me.

"My mamma, my brodder, my seest," said Concha, pointing her hand at them. The old woman looked like a Rembrandt painting in the lamplight. She was wrinkled and sad, and kept staring at me vacantly. The children had Concha's Latin beauty, but were pale and undernourished, and dressed in rags.

And so we sat and stared at each other in gloomy silence. I was embarrassed, and wondered what would happen next.

"Luis! Trinidad!" the old woman spoke sharply to the children, coming out of her stupor at last. They rose and followed her meekly into the bedroom. They shut the door.

Concha smiled then, and came over and sat on my lap.

My heart beat fast, and as I breathed the warm life-smell of her vital body, I felt a shock of joy.

She had decorated herself for my coming. She had rouged her cheeks, and hung pendants from her ears. I was sure she had found them on the garbage dump. The purple silk waist she wore I was also sure came from the dump, and the faded linen tablecloth, and the chromo pictures on the wall.

"You like-a me, boy?" Concha whispered, her burning lips at my ear.

"Yes," I said.

"Me like-a you, too," she said.

We kissed. A long time passed. I could hear the old mother and the children climbing into a creaky bed in the bedroom.

"You gimme dollar, maybe?" Concha said.

"What?"

I was startled.

"Maybe you gimme dollar," Concha repeated painfully. She saw the shocked look on my face, and it hurt her. She began talking very rapidly, earnestly, painfully.

"Me poor. Me make \$8 a week. Me pappa he die. Me pappa he sick and die. Me mamma she sick. Me like-a you, no bad girl. Me send brodder, seesta, to the American school-a. Me too much poor. Sabe?"

There was an ache around my heart as I gave her the dollar.

I walked home slowly, heavy with a load of shame. Physical love had betrayed me again. I walked through Boston streets, glamorous with May, and darkness, and lights and sounds, and cursed myself, and cursed my evil doggy nature.

It had all ended in cheapness. She had done it just for the dollar, not for love, my proud wildcat beauty! My God, would I ever escape from the garbage dump of America!

Almost automatically, my feet led me to the street on aristocratic Beacon Hill. The other girl was still playing Mozart from the window. I leaned against a railing, and listened to the pure, bright flow with a breaking heart. What a contrast!

This was the world of spiritual beauty, of music, and art, and ethereal love, and I, the proletarian, could never enter it. My destiny was evident; I would die like a stinking old dog on a garbage dump.

I wanted to cry for yearning and self-pity. I was ready to give up the endless futile struggle for a living. I grew weak and cowardly, and wanted to die.

And then a policeman broke this evil spell. He loomed up out of the mysterious spring night, and poked me in the ribs with his club.

"Move on, bum," he said, "bums have got no business hanging around this part of town."

Of course I moved on, and proletarian anger boiled up in my deeps, beneficent anger, beautiful anger to save me from mushy self-pity, harsh, strong, clean anger like the gales at sea.

As I walked along the Esplanade by the Charles River, everything straightened itself out again in my head, and I came back to the strong proletarian realities.

"Mozart and candlelight and the spiritual values, to hell with you all!" I thought. "You are parasites, Concha is the one who pays for you! It's more honorable to work on a garbage dump than to be a soulful parasite on Beacon Hill.

"If Concha needed a dollar, she had a right to ask for it! It is that lazy, useless, parasite who plays Mozart who forced Concha so low!" Then unlike James Cherry, I dreamed angrily of a great movement to set the working-class free. I walked home in double-quick time, in my fantasy a young Communist marching to the barricades.

Bourgeois friends to whom I have related this story cannot believe it. What strikes them as incredible is the basic fact that I ever worked on a garbage dump. They can't understand how anyone would choose such a job. Well, I didn't choose it; it merely happened that I was broke, hungry, without Boston friends, and desperate for any old job. People get that way, my fat friends, even in your fat America.

MINERS' 'PROGRESS'

Every week the mine committees from the different collieries get together to report on the latest grievances taken up at their collieries. Each colliery has three committee men who protect the rights of the miner. If the miner feels that he has stomached more than plenty, he usually musters up sufficient courage to cough his complaint up to the grievance men who take up the man's woes with the boss, and give his protest an official character.

Seldom a week passes that everything slides dreamily and blithely by at the collieries. The bosses, on efficiency-bent, will knock off a man here, and dock a man there, giving the place the air of a continual hell-up.

The damaged miners seek out the huffy grievance men who are usually gruff and equipped with a politician's vocabulary of smut. These militants go before the foreman and demand apology and redress. The foreman whose position calls for some dignity instantly swells into a miniature tug of war, and the argument rages on for hours. If mere hollering won't do it, the case is finally dispatched to the conciliation board where it is neatly "fixed" and decisions come out with the certainty of a chewing gum machine that has just digested a penny. Only it doesn't click with the same regularity, and a case may drag on for months or even years before the umpire finally sees the light, and renders a decision. . .

But on the whole the miner is an uncomplaining cuss. As long as the company doesn't actually sink a pick into his buttock, or plant dynamite under his bed, he is willing to forgive. Every coal company of course is losing money. That fact is "classic," and only the younger generation doubts its truth. But coal companies apparently run collieries because the public would freeze without coal. This humanitarianism has kept the coal companies on the ragged edge for years, and to this day few stockholders are more acrobatic by way of protest than those whose grandfathers invested their first pennies in coal. "We're losing millions every year," is their slogan.

This slogan has stumped the miner who welcomes charity in the way of an occasional day's work flung to him by the big-hearted coal-concerns. Most of the miners are compelled to ask for charity that is more like the old-fashioned handout. In Treverton, where the miners have not worked a day for almost a year—their colliery doesn't "pay the company"—families are being supported by the local poor-board.

In Shenandoah a certain colliery hasn't moved a wheel for months. The miners are as rusty as its whistles from idleness. But every time the grievance committees meet, and the name of the colliery is called out for a report, the lean and dejected delegate lifts up his head and looks blankly in the direction of the chairman, and blurts out the one word, "Progress!" A thin smile steals over a few faces, but most of the men take things very seriously and there's nothing funny about this!

ED FALKOWSKI.

JAPANESE LITERATURE

By **BORIS PILNIAK** and **R. KIM**

(Translated from the French by William Edge)

About five years ago a great Japanese periodical requested the principal writers of Japan to name the authors who had exerted the greatest influence on them. Ninety per cent of those who replied to this inquiry named Dostoevsky, Rousseau, Turgeniev, Maupassant, Zola, Chekov, Rolland, Ibsen, Strindberg, Heine, Shaw, Goethe, Flaubert. The Japanese and Chinese classics were second in importance. All over the world the low horizon of nationality is lifting. After this investigation it could be affirmed that Japanese literature has developed in accordance with the spirit of European letters—that Japan is, in some respects, a European colony. When the results of this inquiry were announced, five years ago, Japanese critics called attention to the fact that their literature had attained the level of world-literature.

During the last year, however, authors and critics have demanded, with increasing vehemence, that Japan shake off the yoke of European literary culture and that it turn back to its old classics.

The characteristic trait of Japanese culture during the last few years has been the rapidity of its development. Seventy years ago the samurai had as weapon only his sword; now we find superdreadnaughts. The Japanese were forbidden to leave their country; now they are to be found in every quarter of the globe. Japan is the only nation "of color" which has freed itself from the domination of the white man. Seventy years ago books were illuminated by hand; and now—papers with bulky literary supplements such as *Asaki*, *Simboun*, and *Osaka Mainiti* go into editions of two million and two million and a half copies.

The usual medium of Japanese literature has been the monthly review. There are as many as seventy-four large literary and sociological journals. In an ordinary number the literary section has 60 to 70 pages in hieroglyphics; the sociological and economic section nearly 200 pages. In special numbers 200 pages are devoted to literature, 300 to political and economic articles.

There is a tanka contest in Japan every year. This contest is presided over by the Emperor who reads his own compositions. General Nogi, who took Port Arthur from the Russians in 1905 wrote a tanka before committing hara-kiri with his wife. Professor Noborou Katakami, dying, undermined by a contagious illness, composed tankas. Everybody composes tankas in Japan. Their origin goes back thousands of years.

The review, *Kibouti Kan*, has a circulation of 100,000. Before the publication of the issues that appear at the new year, in April, and in October, the papers advertise extensively the new works which are to appear in *Kibouti Kan*. The most flourishing section is the gossip, or "scandal" section, in which appears information about the life of the authors—information which delves even into the authors' love affairs during the preceding year. The Japanese reader is very much interested in the intimate life of his authors; and of all the matter published in literary reviews he likes best the "scandal" section. The writers fan the flames of this personal interest and in their tales one often finds a footnote of this sort: "A toothache has prevented me from putting on the finishing touches to this story."

Regardless of whether this exaggerated interest in the personality of the man of letters comes from the will of the reader or from the will of the author, it remains true that this interest has given birth to the dominant type of the bourgeois novel: autobiography. The authors conscientiously tell about their business affairs, their amusements, the least adventures of their family life, without any attempt to disguise names. It is a matter of every-day occurrence to see in the newspapers advertisements like this (which advertised Uno's novel): *The Combat of Love*; "The reader will find in this work a detailed account of the love affair of two writers and an actress—the love affair which was so much talked about last year." In the reviews, beside the critiques of recently-published works, incidents which have occurred in literary circles are narrated. Thus, under the heading, "literary criticism," one reads of the author Simanda, "who seduced the sister of one of his friends." Literary criticism often appears in the form of stenographic reports of conversations with writers. In one of

his tales, *The Sick Boy*, the famous author, Akoutagava, tells how his son fell ill; he notes the boy's temperature, the visits of his friends, how the boy goes through the crisis, his own sensations. In another story he tells how his hero, walking home sadly, stopped to urinate on the way.

Purely physical emotions, excrements, nudity—these are not usually, from the Japanese point of view, subjects to be overcast with a veil of reserve. On the contrary, entire tales are devoted to them.

In the manifesto of the autobiographical school, Koume Masao, its principal theorist, says that the writer should renounce all invention, all plot, all searching after subject matter. Resort to such methods is perhaps permissible in ephemeral literature, which seeks only to amuse. The writer, affirms Koume, should describe only his own life and his own personality; he should do this in an objective, detached manner. Such is, it seems, his conception of a literature appropriate to Japan, for Europe knows practically nothing of this "perpetually spouting" novel.

This theory has taken root in the most important journals and dominates Japanese thought; without doubt its adherents have been strongly influenced by Marcel Proust.

Japanese sociologists note that this auto-realism represents the literary ideology of the Japanese bourgeoisie as it became crystallized about 1910.

In Japan the works of Marxian writers are looked upon as proletarian literature. In 1919 the accepted literature, the "houra-boungakou" of the great reviews, found their rival in a group of authors who were laying the foundations of a proletarian literature. This literature is known as the "pourretaria-boungakou"—"pro-boungakou" for short. In the year 1925 the Union of Proletarian Authors was founded. Reviews came into being—slender, gaunt, and mordant. These are the "literary battlegrounds," "the art of the proletariat," etc. They are passed, somehow, by the censor, and increase daily in size and circulation.

To the snobbish narcissism of the "houra-boungakou" the proletarian authors reply with imagination and invention; they create; they have rejected autobiography; they try to discuss subjects which have social importance. To the formal, roaring style of the accepted writers, the heads of the proletarian school (Khayama and Khayasi) reply with language which is sober and laconic; which tends towards imagery and metaphor.

Now, in 1928, one may affirm that nowhere, except in Soviet Russia has proletarian literature gained such a strangle-hold on bourgeois literature as in Japan.

A tradition, which is gradually wearing out, demands that Japanese writers assume a pseudonym, at the same time that they keep their surnames. Akita Yoazakou, who spent the winter of 1927-28 in Moscow uses the name "little sparrow in the rain." Mabori Sumon is "dream of the dawn;" the patriarch of Japanese realism, Tkoudu, calls himself "the voice of autumn."

Boris Pilniak, one of the authors of this article (this semi-statistical article) remembers having spent an evening in a tea-house with the writers Kano, Tavisaki, Mikami, and the deceased Professor Katakami Nobourou. One of them asked Pilniak not to bring his wife the next time in order that, after leaving the geishas, they might go out to find some prostitutes.

A few words to demonstrate that the masses know literature and are interested in it. Travelling on a provincial railroad, Pilniak was one day accosted by the conductor who asked him to write a few words on a visiting card in memory of their meeting—something which shows that conductors on Japanese railroads are not ignorant of the features of authors, even of authors who do not belong to their race. A peasant writer whose father had been killed at Mukden in 1905 had sworn to kill the first Russian that he came across. Pilniak was the first. The Japanese peasant let him live because he was a man of letters. Japanese papers are printed in editions that go into the millions; the reviews go into the hundreds of thousands. Every Japanese must know how to compose a tanka or a hokka. In Japan the percentage of illiteracy is nil.

GOD IS A STEEL MILL

By EUGENE LANTZ

He wasn't the first to go.
We had all shaken
The clammy paw of death too often
To be concerned when one of us was taken.
Then, too, we felt that a coffin
Meant a long rest,
And might be preferred
To the shop. So we bought
Lillies for the funeral,
And mumbled a word
Or so of awkward comfort to his folks—
And then forgot.

Isn't it strange that men will build
A temple to some insensate brute of steel,
And bow down
And let themselves be killed
Like dumb sheep, just to make a meal
Of flesh and bones and blood that scarcely lulls
The appetite of the Thing
Their hands create?
Perhaps the clang and clamor
Of machinery dulls
Their minds.
They die, at any rate.

Whoever runs the plant, the "firm"
Or "company" always meets
Such cases blandly
With the term
"Industrial Hazards." The sweets
Of life are measured by insurance rates,
And paid
In nicely computed compensation scales.
Why try to stop the spinning of the Fates
When currency can hush the orphan's wails.

After all, it might not pay
For men to think too much
On such things.
The Russians did
And see what happened.
What I meant to say
Concerned not "forms" or "companies,"
But the kid.

He came in from a hill farm
Somewhere back of town;
Nineteen, but slight for his age
In the way
A tough young birch is slight.
His hands were brown
From hoeing steep rows of corn all day
Under a July sun,
And his hair was summer-bleached
And wind-crisped. His eyes were the blue
Of little flowers that hide
In grass by dusty lanes, and they preached
Whole sermons on yellow fields,
And bright water, without him ever
Opening his mouth to you.

