

NEW

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OCTOBER, 1929

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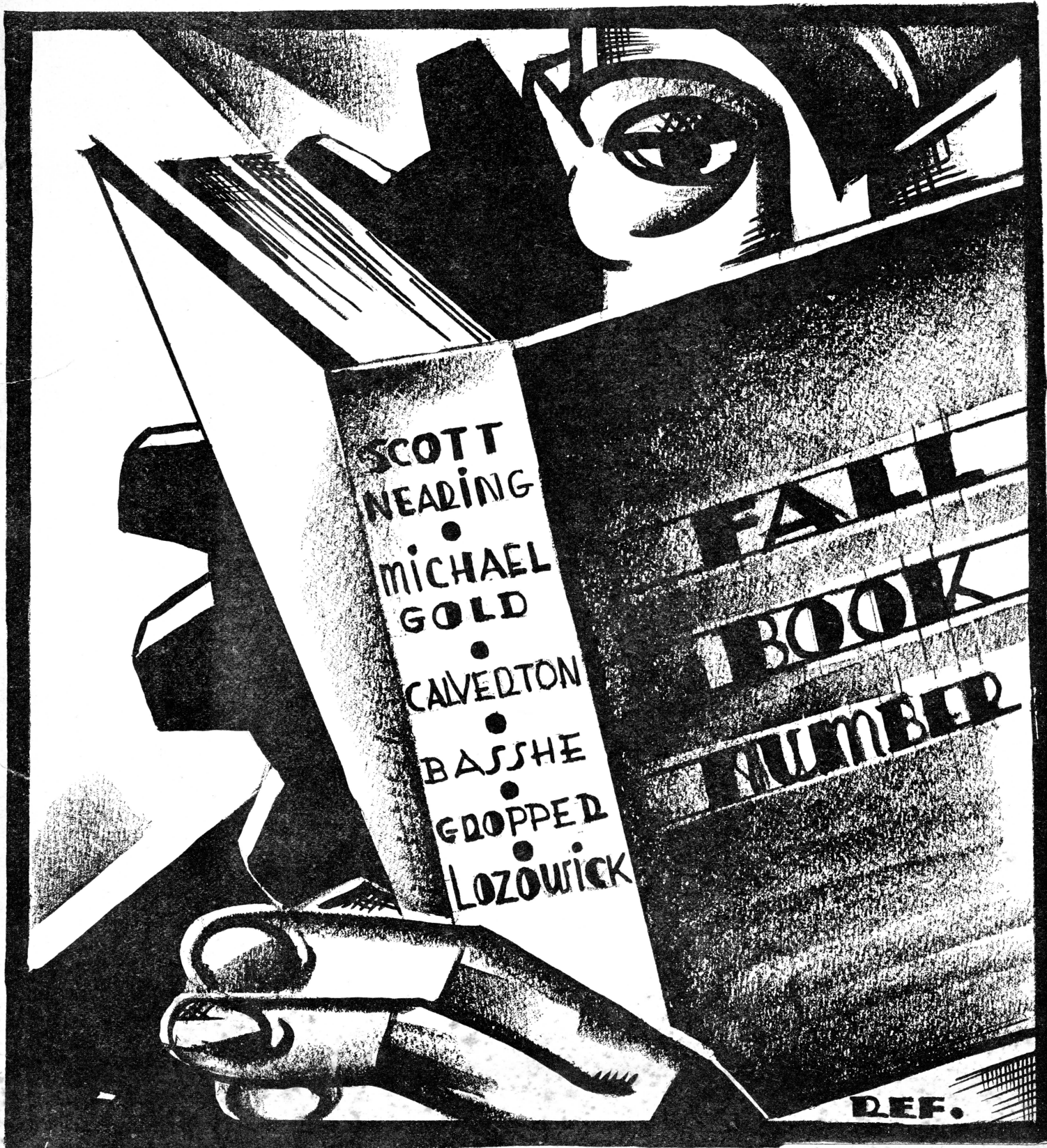
JESSIE LLOYD

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THE GASTONIA TRIAL

By WILLIAM ROLLINS JR. AND JESSIE LLOYD

A GENTLEMAN'S GAME

In the large courtroom at the judge's side a golden-haired baby-girl draws the venireman's name from a straw hat and starts the show. The hat was snatched from a defense lawyer who went hatless three days before he discovered it. (Laughter; scribbling of newspapermen; you've got to have a human interest element in a trial.)

The venireman, self-conscious, awkward, enters the bar and crosses to a spot below the bench. The tall slim pale young clerk at his honor's left rises, looks down on him, and draws a deep breath.