I never understood just why the kid
Had left his berry patch, and trout stream,
And his honey bees and rye-fields
As he did
To build locomotives for the T. & R.
It would seem
That the silver haze

Hanging over his hills
When day broke
Was a pleasanter sight at which to gaze
Than clouds of steam
And forge smoke.

That really doesn't matter. He came
One autumn to the place
Where sweating men
With cart-horse shoulders
Feed a hungry flame
Hunks of metal, and draw them out again
From the red mouth, and beat them into a rod,
Or a thin sheet
While the cheated fire hisses out its hate
And bathes their bodies in long waves
Of sickening heat.

The boy's job was to take the steel
Still smoking from the forge, and truck it down
To where the planers squeal
And wail,
And the grumbling millers drown
Any sound of laughter that a man might make.
The kid had often laughed—the first few weeks;
But he quit that
When he saw his first chain break
And skipped back just in time
To feel the wind
From a toppling main-rod
Fan his cheeks.

The fifteen hundred odd pounds of brass
And polished steel thumped the dirt floor
A few inches from his toes.
I saw white terror pass
Across his face.
After that he was more
Careful, and tight-lipped when the chain
About one of his playthings tightened,
And it began to rise
Off of the truck-bed and up
Toward the grinding crane.
Little by little the laughter died in his eyes.

The kid had learned his lesson.
It pays to know
That steel is not a dead, inert thing
To be hammered and pried and laid a-row
Like so much cordwood. A panther's spring
Is not more sudden or unexpected
Than the leap
Of a two-ton forging when a link has parted,
Or a cable snapped. A man might reap
Funeral flowers; or, worse still,
A maimed existence
From a moment left unguarded.

It was some time after that
That Angelo, the little Wop
Who cleared the snow and slush
From the road between the office
And the blacksmith shop
Got tangled with his wheel-barrow in front
Of the yard-derrick.
Flesh will crush
Easily, when caught between
Steam-driven gears,
And Angelo's legs were ground into a bloody stew



Proletarian Sport

Drawn by G. Kolska

Before his first shriek reached our ears.
That tatters of his overalls fell away from mangled flesh
And showed the white bone-fragments sticking through.

The kid and I helped jack
The derrick up. The least
We could do was give the little man a sight
Of his fellows before he died.
Someone sent for a priest
And a doctor. The latter wasn't needed.
In the late afternoon light
That filtered down through the crane-girders
And the smoke,
The black-robed figure knelt in the snow,
Droned the unctions, paused a moment and then
From under the derrick Angelo's clear voice began,
"Madre del cielo—ah—" strained, and broke.
The priest's white hands cut the Sign in the air
"—et Filio, et Spirito Sancto,
Amen."

The kid came to me the next morning.
"I'm gonna quit," he said
Before this damned place gets me.
Gonna draw my time today.
I need the jack, but money's no good
When you're dead
Like that dago.
I'm through with this hell," I had heard others say
The same thing before, so I grinned sarcastically
And grunted, "Scared, huh?"
He looked at me a long minute with his blue eyes—
"Yes, I am, but I'll stick anyway."
He went to his work. As for me,
I forgot him until that afternoon, when—
Well it happened in this wise.

The Big Guns were yelling for rods
And the plant hummed so
You couldn't have guessed that the day before
A man's blood had drained away in the snow.
We had to forget him. Production—
You understand.
Between the forge-shed and the machine shop
The lad's truck wove like a shuttle-cock.
Dogged, tired, cross
The boy drove himself all afternoon without a stop,
Carting rods,
And cussing the boss.

Almost quitting time,
He dragged his tired body in
Through the doors to load up for the last trip.
It wasn't much;
A rod and one small casting.
He tried to grin
At me in a half-hearted way as he stepped on the truck.
I watched him slip
Out of the shop—and out of life as well;
For something happened just outside the door—
There was a warning shout, a high-pitched yell
Of terror,—a crash,—silence . . . nothing more.

I can't remember how I got outside.
But there were two big forgings lying in the road,
And above them two chains
From the crane whipped wide
Writhing patterns in the air.
They had slipped their load,
And the big chunks of metal had sped
Earthward.
The kid was just below
Trying to speed up on his last trip.
He was quite dead
When the things were pried off of him.
They weighed a ton or so.

* * * * *

That was all.
Finis.
Ended.

They took his broken body back to its hills
And dug him a soft couch in the earth
And the clean snow,
And left him sleeping there
While we, his fellows still grapple
With the soulless thing that kills
And maims us.
Others went before, and after, and others still will go—
Tribute, or sacrifice to something, some ravenous
Iron-taloned god
Or devil, or beast, or whatever it is that lurks in steel.
Sometimes, when I'm tired, I almost envy the boy
His rest. He has had time to forget the squeal
Of tortured metal, the parched breath of furnaces,
And the whine of a spinning wheel.

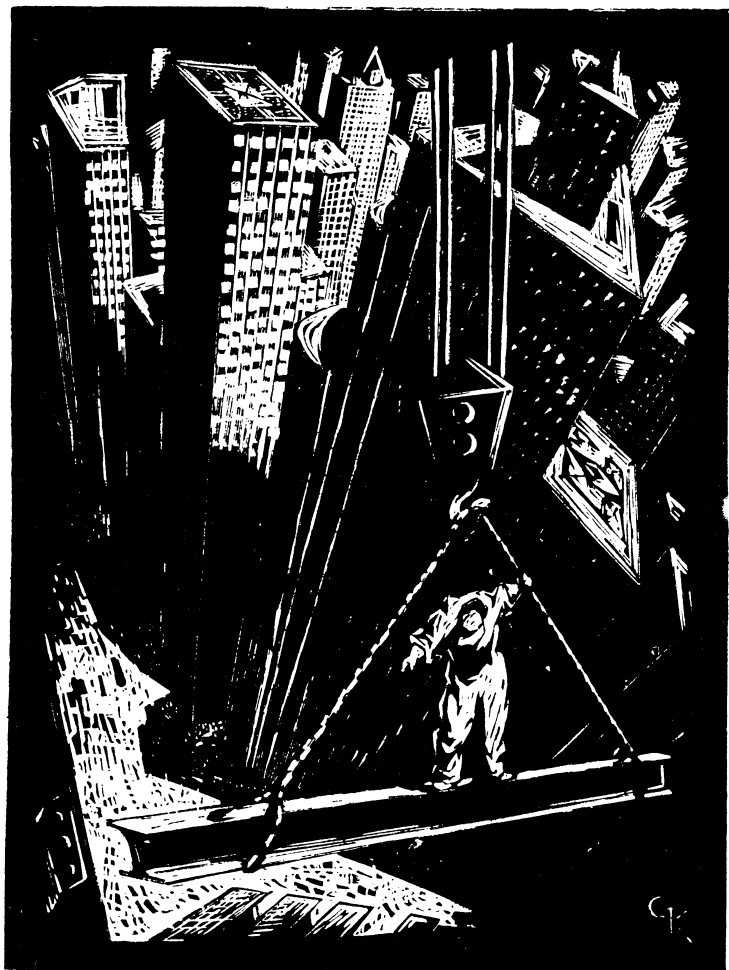
I PASSED THE DEVIL

I passed the Devil this morning sitting in the park;
I am sure it was he for he scowled and looked so dark.
I know he had horns—he wore his hat, there on a bench.
As I passed I whiffed the fumes of Hades' smoke and stench.

He interested me so I passed along and sat
On a bench, wanting to see the horns beneath his hat.
He was reading the news and I could tell by his smile
That he was enjoying it immensely all the while.
The head-lines told of murders. It wasn't far to see
That homicides and thieving made up his gaiety.
He chuckled once or twice. It was very hard to tell
What he was reading—any way he belonged in Hell.

RAYMOND KRESENSKY.

DECEMBER, 1928



Proletarian Sport

Drawn by G. Kolska

ART YOUNG'S CONFESSION

(Some extracts from "On My Way," published by Horace Liveright, a book in which America's most loved cartoonist chuckles gently over his own life.)



September 1st: As I begin these notes, I am where I ought to be in the summer, at my home among the stone-fenced hills of Connecticut. I will be 60 years of age January next.

Three things are worshipful—the Sun, giver of life; a Human Being who believes something worth while and will die for it if need be; and Art, the recreator of life.

I walked to the village today and noted a gentle rise of my spirits as I watched the butterflies careen through the fields of goldenrod.

September 2nd: I look out over the hills this beautiful forenoon. It ought to be a day care free. Nevertheless, a taint of anxiety is in my mind. The rural postman has not brought the right letter. One with a check in it. The thought of expenses and inadequate income persists. This is the blot that is ever before the beauty of the world in the lives of most of us; anxiety that disturbs the harmony with our inner selves over money matters. There is a divine discontent that a humble man of understanding accepts gracefully, but this dollar discontent, this adjustment to a commercial age, is what prevents the artist-soul in all people from expanding.

September 18th: To call one a propagandist is generally to dismiss him from the sacred realm of art. The favorite cry of critics, "Oh, he is a propagandist, not an artist." These propagandists against propaganda amuse me. Propaganda is a kind of enthusiasm for or against something that you think ought to be spread—that is, propagated. Your propaganda may be wrong or not worth while from another's viewpoint, but that is a personal matter.

Duty, sacrifice, beauty, bravery, death and eternity—all allowable subjects for poets and dramatists—out of which they can fashion works of art. When others do not believe in your enthusiasm your work runs the risk of being condemned as propaganda. There never was a real work of art in which it is not plain that the author wants you to share his loves and sympathies and his ideas of right and wrong.

September 27th: Had I been ambitious to be a politician, I would have qualified in one way, so well and instinctively that I might have gone far. I like to kiss babies. Not being a politician I just pat their cheeks. To get that responsive smile gives me delight. In the old days, when a candidate had a habit of shaking hands and kissing babies, it was taken as a pretty good sign that once in office he would be a man of the people. But it did not always turn out that way.

September 28th: I saw some maiden flowers growing in a community of grass and old weeds.

One day I watched a bee that was buzzing around the outskirts of this community, peddling pollen.

One of the flowers may have waved to the bee; anyway, he called on her and stayed for quite some time.

Immediately, it was whispered about through the grass and old weeds that another flower had been "ruined."

October 11th: A strange thing about my early youth is that I refused to tell anybody how much I was affected by the beauty or ugliness of things. I saw beautiful village girls, who had married farmer boys, in a few years turn into hags, and I have wanted to cry out against this humping of feminine backs, wrinkling of necks and whiskering of faces. But no one else seemed to care. I looked upon myself as a lonely minority and helpless. And yet, queer paradox, I always had a liking for those who were ill-treated by circumstances. It was the unpopular girl that I often sought at the town parties. Not with uplifting sympathy—but feeling that I might discover a rare individuality and beauty overlooked by others—and I did.

October 27th: When anyone tells me he hates a particular race of people, I can work up a little hate myself—not for the race—but for the one who is talking.

October 31st: When I studied in Paris I had an ambition to be a painter.

I knew it was a long road to accomplishment, and how would I live in the meantime? I saw this to be the problem of most young painters; they were painting with one hand and reaching for a beefsteak with the other. It was all I could do to get sustenance while working at marketable drawings. Paintings would be still less marketable.

One has to catch a train in this kind of a civilization. You can't be careless or gay, you must crowd in and go somewhere, or get left on the desert of your dreams.

November 3rd: That boy, John Reed, interested me when first I looked at him. He had finished at Harvard and was entering the newspaper and magazine field in New York. At the Dutch Treat Club, of which I was one of the original members (but resigned during the war), he entered into the spirit of our annual frolics. Once he wrote the libretto for an opera and carried off the honors of the evening. We called him Jack. If ever a boy had the spirit of daring and doing it was Jack. Once he thought he had discovered a girl with a marvelous voice. He rented a hall and invited his friends to hear her. No one in the entire hall except Jack thought she had a voice of superior quality.

When he began to get actively interested in the radical movement, it was a matter of regret on the part of some of the "quality" boys who had known him at Harvard. One of them was heard to say, "Too bad about Jack. He is writing this humanity stuff when he could be writing good light opera." During a big silk workers' strike in New Jersey, Jack was one of the moving spirits to mobilize the strikers for a pageant in Madison Square Garden. Here, he and some of the I. W. W. leaders staged the strike scenes at the factory with the strikers themselves on the stage. I saw Jack impetuously waving a baton as he tried to lead a polyglot chorus of hundreds of workers of many nationalities into a vociferous rendering of the "International." He disregarded failure. His fun was doing. He seemed to enjoy being with the group of artists and writers of *The Masses*. In 1915 he went to Mexico and traveled with Villa's peon army and saw war for the first time. Then he accepted the assignment as European correspondent of the *Metropolitan Magazine* and saw most of the battle-fronts of Europe. He was always coming or going. He would enter a room, hitching up his trousers, rough and ready—a kind of grown-up Gavroche, with big eyes, and he-man shoulders—which he would shrug with an amusing coyness. He was a master reporter of strikes and conventions or whatever interested him. I traveled with him to illustrate the Republican and Democratic National Conventions of 1916 for the *Metropolitan Magazine*, the former in Chicago, the latter in St. Louis. A few years later we went to Chicago to report the trial of the I. W. W. leaders. At this time he was continually hounded by detectives. Suspected

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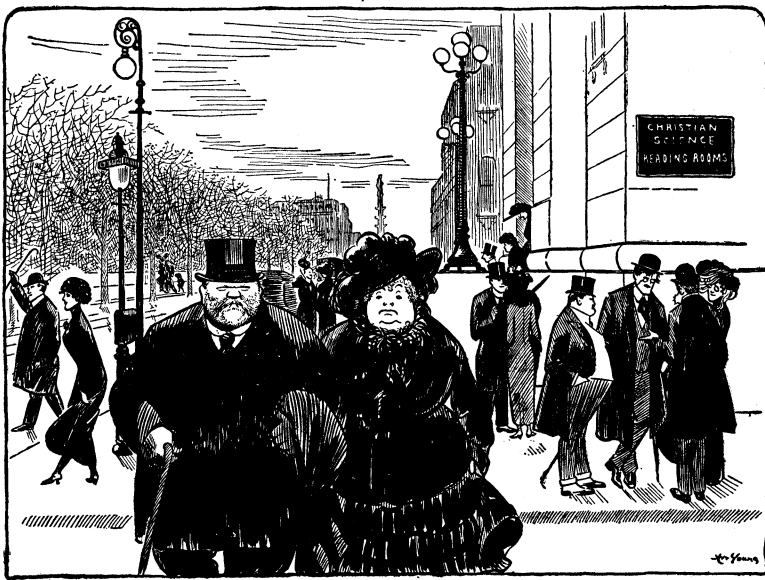
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The Masses

"I Gorry, I'm tired!"

"There you go! You're tired! Here I be a-standin' over a hot stove all day, an' you workin' in a nice cool sewer!"



Puck

She: "But, my dear, we are not matter, we are mind."

Chinese with the Turks, the Swedes with the Indians and so on, it would make for a better understanding between the peoples of the earth, and would eventually improve the human race.

I am writing this partly in a mood for jesting, but I will hazard the guess that there is something biologically sound in the idea.

March 1st: Judged by that standard of success which most of the American people accept and believe, I would be classed among the failures. Now past sixty, with an obvious talent and reasonably industrious in doing the work I like, yet never in my life very far from bankruptcy. If I should happen to be a money success when I am old—and the years ahead of me very few—the fact remains the same; in the common vernacular, I lacked brains to get on and clean up; throughout all the years of an average life-time. I belong with the failures—with the man who is sitting at home tonight after his day's work who knows that his wife, his relatives and friends think; "he is a failure." I'm with this man and the whole army of splendid men and women who wear the ragged badge of defeat. I know that some people are successful who deserve to be, but I am with the unadaptable, the out-of-luck, the weary with the money-struggle. I am with them but not sadly because in my vision of a new world there is going to be a different definition of success.

of being a Russian propagandist, in Cleveland, where he had a lecture date, his suitcase was seized, taken to police headquarters and searched for bombs, seditious literature and other odds and ends for overthrowing governments. He narrowly escaped arrest after the lecture (which was "patriotic") by a strategic move through a basement exit. Boylike, he seemed to enjoy outwitting government officials. He had no regard for regularity; he would write all night, and was careless of his health, especially in the matter of food. He lived just as intensely with one kidney as before. He was coming out of Russia when he was arrested in Finland by a White Guard government, and put in a dungeon, where for almost three months he lived on raw fish. Finally released and unable to get passports for America he was soon back in Russia again to continue help in the reconstruction that followed the "Ten Days That Shook the World"—(the title of one of his books). But Jack could no longer stand the strain of the full front to all the hardships that he encountered—that dread disease, typhus, got him. He died in Moscow and was buried by the Russian Soviet government outside the Kremlin walls with all the honors of a hero, which he was.

November 8th: If marriages were more generally mixed as to nationalities, such as Africans with the Eskimos, the



The Liberator

"Say, Bill, do you know what we made out of the World War—we made 185 million dollars."



"I Gorry, I'm tired!"

"There you go! You're tired! Here I be a-standin' over a hot stove all day, an' you workin' in a nice cool sewer!"

The Masses



She: "But, my dear, we are not matter, we are mind."

Puck



The Liberator

"Say, Bill, do you know what we made out of the World War—we made 185 million dollars."

MIDNIGHT MISSION

Those big fat cooties crawl to hair
On the necks of starving men,
As tumble-bugs ooze up to air
And then ooze down again.
It's slop-time, and the hoboes grunt
Grace in that lousy den.

That's him! that's Brother Tom himself
With cold, unbrotherly eyes,
A churchman keen for charity-pelf
To run his enterprise;
He looms above the droning mob
And prays in humble guise.

In the first room's fetid lack of space
More bellies gnaw for rot;
Lectured by converts of the place,
The scab, the pimp, the sot.
And more yet push to get inside—
A starved, a vulturous lot.

Upstairs they truly "pound their ears,"
Each to each on his side,
Cramped in, sardined, for it appears
God has made the bums too wide.
Then in the morning, like as not,
Some old derelict has died.

The Midnight Mission—how I know
And painfully must tell;
Down where the jobless workers go
I knew that social hell:
For see—the lice, abhorrent lice
That faith cannot repel!

What is the LOUSE I'm seeing here
Upon the social frame?
The lie that Jee-sus dear, oh dear,
Makes penury not a shame—
The lie that penury must be . . .
Religion, that's its name!

H. H. LEWIS.

ONWARD, CHRISTIAN SOLDIER

Help me, oh Christ, to hold Thy Sacred Cross
Above this trench, now strewn with human gore;
Nor grudge to pay the price of bitter loss;—
(That man is not quite dead,—I'll give him more.)

Help me to give my all, nor count the cost,
(This trigger needs a little oil, I think;)
No part of love's sweet sacrifice is lost;
(These dead men make a most unholy stink!)

The meaning of Thy Cross is sacrifice;
(Some men die hard—just see that fellow shake!)
I'll bear Thy Cross with Thee, I'll pay the price.
(These bullets do the work and no mistake!)

He gave His blood that sinful men might live;
(That edge is hardly sharp enough to cut;)
Sustain me by Thy might, and comfort give!
(I'm standing on a piece of human gut.)

His holy words redeeming love proclaim;
(Just see those blood-stains on my bayonet!)
Whate'er I do, I'll do in Jesus name;
(Is that the ninth or tenth one?—I forget.)

Grant me to know the joy of Calvary;
(Hold steady now, more sport ahead, I guess!)
I'll sacrifice my all to make men free;
(Tis not so dull a game, I must confess!)

Lord, if I die, clasp me in arms of love!
(Something is moving by that rusty can!)
Grant me an entrance into heaven above;—
(His head appears!—thank God!—I've popped my man!)

FLOYD HARDIN.

ARTLESS ART

By UPTON SINCLAIR

Art Young wrote a piece about me in the NEW MASSES, paying me some compliments; and now if I pay compliments to him, the suspicious reader will say, "Aha! You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours!" That wouldn't do any good to either Art or me, so I have to figure out some way to write an unfavorable review of Art's autobiography, so that the reader may see that I am a stern and incorruptible critic.

Here goes:

In the first place, this book is entirely lacking in dignity. The artist-author puts a picture of himself on the jacket, showing a stout old man with a large paunch, and a cigar in his mouth, and his legs crossed, which my mother taught me is bad form. He is riding in an old barouche, or victoria, behind an old horse; and when you read the book you find it isn't even true, because he admits that he never has ridden in that vehicle, which he bought from a broken-down cabbie for fifteen dollars; he has spent many times that amount keeping the thing in storage, hoping that some day he would get an old horse and a chance to ride. This, as you can easily see, is mere vanity and waste of time, and what right has a man who spends his money that way to complain because he is poor in his old age? He is setting a very bad example to young persons, who have such a fine chance to get rich, now that Hoover is safely elected and we are going to get eight more years of prosperity.

Moreover, this is a very unpatriotic book. The writer was indicted for sedition in war-time, and he has no shame to express, but on the contrary tries to make a joke out of the whole thing, by drawing a picture of himself expressing contempt of court by falling asleep while on trial. It seems to me that this kind of

laughing at authority is the surest way to break it down, and so I shall send a copy of the book to my friend Superintendent of Police Crowley of Boston, with the idea that he will cause the book to be banned, and thus let the rest of the country know that it is a dangerous book, which should be kept out of all Sunday school libraries. I am also going to send a copy to the police authorities of Japan, who have recently cut out a part of *The Jungle*, and to the Minister of Education of Italy, who has ordered all my books out of the libraries.

Moreover, it is a very carelessly written book. It rambles all over the place, and you are as like as not to find yourself being told about butterflies by the wayside, or dead leaves falling from a tree in autumn, right when you have got interested in being told what President Harding said about having a sense of form, and wanting to be a sculptor, which is really educational. This book is just an old man rambling along, talking about anything that comes into his head, and making jokes and foolishness; I can't see much sense in printing a book like that, which is of no interest to anybody in the world except children, and artists, and rebels, and disturbers of the public thought, and idle and unpatriotic persons who do not appreciate or deserve the eight years more of prosperity which Mr. Hoover is going to give to everybody who works hard and keeps his eye on the main chance.

There now, I have been a stern and incorruptible critic. I hope you will forgive me if I add that in spite of all its faults, I read the book all the way through. There must be something wrong with me, in spite of my best efforts to be a really good American, as my parents brought me up.

THE SACCO-VANZETTI LEGEND

In the midst of the chaos of the last days of Sacco and Vanzetti, in all that Boston hysteria, factionalism, spying and too intimate reality, one retained an almost mystic conviction that one was living through a great moment in American history.

A year has passed since the murder of the two immortal workmen, but their cause still burns strongly in the hearts of thousands of Americans.

The Outlook, a semi-liberal weekly, has just published the confession of Frank Silva, an underworld character who says he committed the Bridgewater crime for which Vanzetti was first indicted. The magazine sold 250,000 copies of the issue in which the confession appeared, more than four times its usual circulation.

Upton Sinclair's novel, *Boston*, which is a faithful and complete fictional summary of the case, has just been published in two volumes. It had an advance sale of 24,000 copies, which really means 48,000 copies, the largest advance sale, perhaps, any novel has ever had in America.

The legend grows, it will not die, it can never die while there are two classes in America.

This month there appeared on the Broadway stage, a play called "Gods of the Lightning," by Maxwell Anderson, who wrote "What Price Glory," and Harold Hickerson, a music teacher and radical.

The play is based on the Sacco-Vanzetti case. It does not follow the story literally, but with great wisdom, the authors substituted a typical I. W. W. leader for one of the two men. This gives the play a broader basis; it becomes a study in the whole American frame-up system of labor radicals, instead of a single case.

I don't know how to praise "Gods of the Lightning." It hurt too much. It was too close to reality. It was not a play, but an experience. So skilful was the art of the authors and actors, one never thought of art.

It was written in the spirit of "Potemkin," with a realism so passionate it transcends all the lyric poets. A play like this makes one doubt a lot of the new theories of the stage, like constructivism. This play was the most effective revolutionary play I have ever seen on the American stage.

There were a few false notes in the play, but 98% of it was straightforward, blunt revolutionary truth. Harold Hickerson, one of the authors, is a Marxian, and he knew all the values involved. I think it was he who was responsible for lines like the following:

District Attorney: So you believe, Mr. Macready, that you are going to be convicted?

Macready—(one of the two labor men on trial). Yes. From the day it started, I knew this trial was a railroad train. I took one look at that jury, and I knew what they came in here for. . . . I've been around the country some, and I've seen the courts work.

When you get a red or an agitator in court, the custom is to soak him.

District Attorney: So you don't think the workers get justice in this country?

Macready: No, do you? Did you ever hear of a policeman hitting a capitalist over the head?

District Attorney: You admit you are an I. W. W. What are the principles of the I. W. W.?

Macready: One big union, organized to break the capitalist stranglehold on natural resources.

District Attorney: Do you believe in our constitution?

Macready: I believe it was made by a little group of hogs to protect their own trough.

Judge Vail (his gavel falls): Have you no respect for the courts sir?

Macready: Certainly not. The courts are the flunkies of the rich.

Judge: You realize that you are on trial in this court for your life?

Macready: Do you think you can scare me into respecting you?

Judge: I merely wish to warn you, sir, that in this frame of mind you make an exceedingly poor witness for the defense.

Mac: It's my usual frame of mind.

D. A.: Where were you during the war?

Mac: I was in Bisbee, Arizona, at the time of the deportations. I was in Everett at the time of the I. W. W. massacre. You heard about that, I suppose? When the gallant business men of Everett came out and shot down wobblies in cold blood?

D. A.: You were a pacifist and agitator during the war?

Mac: I was, and I am proud of it. What were you in the war?

D. A.: You have no respect for that flag?

Mac.: What does it stand for? . . . Who killed Salsedo?

When a play like this is produced on shallow Broadway, one feels as if a miracle had taken place. There simply is no serious drama being written in America. Broadway is a glittering river of futility and gilded amusements. One does not expect the puffy-eyed rounders or the visiting department store buyers to enjoy anything but musical comedy.

But why weren't there enough radicals to keep "Gods of Lightning" running for months? It failed after three weeks, this great play, and I am almost certain the fault was that of its business management. It will take years to persuade these Broadway businessmen that there are at least 300,000 radicals of one shade or another in New York, and that they will support radical plays, if appealed to properly, through the radical and liberal press.

Charles Bickford, who played Macready with such true wobbly force and directness, is on the way to being America's best native actor. I mean, he knows the working stiff, and can give him the same dignity on the stage that Barrymore gives to Hamlet. I think Bickford's is a greater achievement, because it is so new.

MICHAEL GOLD.



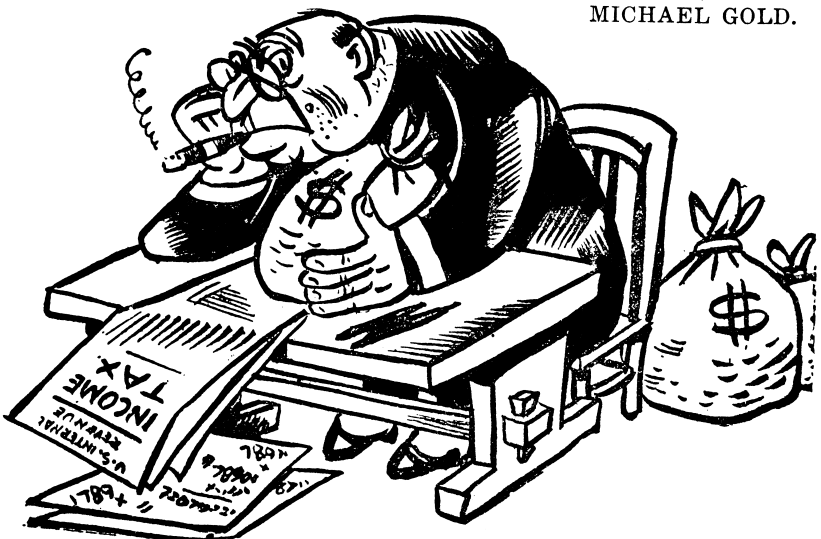
Every Heart Has Its Sorrows
And the rich worry about money, just like the poor (Ha, ha!)

Drawn by William Gropper

...the same work.

...on the stage that Darrymore gives to Hamlet. I think Bickford's is a greater achievement, because it is so new.

MICHAEL GOLD.



Every Heart Has Its Sorrows
And the rich worry about money, just like the poor (Ha, ha!)

Drawn by William Gropper

SNIPED!

(A War Sketch)

By CHARLES YALE HARRISON

The rain had stopped during the night. It was late November. For three whole days icy sheets of water had poured down on man and beast. Some of the badly irrigated trenches were mud-colored lakes with islands, soaked and wrapped in khaki. There was no relief from the freezing water yet, but in a few days the area would dry up, maybe—maybe in time for the rest behind the lines.

As the grayness of breaking day appeared, the odors of the battlefield rose in a miasmatic mist on all sides of the trenches. The soaked earth, nothing but a thin covering in spots for a layer of decaying corpses underneath, smelled like a city garbage dump in mid-August.

Five men stood in the muddy bay of a trench. Here the water and mud were but ankle deep. For more than a month they had not been out of their clothes. Soaked with rain and stiff with cold they were sunk in that daze which men fall into through hopeless misery. They were one lance-corporal and four privates.

The bay of the trench which they defended was situated so that they were exposed to enfilade fire. At any moment a sniper could shoot down the length of the trench from his concealed position half a mile away. When they were being hurriedly training for trench warfare the instructor droned: "Enfilade fire is a fire directed down the length of line or trench. It is fire coming from the flanks. Keep low." But the instructor was in England now and they were in the water-soaked trench.

A stifling impulse to dash out into No Man's Land; to fly down the communication trenches to temporary safety was held in check by the tight rein of discipline. For months, on the rolling downs of Sussex, military discipline had been driven into them. To flee was cowardice. One must carry on, carry on. . . .

In a thousand ways this idea was drilled into their heads. The salute, the polishing of officers' boots, the shining of brass buttons, the correct way to twist a puttee and so on. A thousand thundering orders for a thousand trivial rules, with a penalty for each infraction had made brainless marching robots of them all. All, without exception.

Half a mile from the partly exposed trench, hidden in the decayed hollow of a tree a sniper sat holding a high-powered rifle. Every night they brought him his special rations—for it was with extra foods and special leaves of absence that they paid him for his task. Sooner or later he would be caught in an advance by the enemy troops. He would be fallen upon and bayoneted like a hapless trench rat. He would crawl out from his position as the attackers swarmed about him menacingly. He would hold his trembling hands on high and stammer the international word for compassion and pity. But they would stab him down shrieking to one another, "Hey, lookit, we found a sniper." And so every night they brought him his extra rations.

His rifle was fitted with telescopic sights so that his victims were brought quite close to him visually. Slowly he would elevate his weapon, look through the glass and see his target as though it was but a few feet away. When he pulled the trigger the target dropped out of sight.

In the trench half a mile away, the five men moved about almost doubled in two, much as a man does who is suffering from abdominal pains. They remembered the instructor's advice. Sometimes to get relief from this agonizing posturing, they crawled like babies on all fours. When the bark of the sniper's rifle rang down the line, they flopped down grovelling in the muddy bottom of the trench. Minutes passed before they would move and then slowly they would sheepishly face each other.

They explained to one another that they were not afraid to die. But to die like a rat in a hole, said one. To be torn to shreds by an H. E. shell, said another. To lie in a hospital sightless with gaping holes hidden by bandages said another. That was the terrible thing, said the corporal. They all agreed that a swift death would be a pleasant thing. But at the crack of the distant rifle or the sweep of a burst of machine gun fire, each racked body cowered lower in silent fear.

It was dawn now. Soon a carrier would bring them their rations and as soon as it was divvied up they would go to sleep leaving one sentry on duty. It was quiet. Over the trench sparrows squabbled startling the men with their sudden outbursts of chirping and twittering.

When the rations arrived the lance-corporal spread a rubber sheet along the firing step. He bent low and emptied the small sack of food into the sheet; a piece of yellow cheese, two large onions, some tea and sugar and a large hunk of grayish war bread. With hungry, grimy fingers he deftly cut, sliced and divided the food. His men looked on with greedy, alert eyes to see that justice was being done. From time to time he looked nervously over his shoulder in the direction of the concealed sniper in the distant woods. One of the men straightened up to get a better view of the food. The corporal snarled a warning.

The bread, cheese and onions were soon divided into five equal parts. Each man took his share and stuffed it into his haversack. The rubber sheet was now brushed clean for the division of the sugar. Precious sugar with which to sweeten the strong, hot tea that came up at midnight, tea that was so bitter it would curl one's tongue; strong tea that soothed the frayed and harrassed, trench-shattered nerves. The men watched the corporal in silence.

The rusty spoon for dishing out sugar and such things stuck in the parapet over his head between two sandbags. Glad to straighten himself for a second he stood up to reach for it. From nervous habit he looked over in the direction of the sniper.

In that instant his head snapped back viciously from the impact of the bullet. He sagged to the bottom of the sloppy trench, his neck twisted at a foolish, impossible angle. Between his eyes was a small, neat hole. No one moved. On the parados in the rear of them a bit of slimy, gleaming gray matter jiggled as it stuck to the hairy sacking of a sandbag.

At the crack of the sniper's rifle the four privates crouched lower in the trench and looked with dull amazement as the body fell into their midst. They looked without resentment toward the woods, animated only by a hunger for safety.

They pulled the heavy, awkward body out of the mud, stretched it on the firing step and covered it with a gray regulation blanket. Hiding the head, it reached only to the ankles. The muddy boots stuck out in V-formation.

Next-in-Command took charge of the squad and went on with the corporal's duties. Dispensing with the spoon he used his hands scooping the sugar into four, instead of five, parts. Before they took the corporal's body down to headquarters that night they took his bread and cheese out of his haversack and shared it between them.

TOWARD A NEW WAR

This presidential election has been the most important since the choice of Lincoln.

Abe Lincoln's victory meant that modern industrialism had defeated feudal agrarianism for the control of America. Herbert Hoover's election means that the United States has overcome its provincial inhibitions, and is now consciously determined to rule the world.

This is the victory of sophisticated imperialism. Herbert Hoover is not a weazened Coolidge, no dwarf on a throne. He is the ablest pro-consul American business ever sent abroad. He does not believe in labor unions, he drowned the Hungarian Revolution in blood.

He is a Fascist, an imperialist, and an engineer. He is the best leader the rising American empire could have found in its duel with the sinking British empire.

Hoover will win the duel, even by means of the inevitable war. His election speeds up the process of universal war and revolution of our time.

THE BROWN DERBY

The liberal "intellectuals" flocked to the banner of Al Smith in the campaign. They remind one of the girl in the cockney song, who was ruined by an army captain, and lost her honest name. Then she went to London city, and lost her name again. Again, again and again! (Will they never learn not to trust glib strangers?)

John Dewey, our foremost philosopher, was seen to don a brown derby, swig a shot of synthetic gin, and march off to vote for Tammany Hall and pragmatism.

I hope Jimmy Walker does as much for our Jawn, and buys a set of the Dewey books and reads them. M. G.

THE COAL THIEF

By VERA EDELSTADT

Two grey eyes peered cautiously over the top of the railroad fence, then suddenly a small body wriggled itself over and dropped, like a cat, to the frosted cinders below. Clouds of fine snow whirled down the narrowing tracks in a mad witches dance, chasing the music of the howling winds.

As Voytek fought his way across the gleaming rails a thousand needles tattooed their message on the drawn skin of his cheek. He pulled down the cap that the quick fingers of the snow tried to snatch from his head. It had not been as windy in the attic, but it had been almost as cold. His mother did not have to yell at him today to go for the coal.

He trotted stiffly to the sidetracked freight and climbed up into one of the cars. His fingers were numb and a thin coating of ice had glued the sharp pieces of coal together so that it was hard work knocking off enough to fill his basket. It was a relief to know that he didn't have to be on the look-out for a beating. He was certain that the old railroad "bull" wouldn't be around, because the story had spread thru the Patch that a "bo" whom he had once thrown off a moving train had come back several nights ago and plugged him.

A grunt of satisfaction parted his blue lips.

"Good for 'im," he muttered. He had once promised his little sister that he would do something of the sort himself when he grew big enough. He would never forget the day the big bully had kicked her. (No complaints about the beatings he got; in the fourteen years of his life his meagre body had grown hardened to them; but his sister—nobody had the right to kick her.)

"I'm glad they croaked 'im," he said half aloud, and accented the words with a kick at an obstinate chunk that fell to the ground with a thump.

"Damn you, you dirty little Polak," came in an enraged voice from below.

Voytek's eyes widened when he saw the blue of a uniform. Some police-station experience told by the older boys flashed across his mind, and in an instant he crawled to the opposite side of the car and jumped.

"Though you could get away, dincha?" sneered the policeman as he collared him and marched him thru the deep snow.

* * *

Voytek stared miserably at the brown shirt he had just taken off. A great sob was surging within him until his very temples seemed ready to burst open and let it out. It had been a day as long as a year—His mother pleading frantically with the judge; the awful word "Reformatory"; then the introduction to the "Ban House." All that and more had happened in a single day—a day whose morning was too far back to remember. Disconnected scenes of it skipped with sharp taps across his tired brain. In addition, came the maddening accompaniment of howling and crying from behind the office door, where the ten boys, who had been collected after undressing for bed, were being whipped for "black marks" received during the day.

"Gee kid, you look scared," came from a big boy sitting on the next cot. "Yuh gotta get used to that," he explained. "Huh, this ain't bad. When I smashed that Sister from Holy Trinity against the radiator I was scared they'd send me to St. Charles. I was damned glad when the judge sez Reformatory, take it from me kid."

"Yeah, I know," Voytek answered vaguely, and huddled up into a tense little heap so that he would not touch more of the strange bed than necessary.

An old refrain he had once heard the boys sing, hummed in his ears:

"The Ban House, the Ban House,
I won't go there no more.
They give you bread as heavy as lead,
I won't go there no more.
The Ban House, the Ban House . . ."

And it would start all over again until at last the words lost significance, their sounds melted into an anaesthesizing drone, and the only little muscle left torturing the flesh of his face, relaxed.

The edge of a Ban House blanket, stiff and grey, rested, finally, unrepulsed, against a rebel cheek.

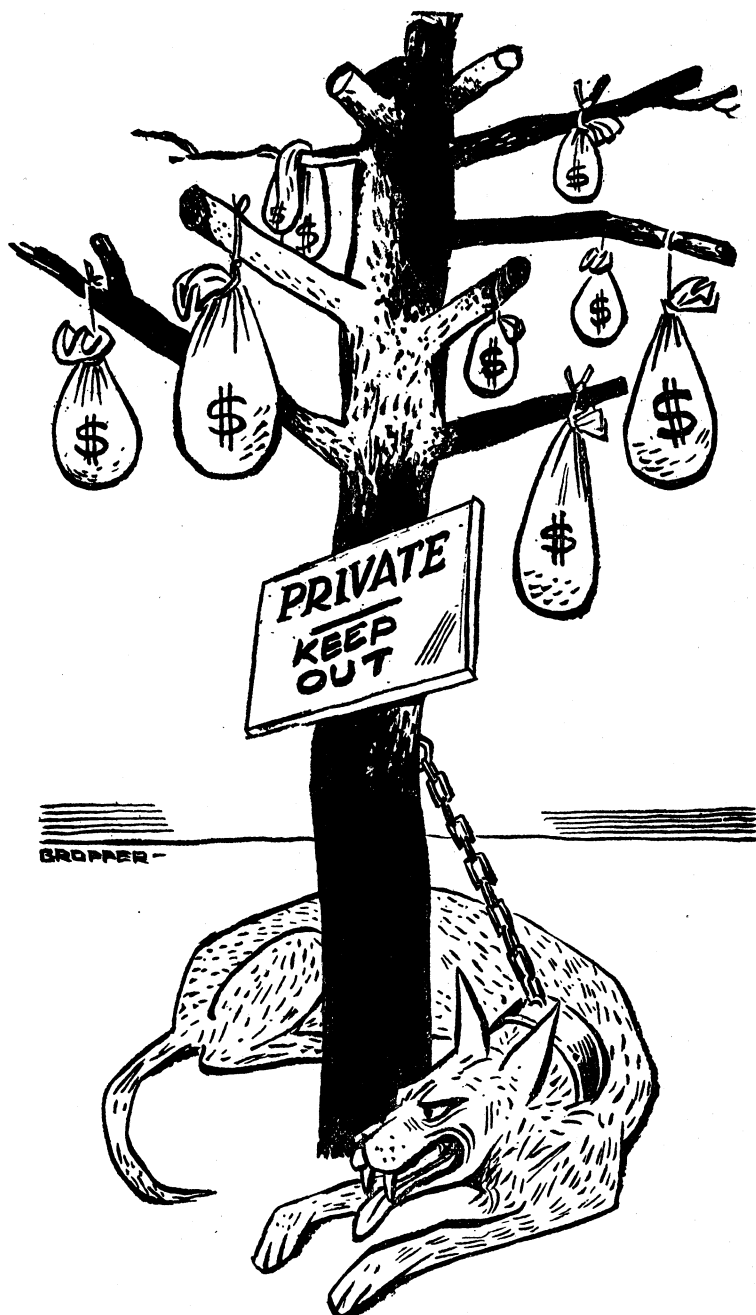
THE OLD SOUTH

*with sanctimony they watch the old homes go
driven by times, by northern
invasion, capital builds a town
like birmingham overnight
and the old aristocracyhell watches lazily
indifferently,*

*daughters of pocahontas
rub their eyes sleepily
as the mortgage is foreclosed.
slowly with welling bitterness they
fulminate against north against ungodly
atheists . . .*

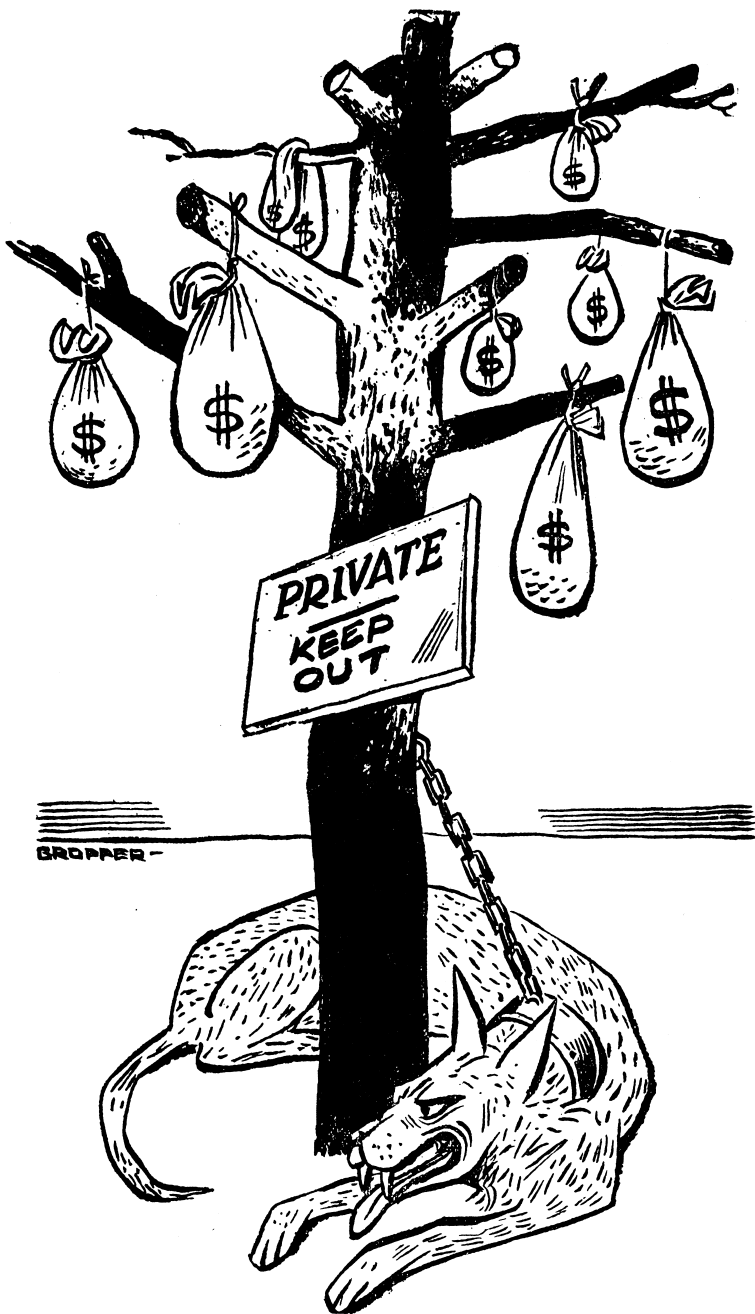
*quicken their brains with corn liquor
and they would not realize
the core the root the pithy worm of the
matter while money gets fat.*

NORMAN MACLEOD.



Drawn by William Gropper

The Monroe Doctrine



Drawn by William Gropper

The Monroe Doctrine

Skidway: Seattle

[By
JOSEPH KALAR]

(The Skidway is the main proletarian street of Seattle, lined with cheap rooming houses, speakeasies, mission halls, unemployment agencies, etc. Every night radicals make soapbox speeches at the corners.) ..

1

WHERE IS THE IDEA?

The Skidway is a stag party of mental gymnastics; a boisterous spree of hair-splitting dialectics; charges, countercharges; revolution, counter-revolution; passive cynical indifference. The Skidway, born by the haphazard convergence of streets, is alive. The brown shabby streets pimpled with Lozowick buildings, dominate the scene, arbiters, sphinxlike judges of the bustling impatient nervous ideas floating like bats in the air.

Shadows detach themselves from shadows, clusters of men like grapes under doorways disintegrate and become alert individuals, sharpshooters of ideas, pouncing gleefully on bastard logic discreetly oozing into men's ears. Ideas like bats fly from crowd to crowd, from man to man. The air is tense, snapping with vitality, charged with unrest.

Shadows become men. There is no single standard and no single class. Sneering cynics rub shoulders with Utopian dreamers; hardheaded wobblers touch hands with A. F. of L. adherents; vociferous atheists smile amiably on Mormons and Holyrollers. The Salvation army bangs drums, blows cornets, jingles tambourines. Longhaired preachers prove by excerpts from the Holy Book that men with hair like women will save the world. Mormon youths affirm the greatness of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. The Communists dominate the crowds; the wobblers dominate the crowds. Masses of men detach themselves from other masses of men and move like a black wave to join other masses of men.

The idea is caught here somewhere. The crowds shift back and forth in search of the idea. They leave George Hanrahan, the Communist, swell the crowd listening to wobbly orators, come back to George Hanrahan. The idea is here somewhere. Crowds pour back and forth searching for the idea. Capitalism? Capitalism is not the idea. Liberalism? Liberalism is not the idea. Communism? Communism might be the idea. I. W. W. ism? They do not know. Anarchism? Hell no, anarchism is not the idea.

One thing and one only, one idea and one only: Capitalism is no longer the idea to warm the lonely sad hearts of men. Capitalism is no longer a battle cry charging imaginations with lust for life, adventure, adoration. Capitalism is no longer the maiden to be adored and fought for.

WHERE IS THE IDEA?

The idea is a live thing. It snaps and jerks over the drab brown streets pimpled with Lozowick buildings. The idea is a vital force. The idea of the idea is a living breathing force.

A welter of ideas, inchoate, formless; disillusion upon disillusion. Cynicism rampant. Idealism slowly conquering. One thing certain: SOMETHING MUST BE DONE!

WHERE IS THE IDEA?

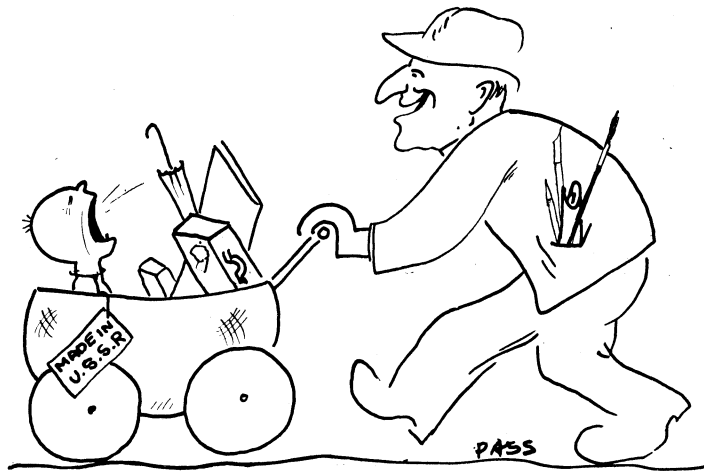
2

PORTRAIT IN RED

George Hanrahan on the street opposite the little cigar store, talks of the Krassin. To George the exploit of the Krassin means something. It is, in a way, the IDEA. He talks of it with enthusiasm, joyously. He charges his audience with enthusiasm. To George the exploit of the Krassin symbolizes the drive and will of the world proletariat slowly grasping the IDEA.

The crowd listens.

"Now you take these capitalist countries. What did they do? Did they try to do anything? They fell to their knees and prayed to God to save the Italia expedition. The pope calls on the faithful to pray. But God was busy, reading the 'Seattle Star,' I guess. What did these here terrible Bolshies do? They threw him into the garbage can and did something. They went ahead with action and the Krassin and did something. Action! They want action! Only action will build the new world!"



Drawn by Morris Pass

Groppa Is a Poppa

Notorious cartoonist returned last month to U. S. after a year in Soviet Russia. He smuggled in a new baby, which he claimed as his own.

The Salvation army marches by beating drums, blowing cornets, jingling tambourines, drowning George's talk. George looks scornfully, pushes his black derby still further back on his head.

"Look, fellow workers, there goes God marching by!" ..

George points to a corner where he once talked wobbly to the crowds. That was during the war. Eighteen times was George arrested. They tell him to be a good sport and pay a small fine, but George's old man tells him "If you pay your fine you admit you're guilty, and if you pay your fine, by God! I'll have nothing to do with you." George says he had a swell old man. George says he kept on getting pinched until they got tired of feeding him, as he never would pay a fine.

George speaks of the General Strike. The General Strike made a sledgehammer impression on Seattle. He speaks of the General Strike as though it happened yesterday. His voice is tinged with a hearty scorn for Ole Hanson, now the famed founder of San Clemente By The Sea. George was a member of the Newsboys Union. He talked Bolshevism to the members and the president of the union fined him \$500. George says he only laughed. "Christ! do you think they could make me pay the fine? I had too many of the boys with me, and if Green (the president) got too hard-boiled, the boys would have come with me and we'd had a new union."

When George speaks of the Soviet Union he does so with passionate intensity. At every progress of the U. S. S. R. George smiles like a child. His IDEA is alive. "Banish the Gods from the skies, and capitalism from the Earth." ..

George is a fellow to remember, to admire, and to love. He is a Jimmie Higgins of the Communist movement. He is modest, likes to disparage himself. He tells of his achievements in a tone implying achievements should be put between quotation marks. George to George is not a hero. George to George is but an infinitesimal unit in the as yet embryonic pattern of the revolutionary movement. George never says I. It is always we. A splendid example worthy of emulation by many of our self-conscious proletarian comrades!

Two fat ponderous "bulls" walk with heavy feet up and down the cement walks, keeping order. They scowl sourly at George. They scowl sourly at the crowds. Not a woman in that mass of seething humanity to tickle under the chin—nothing to do but walk up and down drab brown streets scowling sourly at George, scowling sourly at the crowds.

3

DIRECT ACTION

The Skidway has its humor, too. Nearly every night, a slightly corpulent short figure comes to a stop opposite Sammy Cohen, the anarchist, and fumes with blasphemous derision. He walks nervously, impatient. He bellows. He offers Sammy Cohen a punch on the nose. The crowd surges toward him. They look at him with quickened interest. He is by contrast dressed with exquisite taste, obviously a member of the "upper" classes.

"Words! Words! Words! Nothing but words! To hell with this talking! Bayonet to bayonet, Godammit, bayonet to bayonet now!

To hell with this—the dog!" He bellows. . .

Later he says he inherited three million dollars from his old man, but by Jeeze, he knows what's right, and he wants a little equality for the working man.

It is a permanent picture: this corpulent short sweating figure shaking his fist at Sammy Cohen, anarchist, and cursing luridly the while.

4

COUNTER-REVOLUTION

Sammy Cohen is an abnormally short person, with a mane of black hair, and a very greasy face. His pronunciation is decidedly imperfect; his knowledge of crowd psychology tremendous. He roars abuse in a degree commensurate with the tempo of the crowd. He reads faces. His tone changes subtly with the changing lights in the eyes of the crowd. He hits and retracts. He is a consummate liar. He is the reptile in the labor movement that sways its head waiting to pierce the legs of his fellowmen with his small poisonous tongue.

His technique in baffling a puzzled opponent harks back to the estimable day when arguments were settled with spike boots. An ex-service man, one of the Americans who mutineed in Siberia, takes exception to a remark Sammy makes about the U. S. S. R. Sammy's eyes sparkle with glee. His face breaks into smiles. "So you ben to Russia, hay?" "Yes." "You don't say—ben all the way to Russia—hay?" Laughter. His opponent in words becomes puzzled, self-conscious, aware of the hilarious eyes of the crowd. Sammy beats into the veteran's head the incontestable fact that he, the veteran, is really a fool and should be at home with his mamma. The crowd roars. It is a peculiar characteristic of the human race to find pleasure in the discomfiture of one of their kind. The crowd heckles the veteran, laughs and jeers at him. The pale face of the veteran becomes a violent red; he blushes, smiles weakly, and flees. Sammy has proven, by the defeat of this soldier, these points:

1. In Soviet Russia over three million children are homeless and without food.

2. In Soviet Russia the nationalization of women is still in force, and girls of nine are raped on the streets of Moscow.

Sammy skilfully plays the role of agent-provocateur. Sorenson, district organizer of the Workers' Party, speaks opposite Sammy Cohen. He speaks of Soviet Russia with a passionate fervor;

he discounts point after point Sammy has "proven." Sammy turns from his audience and faces Sorenson. He howls with laughter, and shouts "Ya! ya! ya!" over the heads of the milling crowds. He drowns Sorenson's voice. The crowd mills excitedly, bewildered. The gap in the street fills, blocking traffic. The two ponderous heavyfooted "bulls" advance belligerently toward the Communists. Sorenson leaves his box and takes up a position vacated by George Hanrahan who has a sudden fierce desire to throttle Sammy Cohen.

The crowd leaves Sammy Cohen. The cynics, proletarian cynics, those curious fruits of capitalism, remain, applaud Sammy. Sammy takes up a collection. He gets \$1.52.

5

A BELOVED FIGHTER

Sorenson is also short, in poor health, but possessed of enormous enthusiasm and a beautiful faith in the proletariat.

It is quite evident that he is loved by many of the audience.

Sorenson speaks for a long time. He becomes exhausted.

George Hanrahan and a woman comrade take Sorenson's arms and guide him gently across the street.

I looked in George's eyes and saw a beautiful emotion. I am sure that George would lay down his life for his Comrade Sorenson.

6

ONE SNAP LEFT

The crowds swirl in the streets as restless as leaves stirred by a stout breeze. There is life here, and enthusiasm.

When they speak of the Russian revolution, their eyes light up, their voices become vibrant with life. One gets the feeling that eleven years have not passed since the revolution. The enthusiasm and interest here are as deep as the enthusiasm and interest immediately following the first successes of the Bolsheviks.

There is doubt, despair, and cynicism, but the implacable persistence of logic is gaining ground, is making splendid headway.

Even the sailors and soldiers crowd around George Hanrahan, buying the bulk of his DAILY WORKERS, leaving for their ships and their quarters with thoughtful expressions.

The idea is a vital force. It snaps and jerks about the streets; it snaps and jerks about the streets. The idea is a live breathing thing, entering the stale backhouses of despair like a cleansing freshening blast of clear air.



Two More Gunmen Go Bankrupt

American Prosperity Has Created Hundreds of New Millionaires and Thousands of New Gunmen. These two unsuccessful go-getters met their deaths peddling rackets for their boss, Scarface Al Capone, of Chicago.



Two More Gunmen Go Bankrupt

American Prosperity Has Created Hundreds of New Millionaires and Thousands of New Gunmen. These two unsuccessful go-getters met their deaths peddling rackets for their boss, Scarface Al Capone, of Chicago.

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THE SAD YOUNG MEN

By BERNARD SMITH

The years 1927-1928 will be significant in literary history. They mark the crystallization of a movement that began immediately after the World War, that gathered strength and importance during the following years, and that finally established itself as an adequate expression of the various spiritual currents disturbing this decade of American life. The emphasis on 1927 and 1928 is not arbitrary. It was during those two years that Ernest Hemingway achieved public recognition and the *American Caravan* appeared. The welcome accorded Josephine Herbst and Morley Callaghan, followers of the Hemingway manner and mode, is sufficiently indicative of the trend. The younger American intellectuals have finally realized that their emotional responses to the contemporary scene parallel those of the moderns, whether "incomprehensible" or "hardboiled."

The work of the newer writers is insignificant in quantity, but from now on we can expect creation to increase persistently. Those with whom we are already acquainted will produce more; new names will appear. The economic stimulus seldom fails. Previously, there was little enough impulse to production. One who is forced to write advertising copy is not likely to spend much of his leisure time writing poems that he knows will not be published. With a market open, the situation changes. There is material compensation, and there is something more—there is an audience.

But there is enough data for the critic. The manifestoes issued sporadically by the little reviews enable the observer to determine the aims and ideals of the writers that have been loosely described as "modernistic" and "experimental." The range of composition is outlined clearly, and it will occasion no surprise that each new product of the movement almost invariably falls within the boundaries already defined. It will be found that the movement is split into two groups from the point of view of technique and approach, but that the dominant spirit is common to both. A survey of the *American Caravan*, or of *transition*, or any of the older quarterlies, reveals two major tendencies in prose manner. Part of the prose is rich, rhythmic, almost musical, highly imagistic, compounded of startling associations. Note the novelette, *Narthea*, by H. D., in the *Second Caravan*, or the prose of Jean Toomer and Waldo Frank. The opposing school whittles its lines to the bone. The prose is clear, simple, hard, seldom flexible, seldom imaginative. Hemingway, Callaghan and Herbst are among the chief exponents of the latter method.

The division in technique is not accidental. It results from a division in interest. It seems to me that the writers who are creating the musical prose, with its sudden lyric phrases, its sweeping beat, its exploitation of esoteric and exotic words and sequences of words, are chiefly concerned with the phenomena of the mind. They are pure subjectivists, probing the human soul, seeking the springs of thought and action in the subconscious, elaborating the chaotic or amorphous first-impression. Briefly, they may be described as "psychoanalysts."

The interest of Hemingway and his followers is centered mainly in physical acts, in tangible or observable phenomena. They are unwilling to explore realms that do not lend themselves to direct and immediate measurement. Hidden causes, indeterminate vague feelings are meaningless to them, except as they may be interpreted from the action and speech of the individual. Hemingway, for instance, will write a sketch about a toreador exclusively with the eyes of a spectator. He will describe the bullfighter's gestures in detail, how he holds the sword, how he manoeuvres for an aggressive position, how he receives the charge of the enraged bull, but not a word about the man's thoughts at the moment, not more than a hint of his emotions. Of course, the reader is free to interpret what Hemingway gives him to see. But the author himself is aloof. Similarly, Callaghan contents himself with following his bootlegger hero of *Strange Fugitive* through the intricacies of the entire racket without telling us more about the internal life of his protagonist than that he frequently thinks of his mother. Hemingway, Callaghan and the others of this group are "behaviorists."

The limitations of each method are apparent. Delving into the subconscious, studying the "soul," is a precarious business. There is nothing exact, nothing to put your finger on, not enough to work with in this ethereal, vaporous land of amazing contradictions. You must be appalled by the indefiniteness of your own feelings. You are confused when you attempt to analyze. Whatever you dig up from the bed of the stream is not complete. It does not explain the causes of human acts simply because behavior is not always the logical outcome of perceptible stimuli. Inherited traits, physiological influences, acquired habits of mind, patterns of tradition and taboo unconsciously absorbed from the environment, each plays its part in determining the final result of an impact of sense or thought. Each intervenes between stimulus and response. You cannot interpret behavior, in other words, merely from the recorded emotions, moods, impressions. A flow of undisciplined ideas, or a description of a dream, a sensation, or an emotion, may excite the reader momentarily, but it will not leave him with a functionable aesthetic experience.

The behavioristic approach is likewise incomplete. It is impossible to interpret motives, emotional conflicts, emerging ideas and the counterplay of environmental influences purely from behavior. An act in itself gives no hint of the storms that may have preceded it. An act does not define the cause. It does not limit the choice of conditioning factors. It lacks historical perspective. Of course, Hemingway does not depend solely upon recreating an act, and neither Jean Toomer nor Eugene Jolas contents himself with reflection. But the tendencies exist, the emphasis is distributed according to the two plans, and each must be judged in terms of its central idea.

Thus the two schools start from a single premise, that language is plastic, follow each other for a time in their mutual agreement, that new phases of human life must be explored, and then diverge in technique and subject. But ultimately they come together again. The philosophies and personal prejudices of the schools are identical, and the spiritual forces motivating their intellectual convictions never vary. They are one in their attitude toward modern life. This attitude is never precise, never frankly admitted, never even stated with any pretense of honesty. But it exists. It inspires and forms the total basis of contemporary creation. And this attitude is one of negation.

There has never been a literary movement so depressing in its implications as the contemporary movement. There have never been so many young authors in the throes of personal despair as there are today. Almost without exception the writers identified with the modern schools exhibit moods of despondency and melancholy. Pessimism does not appreciatively describe the philosophy. Pessimism at least is concrete. It has metaphysical reality. It results from certain assumptions about the nature of man and the universe. It is something you can examine, discuss, attack. But you cannot argue with "intuition." These machine-mystics, these sad young men are "intuitive." They feel; they do not think. Something is wrong, something is evil, let's have a drink. That is the state of mind current in the studios. The intellectual expression is a refusal to take anything seriously but their own spiritual impotency, denial of values, denial of good, denial of humanity, denial of historical destiny. This is not the angry, ferocious repudiation of man-made institutions by a Dean Swift; it is a pale gesture of futility, a confession of personal weakness taking form in alcoholic tears.

The critic who has followed social and economic developments in this country since the war will have little difficulty understanding the roots of the ghastly melancholia that has so inescapably entwined the younger writers. Those who were not actually participants in the late idealistic effort to democratize the universe, were just growing out of adolescence. They were forcibly learning a new and unsuspected vocabulary: mutilation, death, gas, hysteria, insanity . . . and hypocrisy, falsity, imperialism. Centuries of dreaming were raped in four years by a handful of military statesmen propelled by forces they but dimly recognized. Commerce and the dollar were enthroned frankly in the United States. The nation became an enormous Ford factory. Even its diversions, its moments of debauchery were ordered on the speed-up system. The people were regimented and mechanized, not with an intelligent view to efficient satisfaction of material

wants in order to increase leisure, but with the direct purpose of castrating incipient revolt and re-enforcing the existent economic order.

The masses survived. They did not adopt an ethic of suicide. They accepted the machine-age, they went to the movies and the burlesque hall and laughed, and everything went on as before, although on an altered psychological basis. But the young intellectuals died. They rejected in theory, if not in practical life, the role of the machine in contemporary existence. They rejected collectivism in social organization. They were unable to find a place for themselves in the new scheme of things, for there is no longer glorification of the ivory-tower individualist, no longer worship of the Byronic romanticist, no room for dreams and lullabies and Bohemian gestures. In short, they were out of a job with no visible means of support. The only solution to their problem was thorough nihilism. The present mood and ideology of the young, modern American writers reminds me of the state of mind of the youth in Russia after the abortive 1905 revolution. Here also there is relief in whiskey and fornication. The chief difference between the Russians and the Americans is that the Russians committed suicide and the Americans go on living. It happened that the Russians had few sources of amusement while the Americans either have or hope to have enough money to indulge in the pleasures of our more fastidious millionaires.

The maladjustment of the young intellectuals is due to the fact of their origins. They come from middle-class or well-to-do homes. But they have too much native intelligence and are too sensitive to accept the crass, ugly materialism of their social equals, or perhaps they have been to Europe and have acquired the Continental contempt for the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, they are incapable of allying themselves in aspiration and spirit with those workers that are actively planning a new form of democracy. The clue is found in Lewis Mumford's *Little Testament*, in the *Second Caravan*, where he says of himself that he hated the capitalists for oppressing the workers, and also hated the workers for permitting themselves to be oppressed. There is some justification in this aloofness. The proletarian movement in America is largely conspicuous by its impotency. It is almost non-existent, and a certain simplicity of courage and vision is necessary for alliance with a thing that has not penetrated the consciousness of the masses. It is possible for the intellectuals of Germany and France to become "proletarians," and they do so. It is practically impossible as yet in this country.

The dilemma of the younger writers is exemplified in their work. Sex, psychopathology and a dilettante's interest in the antics of gangsters and "tough guys" are the major themes of the newer writing. The narrowness of technique becomes comprehensible. The "behaviorists" refuse to accept the validity of thought and ideas. That is one form of negation. The "psychoanalysts" repudiate acts and toy with the "pure soul." That is another form of negation. That both stem from a common spiritual source is proven by the fact that the two apparently antagonistic factions acclaim each other joyfully. Each recognizes in the other a jobless comrade.

I do not think a permanent, or even a transiently important literature can be nourished in soil such as I have described. We need now, and will demand in the future, a literature of which the intellectual content is healthy and positive in its attitude toward human values, and of which the contact with pressing problems and conflicts is more evident. It would be futile, nevertheless, to attempt to condemn the young writers for their philosophy, if I may call an undefined mood a philosophy. They are products of their time; they cannot undergo a metamorphosis, unless some vital spiritual upheaval occurs while they are still young, which is improbable. To understand them is enough. By understanding we nullify their influence. Gloom is glamorous, but it becomes pitiful when weakness is seen to be its foundation. We are all maladjusted, all more or less neurotic. The point of departure is the utility to which you put your maladjustment.

Certain things, however, must be noted in favor of the young writers. No matter what their ideas may be, we cannot decry the manner in which they have handled those ideas. They have broken effectively the rigid modes of convention. They have evolved a new technology. They have broadened the medium, and have proven by their experimentation that language has not been exploited. With new rhythms, new combinations of words, new angles of approach, they have affected a revolution in aesthetics. And that, I think, is their claim to importance. They are indirectly teaching the next generation how to write. When a more

courageous, more violent literature will arise in America, it will probably be in the forms created by the present group of young moderns.

ROAR CHINA, ROAR!

China's Millions, by Anna Louise Strong. Coward-McCann. \$4.

The Chinese revolution is not synonymous with the brilliant northward drive of the nationalist armies in the spring of 1927. Nor does the treachery of the Kuomintang mean the death of the revolution. Revolutions are too often identified with the marches of generals and with match box governments.

The northward drive of the nationalist armies was a spectacular phase of the colossal social struggle which is still going on in China. The close of the drive marked the realignment of the social forces involved in the struggle; but it in no sense marked the death or even the decline of the struggle. It meant that the Chinese middle classes had swung over to the forces of the counter-revolution and that the workers, the huge mass of peasantry and the artisans must now face the middle classes, the feudal landlords and the imperialists.

The Kuomintang generals and the middle class intellectuals who have formed a government in Nanking have by no means eased the sharpness of the revolutionary struggle. On the contrary, they have intensified it. Instead of land, they have given the peasant additional taxes. Instead of shortening the hours of labor, they have deprived the worker of the right to organize and have ruthlessly murdered trade union leaders. Instead of struggling for nationalism, they have worked hand and glove with the imperialist powers.

Nor are the Kuomintang generals capable of establishing a stable government. United only in their war against the workers and the peasants, they have been involved in a constant struggle for spoils and power. On the one hand the Shanghai generals make overtures to Wall Street; on the other, the ambitious young Canton war lord, Li Chai-sum, seizes two Standard Oil tankers.

It is the real forces of the revolution and not the sham battles of the war lords with which Anna Louise Strong concerns herself in her brilliant story of her journey from Shanghai, to Hankow and north to Mongolia made in the stirring days of 1927. And these forces are presented not in text book style, but in a series of extraordinarily brilliant thumbnail sketches that make the revolution a tremendous living reality and not a conglomeration of strange names gleaned from newspapers.

There is young Yu Mo Hwai, the Shanghai labor organizer, who has just escaped from the secret police of Chiang Kai-shek and who has come to Hankow to attend the trade union congress. Yu is young; but he has helped organize the municipal workers of Shanghai and the railway workers on the Nanking and Nipgo roads. He took part in the demonstrations of May 30, 1925. His life has been sought by the northern troops and the secret police of Chiang Kai-shek.

Or there is Ten who is organizing the peasants in Hupeh. Already the reaction has set in. The supposedly revolutionary Wuhan government has forbidden the peasants to use arms against the bands of reactionaries in the villages. It does nothing to relieve the crushing burden of rents and taxes. But Ten works steadily on, knowing that at any moment he may be seized by the reactionaries, brutally tortured and murdered.

It is on the disintegration of the Wuhan government and its secret alliance with General Feng that Anna Louise Strong has written one of her most valuable chapters. She was in Hankow when the middle class intellectuals who ran the government first began to yield to the pressure of the war lords and she was in Chengchow when the Hankow generals agreed with Feng to suppress the workers and peasants movement and to smash the rapidly growing Communist Party. Little of any value has been written on this phase of the revolution.

Describing her return from Chengchow, Miss Strong writes: "Passing out of the great Central Plain of Honan where the peasants had finished in these few days the harvest of wheat and were loading now on their primitive oxcarts for transport, we entered the high mountain pass that leads to Hupeh. In the dimness of the waning moon, General Galen pointed out to me so some half distinguishable shapes under the trees and in the little ravines; there, he said, were the bodies of Cantonese who had died advancing by this pass and railway. It was for this that they had

died; it was for this that fourteen thousand wounded lay in the hospitals of Hankow, boys of Kwangtung and Hunan who had marched forth for a hope that most of them were only beginning to understand. It was for this only,—that after the revolutionary Iron Armies had been broken by the cost of victory, their allies who survived might establish a military dictatorship, based on the joint suppression of workers and peasants."

Not all of the revolutionary troops have been wiped out, however. In the provinces of the south, in Kwangtung, Kwangsi and Hunan worker and peasant troops have been fighting the Kuomintang generals and the workers and peasants of China have not only learned the lessons of organization, but they have learned to distinguish their friends from their enemies.

H. F.

THE NAUGHTY TEASER!

The Lady of Stainless Raiment, by Mathilde Eiker. Doubleday, Doran. \$2.

In all the huge volume of printed matter that belches unremittingly from the presses of capitalism, the main mass of which is diluted and disguised propaganda in favor of Things-As-They-Are, which we euphemistically call "literature," we can occasionally separate a few kernels and at least be amused momentarily. Even Bruce Barton, who loves the Power Lobby as a Frenchman loves his mistress, palls on the palates of the Idle Class (I mean the book readers).

Now comes the naughty little school marm, Mattie Eiker, who forgets the forget-me-not bordered mottoes she has been impressing upon impetuous high school youth and flings her heels in a sheer ecstasy of school let out and a youth repressed. In *The Lady of Stainless Raiment* there is a splendid charm of narration, a thoroughly frank dissection of the weakness of modern sex relations and an utter absence of anything approaching a social or economic conception. Mattie can write well, it is a pleasure to read her, but in this latest as in the other two novels, *Mrs. Mason's Daughters* and *Over the Boatside* she misses the epic sweep. Psychologizing is all right in its place, but we are getting a hell of a lot of that and too damn little "economizing" and I don't mean the Coolidge kind either.

Chastity, or as one farmer pronounced it, chase-titty, from time immemorial has been a thing that old maids love to fool around but none of them have done much about, at least, not openly. Mattie is like all the rest of the teasers, and instead of taking the bull by the horns (or tail?) fools around in a thoroughly tantalizing sophistication of paganism.

Where do these lady writers live that they can so effectually escape the economic milieu and its implications? I don't want Marx in every novel I read, and I don't want to spend all my time reading textbooks of economics disguised as social novels, but why do so many of these bourgeois writers who have the ability to keep us awake, why do they leave the solid ground of reality, the economic texture, and fly into the azure of economic nothingness?

If Mattie were to go out and get a job in a textile mill, if she were to live actually as a proletarian class conscious girl, she would soon see on what a shallow basis her three novels rest and, I believe, for there is sincerity as well as technic in her work, that she could produce a novel equal to anything that Sinclair Lewis has done.

HENRY FLURY.

BUILT ON SAND

The Feathered Nest, by Margaret Leech. Liveright. \$2.50.

Let one imagine himself living in New York City in 1894 without the noise of horse cars, without the presence of the Hudson and its river traffic. Or in 1928 without the sound of the subways, elevated trains, people going to and from work, and other of the thousand sounds and smells and physical qualities that are irrevocably part of the city. One who can do so may enjoy *The Feathered Nest*.

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dition is necessary for even the flimsiest superstructure. Miss Leech, however, has consciously or unconsciously dispensed with it. Her novel, as a result, gives one the feeling of a Woolworth Building set on shifting sand, ready to collapse with the first inflow of the tide. In other words, an impossible building.

"The Feathered Nest" is built around the problems of a millionaire widow whose egocentric character brings her into sharp conflict with her three sons. Ultimately, her attempts at being the dominant force of their lives fail, and her life becomes a blank.

But it is all unconvincing. People who have nothing else in life, whose only possessions, or creations, or interests are their children, feel the way Isabelle Forster is drawn to feel when her children go their own ways. But who has ever heard of a person worth three million dollars, with the wide scope of activity and interests that the possession of such a sum implies, to feel so painfully the loss of control over only one of these interests? It is a fictitious problem that Miss Leech presents; at least not universal enough in reality for so protracted a study.

In addition, the psychological inferences in the volume are unsound, and the physical delineations nil. The complete superstructure therefore collapses, leaving not even the pleasing colors of any stylistic felicities among the ruins.

EDWIN ROLFE.

A SNOB'S POTBOILER

The Stammering Century, by Gilbert Seldes. John Day. \$5.

You would never suspect it, but Gilbert Seldes is a friend of the masses—he says so himself. Only in an intellectual way, of course. Nothing stupidly political or fanatic. He defends them against the inconsequential Menckonian concept of "a special boob class" versus a few wisealecky little Menckens. To a good democrat like Gilbert Seldes, we are little boobs. Of course, "radicals" are more so than others. Radicals are people who suffer from an inferiority complex. All radicals are alike—pretty sick, all of

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THE NEW RUSSIA

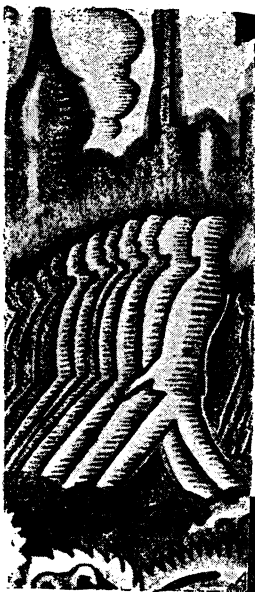
By DOROTHY THOMPSON

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by Theodore Dreiser

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GOOD
BOOKS

Our Next Issue

The January Number of the NEW MASSES, first number of the new year, will be a literary and book number, devoted mainly to a whole-hearted assault on the conventions of American literature. Ballyhooed writers will be examined critically, magazines will be exposed, the publishing racket will be described.

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them. Social radicals are persons who would like Capital and Labor to be friends (imagine! but he actually says it), which would make a pretty dull sort of world, thinks Seldes. Stale wisecracks like these for over four hundred pages and five dollars, by a Doctor of Outlines and hack writer for the *Dial*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and the *Herald Tribune*. Then, toward the close, Mr. Seldes lets us in on a secret. You know, he is something of a classicist, concerned with the higher things of the spirit—more or less pure “idea.” You know what I mean. The kind of man who can say without blushing in an article called “Debunking the Debunkers” (*Herald Tribune*, Oct. 21, 1928): “Debunking has been useful, entertaining and financially successful; but as I suspect that it has been an inadequate, often silly, always superficial criticism of American life, I have tried to discover in it the element of bunk which blunted its instruments.” All very well, but a rather ambitious task for a liberal-classicist-individualist, who, hopelessly confused himself, tries dishonestly to confuse the reader by likening the Marxian communist to the amusing “cranks” of the nineteenth century. His great discovery, apparently, is that we are all boobs—and yet:

“There are, of course, superior human beings marked by independence. These, however, are not a class, but individuals, capable of resisting both the majority and the minority, untouched by suggestion, resisting or following the current as they choose.” Such as Mr. Seldes, we are to assume. Therefore he is not speaking for himself, but for those “in the rut,” as he calls it. That’s what it means to be a democrat! Contradictions like this are typical. After stating that “the ancient radical ideas are soft and ridiculous in the eyes of the communist, just as the old banners of democracy are trampled under the feet of Fascism,” he goes on to describe the communist as an aberrated cultist, inferior in importance even to the puritans of sex and diet. The most “individualist” reader, thinking these matters out, will automatically reject such sophistry. It is written, we suspect, for those bluff, hearty, prosperous, thoroughly normal democrats of the *Saturday Evening Post* clan.

Seldes gets modest in the introduction, called “A Note on Method.” “My original idea was a timid protest against the arrogance of reformers in general.” Then he says: “I came gradually to want to prove nothing.” Gentle reader, he has gone and done that very thing, conclusively, and again and again.

HERMAN SPECTOR.

LIBERALISM AND REACTION

Living in the Twentieth Century, by Harry Elmer Barnes. Bobbs Merrill.

Who Will Be Master: Europe or America? by Lucien Romier. Macaulay. \$2.50.

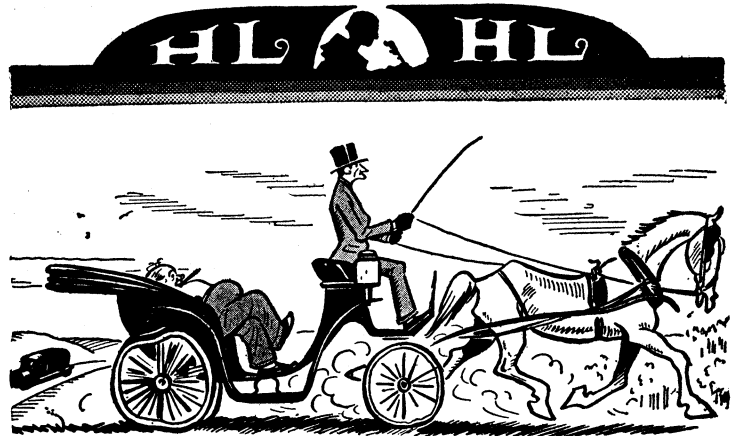
The prolific Professor Barnes has written a book dealing with the technological and scientific advances made since the Industrial Revolution, and the resultant social implications.

Barnes is particularly interested in recording those changes “which separate our day from the civilization of Bentham, Jackson or Lincoln.”

Like its predecessors, *Living in the Twentieth Century*, contains no original contribution. It is rather a compilation of data popularizing the various economic and social conditions brought about by the Industrial Revolution.

Barnes analyzes the revolution in transportation and communication, changes in material culture produced primarily by applied chemistry, imperialism and the search for world markets, the expansion of world trade, new types of business organizations and the concentration and localization of industry—in the light of the “New History,” which is nothing more than a modified liberal version of the Economic Interpretation of History.

Finally, Professor Barnes outlines the various proposals for reconstruction. Altho he realizes that the new order will be one “in which the service motive will supplant the profit incentive,” his own belief is that this transformation will be accomplished by granting economic and social “justice” to the proletariat without sacrificing the supposedly superior directive and inventive ability of the capitalist. In other words, a reform which embraces the interest of both capitalist and proletariat.



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As for Romier's book, *Who Will Be Master: Europe or America?* M. Romier's economics can be identified with those of the French school who accept the doctrine of *solidarism*, one of the most reactionary philosophies in modern history. This philosophy first gained prominence from the pens of Charles Gide and Emile Durkheim, to whom, by the way, Romier forgets to give credit for many of his ideas.

He accepts as the basis of his philosophy the theory that society is an organism. As such, it demands an organic unity of human interests, which means sociologically, that the interests of the bosses and workers are identical, that there must be a close harmony of these two forces to insure progress and avoid revolution.

This doctrine of class-collaboration (*solidarism*) which aims at industrial conciliation to placate the workers and keep them interested in the preservation of the *status quo*, is just the sort of argument the American Federation of Labor uses as an alibi for any real action which may lead to militancy and class-consciousness on the part of the American Working Class. But then Romier does not believe in class struggle. To him the proletariat are not workers, "it is all humanity," that are the proletariat.

M. Romier's cure for unemployment, is that every worker should know at least two trades. Fancy that!

"Wars," he believes, "are almost always caused, in the last analysis by overpopulation." This in the face of all the new material collected since the World War, proving without a trace of doubt, that the war was nothing less than a war for profits, and the hogging of the world's resources.

The problem for him, is not: "What new civilization will arise out of the ruins of the old?" but which one "possesses sufficient moral and physical vigor to adopt itself to mass needs, in order to impose itself upon the rest of the world?" This issue, he believes, must be decided between Europe and America.

J. WASSERMAN.

SEX UNDER CAPITALISM

The Bankruptcy of Marriage, by V. F. Calverton. Macaulay. \$3.

Upon first glance at the contemporary scene, the observer gets the impression that the youth of America are emancipated from the thralldom of the sex taboos which Puritanism imposed upon their parents. The shallow crass pretensions of bourgeois respectability appear to be recognized as bogus shams. The changed economic status of women and the diffusion of knowledge of contraceptives seem to have produced a new morality.

But along the main streets of America chastity and virginity have yet value on the marriage market and are still carefully guarded. The revolt of the youth is more verbal than actual. There is an inertia in sex mores that defies the freedom derived by women through self-support and medical protection in sex enjoyment. The concept of "sin" still sprinkles its poison and paralyzes joyous participation in the amorous relations of the sexes. A complete negation of the church with its sex attitudes developed by men whom modern psychologists, would classify as sex perverts and psychopathic personalities alone can dispel the inhibitions that are yet attached to sexual acts. It is only in Soviet Russia, where, when the proletariat came in power, they swept the putrid hypocrisies of capitalist ethics into the ash heap, that fundamental revolutionary changes in morality have occurred. In capitalist countries, in spite of unparalleled financial backing by the ruling class for their own ends, the church is weakening in control along with the urbanization of life, but it is still the dominant purveyor of specious ethics which impede any real transvaluation of moral values in these countries. Changes in sex behavior have occurred which reflect economic and technological changes but these are only partial because of the lingering fetters of religious ideology, fostered and enforced by capitalist states.

Calverton has therefore wisely published his analysis of the attitude toward sex in Soviet Russia along with his exposition of the cross currents of the contemporary sex revolt in America. With candor and perspicacity, he contrasts the attitude toward birth control, adultery, prostitution, illegitimacy, marriage, divorce and kindred matters in capitalistic countries and in the Soviet Union. There is a striking absence of the silly cant and sentimentality, the "God save us" moralizings and the smirching hypocrisies that are characteristic of the literature in this field. Sophisticates will

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find the book original neither in concept or execution. It is merely a competent analysis and synthesis of the work of others (the only original investigation is the author's personal inquiry into the sale of contraceptives in Baltimore). But for the thousands who are fussing and fuming about companionate marriage, who know more about immaculate conception than immaculate contraception, the book will be stimulating and richly provocative.

BENNETT STEVENS.

LOST IN FREEDOM

Freedom in the Modern World, edited by Horace M. Kallen. Coward-McCann. \$2.50.

Eleven essays by more or less distinguished thinkers on the problem of freedom are gathered together in this volume by Horace Kallen, and offered by him to the enslaved world with an apology. The apology is entitled "Why Freedom Is a Problem." While freedom is certainly a very pressing problem, Mr. Kallen fails to explain exactly why. The list of contributors includes Max Eastman, Clarence Darrow, John Dewey, Walton Hamilton and Father John Ryan. It is a list noteworthy for its inclusiveness. And this inclusiveness is one of the faults of the book. So many different ideas are presented that confusion is the chief impression of the reader. The book lacks any semblance of intellectual unity. There is, however, a unity of spirit. Most of the contributors are liberal metaphysicians. Which is enough to describe the various ideas that float haphazardly through the eleven essays.

BERNARD SMITH.

THE SOVIET VILLAGE

Village Life Under the Soviets, by Karl Borders. Vanguard Press. 50c.

A short, concise volume of the "Vanguard Studies of Soviet Russia" series, written by an American who spent three years in the villages of Soviet Russia. Karl Borders first came to Russia as a member of the Quaker Relief Expedition during the famine of 1922 and again in 1925. He can speak and write Russian.

The author is an impartial observer of the peasants and peasant life in Soviet Russia and these are some of his conclusions: that the peasant of whom there are 90 millions in Russian, critical though he may be, stands firmly back of the government; that there is a genuine collective tendency, fostered by the government, to combine individual plots into larger communal units with the common purchases of machinery; that the biggest task the government has on its hands is to make a bulwark of communism of these millions of petty property owners; and the crying need of these peasants is for machinery, tractors, tractors and more tractors.

A. RESIKA.

GROW UP, CHILDREN!

The Poet's Protest, by Angelo de Luca. \$1.50. The Grub Street Book of Verse. Henry Harrison. \$2.

The Greenwich Village Poets amuse themselves. They have good manners, they sip soup noiselessly, they are essentially virtuous. *The Grub Street Book of Verse* is an inspired collection of the sweetest, most inoffensive outpourings of the sweetest, most inoffensive poetasters in the country. Master de Luca, in calling his work *The Poet's Protest*, is kidding us. He registers his most valid protest in a little piece entitled, "To My Unworthy Critics." The poem preceding that, strange to relate, is called "Premonitions of Genius—A Bid for Immortality." In the words of this poet: "O fame, O life, O youth, repent, repent!" We think that is the best line in the book. The next-best is also very appropriate: "If you do not die too soon, you will grow up." Amen!

HERMAN SPECTOR.

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UNSUNG HEROES

Hunger Fighters, by Paul de Kruif. Harcourt, Brace. \$3.

Hunger Fighters is a companion-piece to *Microbe Hunters*. It continues a series of lively portraits of those scientists who have devoted themselves to human problems. In this book he is concerned with the men who have improved agricultural methods, stabilized food supplies and warred against food diseases.

The impulse that leads Mr. de Kruif to write his fascinating sketches seems to be a grievance against the historians who are more concerned with generals and statesmen than with the men who have affected man's life at least as much as the machinations of petty diplomats. And Mr. de Kruif is righteously wrathful. Social development is frequently dependent upon the isolation of a germ as well as upon the formation of a treaty. Mr. de Kruif could give his thesis a specifically historical significance, however, by indicating that the advance of scientific knowledge corresponds with the increasing complexity of the material environment, with the changes in production resulting in over-populated centers and all their problems of hygiene and the question of man's fitness for factory work. Progress in science is associated with material factors just as are wars, and every other phase of human activity.

There is one chapter in *Hunger Fighters* that particularly lends itself to a little analysis of the relations of science to economics. Joseph Goldberger, a Jewish doctor from the East Side of New York, after years of investigation and research, decided that the deadly pellagra is not caused by germs, but by the absence from the diet of some unknown vitamine. The cause of pellagra, in other words, is a hidden hunger. Among other things leading to this conclusion was the fact observed by Goldberger that people whose incomes are above \$1000 a year are seldom pellagrins. The destitute, whose diet usually does not include fresh meat and milk, are susceptible to the disease. The cure, then, is plenty of food of the right kind. But how can the mill workers and laborers of Georgia and Carolina afford to buy milk and meat? Goldberger's discovery seemed to be worthless, in practical terms. To find a substitute for the expensive food, Goldberger experimented until he found that yeast has the necessary vitamins. And yeast is within the reach of even the poorest. In that short record you have a beautiful example of the influence of material factors on scientific knowledge. But Mr. de Kruif, like all laboratory specialists, ignores the conclusions to be derived from his data.

Morris Fishbein has accused the author of inaccuracy and exaggeration, but for myself the book is more than adequate, the only reservation being Mr. de Kruif's tendency to employ jazzy catchwords. His book, however, reveals heroic deeds unknown to the layman. It paints a picture of such magnificence, with its details of man's patience and bravery and unselfishness, that the reader who approaches the field for the first time must be carried away by it. Written in a fresh, vigorous style, it makes entrancing reading.

BERNARD SMITH.

NOT HEADLINES, BUT LIFE

Headlines, by Mildred Evans Gilman. Liveright. \$2.

Headlines is one of those very few novels that hold your attention from the first to the last page. It is by no means a literary masterpiece, and it has neither philosophic interest nor heroic characters. But it is certainly a charming story about simple people told in an original manner. The author utilizes tabloid headlines, such as "Wifebeater Gets Stiff Term" or "Heiress Adopts Nameless Tot," to indicate similar episodes in the lives of American and foreign settlers in a little Staten Island community. Throughout the book you feel an understanding and sympathy for struggling workers' families. Their lives are described in popular, convincing language. Their tragedies, which they take for granted, become national headlines when prominent people are involved. A pathetic touch of humor is introduced in each chapter by having Mary Pollock, a kindly spinster, read sensational stories in the newspapers and rejoice that the disasters happen far away from her. At the same time she assists at the birth of a tenth child of a poor Italian woman, saves an overworked Irish housewife from committing suicide, and witnesses fires, floods and murders.

N. H. G.

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After about a week you'll receive notice that your loan is ready, and please call for your money. But do you get the money. Don't kid yourself. You'll get the C-note less the investigation fee, less the discount, and, if you are that dumb, less also the insurance charges.

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Does anyone still wonder why men steal rather than borrow when in need? Think it over.

V. D. SCOTT; (messenger.)

N. Y. City.

HELL IN THE ARMY

As there was a great fear of the peons gobbling the United States, the "Powers that be," had launched a great drive for cannon fodder. The receiving barracks were as crowded as a municipal lodging house. Lanky mountaineers from Kentucky. Negroes in patched overalls and worn-out shoes, they slept on the pool tables. Farm hands with bovine expressions and wonder in their eyes. City gangsters, wife deserters and what not. There were several youths none of whom could have been over seventeen. One of them, after being bawled out by a hard-boiled sergeant, borrowed a razor, went down to the basement and slashed his throat.

The next few days were spent in physical examinations, vaccinations and inoculations. For hours we would hop, ---p and jump, stark naked in not too warm rooms in front of different specialists. Many who had passed examinations at centers of enlistment did not pass then. The government paid their transportations back to points of enlistments, many of them seemed to think that it was better to starve and again have their liberty.

We were then moved to different companies, all day hard-boiled corporals, sergeants, etc., would holler and bawl us out, we received our uniforms and other equipment. Soon we were on the parade ground and taught military "science." Anything a drill sergeant despises, is a John, rookie or recruit. We were at that time called Johns. The smallest infraction of rules and they would heap upon us all kinds of verbal abuses. More serious breaks of discipline and we would find ourselves in the guard-house.

In my squad a husky John made awkward attempts to disguise the fact that he did not know how to handle a rifle. The drill sergeant soon called a corporal of the guard, who arrested the man and took him to the guardhouse. He was a deserter, could not find a job, so he enlisted under an assumed name. I was told that all deserters come back because after some time in the service they become helpless.

There were many rowdies amongst the Johns, there were many fights. Usually a sergeant using a bayonet as a club would single-handed put an end to those fights. We were all more or less indisposed, vaccinations, infections and our steam-cooked food did not agree. Every morning at sick

call, hundreds went to the hospital with their complaints. Most of them received a couple of C. C. pills or a dose of salts. One man in my squad room, reported at sick call. The doctor took his temperature, he did not have any, so was sent back to duty. A few hours later that man was found laying dead on his bunk.

Friday was inspection day, most of us were sick, we had received another shot in the arm the day before. We had to stand rigidly at attention, it was snowing. While standing there freezing and sick one of the men fell with a thud face forward on the pavement. He had fainted, soon a few more followed him, a detail picked them up, took them into the barracks. Inspection was not interrupted.

Outside of the reservation there were sa- loons, we could trade our civilian clothes there for beer checks. I received sixty-five cents in checks for my suit, had sold my overcoat for a dollar to one who wanted to go over the hill, which meant to desert.

Ladies of joy abounded in the reservation, they all appeared risky, some of the Johns took a chance anyway. Soon many of them were discharged—"For the good of the Service—" I had been told that I could enlist in any branch of the service I decided. The cavalry had been my choice, but I was doomed for disappointment. It had been decided that I would be sent to Washington, D. C., as an Engineer. So I was going to be a pick and shovel man, I was ready to go over the hill; but it was so damn cold, I was broke, I did not have the courage, as the others, the army already had made me lose my self-confidence. When I left Jefferson Barracks to join my battalion, an oldtimer seeing that I was rather down-hearted, said never mind buddy, it is easy digging down in Mexico, you won't need a pick. There was one consolation, I had been told that as one left the recruiting barracks we would be treated better and get better chow. I was not told that I was going to be a John for many more months, and would be treated as such.

Los Angeles, Cal. CHARLES BURCHEZ

THE LAUGHING SLAVE

I am pounding the pavements now, unemployed, and my talents and experience are wasting away on Third Avenue air, like the desert rose. I am a proletarian; but do I perform the antics of one? Do I join the organizers of labor, go on strike, seek to cast off my chains? Not much; I am too busy looking for chain and a nice, safe kennel. Instead of envying or imitating the revolutionary fox of Aesop's fable. I want a master and a bone to gnaw on. Do you communists blame me? Then let me tell you the story of the laughing slave in America, whose de- praved philosophy I have decided at last to adopt.

First, get me straight—I am not, an intellectual; I have learned my economics chiefly from soap-box orators; and my grammar is the result of a high-school study and my own liking for language and ornate expression. But I am trying to analyze a situation here as clearly as I can, so give ear.

I have concluded that as long as we have with us the laughing patriotic, "right-minded," shallow-thinking slave in this country, there will be no revolution in these United States. And that is likely to be for a weary, long time. The ideology of America's red-baiting, apathetic masses will not change drastically until there is an accompanying change in environment, which does not seem to be imminent, and which in fact will not take place during my lifetime. Now a theory of political and economic change which has pretences to scientific accuracy does not depend very much on my beliefs about it, anyhow. So I may just as well toss away the red revolutionary pamphlets the soap-boxer hands me after his harangue, and look about me for a soft, remunerative job; and if none such happens to be in sight, so much the worse for me. There are a lot of persons who

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have got those jobs; and as long as there is a chance for those below to toady their way up to the soft snap, the petti-bourgeois individualism that so hampers any social change will interfere with the immediate precipitation of an economic revolution. What slight changes may occur in my lifetime is not worth my wasting my energies over. The salesmanship and mental pandering of the parasite master-class has been overwhelmingly successful so far, and will be for quite some stretch of years. The pressing personal problem of each individual proletarian makes him very discouraged about ultimate panaceas—at least it becomes an "ultimate" when there is so little organization.

The proletarian is always tired. And movies, radio, fights, newspapers, cheap sensational books with all their insidious propaganda are easier to absorb than the NEW MASSES, for example. The mass is apathetic, as I have said; it doesn't want theories—it wants realities; bread and butter and a soft couch to lie on and a woman and more optimism. So they swallow the idea that the boss is providing them with life and they tell you, and me when I was an idealist, to "go to hell, ya crazy crank."

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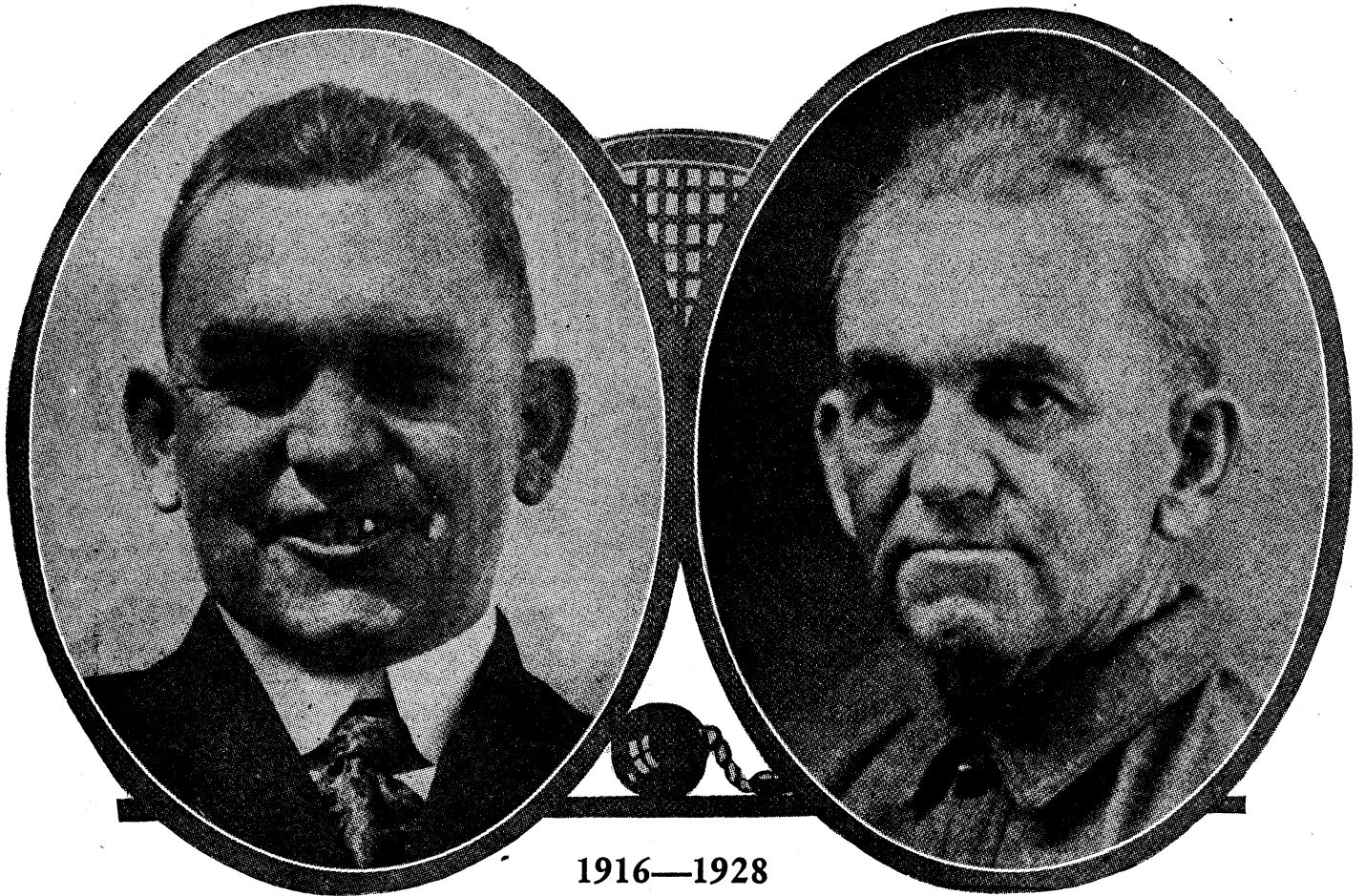
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