"You swear that you will truly answer me etc., etc., so help you God. 'sbook."

The venireman takes a nosedive. (If you don't kiss The Book you're not fit to judge your fellows.)

He turns to the prosecuting lawyers and successfully passes their examination with a statement of his business, religion, father's name, wife's maiden name, and other bits of information necessary to determine his fitness to pass on the life or death of thirteen young men and the imprisonment or freedom of three young women. Now, with nervous fingers exploring his trousers' leg, he faces the battery of defense lawyers.

Has he ever formed or expressed the opinion that *all or any one* of the defendants are guilty of the murder of the late Chief-of-Police Aderholt?

He's afraid he has; one, anyhow, is guilty.

"Which one?" "Beal." (*Mr. Beal,* interposes the frowning lawyer. "*Mr. Beal,*" he hastily corrects himself.) However, he reckons he could give them all a fair trial.

The lawyer shoots a few more questions; then glances down at his papers.

"Ten'er 'im," he mutters.

The clerk rises at the judge's side.

"Ju-roar, look upon the prisoner!

Prisoner, look upon the ju-roar!

D' y' like 'im?"

The lawyer fumbles with his papers. "Naw," he grunts; and the venireman is excused.

* * *

That's the one false note in the trial of the Gastonia prisoners in the imposing two million dollar (\$2,000,000.00) Mecklenburg County courthouse in Charlotte, North Carolina. To be in keep-

ing with the spirit of the trial, the lawyer ought to rise and express regrets for his inability to employ the venireman's valuable services, etc; For this here trial is a gentleman's game, and all North Carolina is damned proud of it.

Instead of a sour-faced, snarling Thayer on the bench, there's the slim, keeneyed Barnhill with a winning smile, a paragon of impartiality. The sheriffs are friendly to all concerned, and there's no roughhousing the prisoners. The lawyers for the most part are courteous, softvoiced Southern gents; they appear in the morning, arms intertwined, and virgin rosebuds still fresh with dew grace the lapels of their carefully tailored linen coats.

And the town itself joins in the game. The Chamber of Commerce spreads itself at a luncheon; all are invited to make whoopee over the industrial disruption of the state of North Carolina, the shooting of their police chief, and the resultant imprisonment of 16 men and women; and every pressman is invited to rise, name his paper, conservative or subversive, and is assured a delighted welcome. Charlotte is no Dedham! Here we're going to play the game with a sporting spirit; and when the cleverest battery of lawyers has succeeded in twisting twelve confused minds to suit its purpose, we'll all shake hands and call it a day till the next meet.

What are you going to do with a crowd like that? How can you (even if you have the nerve) get up in that wellmannered courtroom and tell them it's all a goddam farce? that thirteen lives are at stake and they're sitting there playing tiddlywinks for the corpses? that if judge, lawyers, sheriffs and all, suddenly rose up in passionate anger and blackjacked, stabbed, and shot the prisoners, it would at least have a certain human dignity that is lacking in a weighty consideration of the evidence that the prisoner Hendryx jumped on a sodapop box and crowed like a rooster; in the solemn questioning of veniremen as to who was your frandfather; the statement of hypothetical, abstruse situations and what would you do about them if you were chosen as ju-roar?

You couldn't do it. It isn't good sport; and this is a gentleman's game . . .

* * *

It took nine days and three panels of veniremen, totaling 650, to find twelve men, good and true. They took A. F. Parker, a clerk in his father's grocery store. Parker stood below the bench, listening with cocked head as the defense council examined him. "Yes, sir," he believed workers have a right to organize for their betterment. If it should appear in the evidence that some of the

organizers came from "foreign" states, such as New York or Massachusetts, would that prejudice him against them? His dark face lit up with a smile. "No, sir, it wouldn't!"

L. J. Johnson, on the contrary, was rather afraid that the presence of foreigners would prejudice his decision. He stood, well-dressed, his tremendous veined hands sagging lifelessly at his side, his tremendous veined head thrust forward, while he listened to the defense lawyer through a mouth that sagged open above his sloping chin. No, he has no prejudice against a Communist union that aims to overthrow his government and raise hell with the gents' furnishing business; and the slaying of a pillar of his society leaves him cold. But "yessirreebob!" he certainly is prejudiced against a foreigner who comes down from the North, and he's all for giving the boys the works. Mr. Johnson, like many others of the environment, is too busy thrumming on the rotten drum of an age-old war to hear the rumble of the approaching canon.

Clarence Torrence slipped by the state when they found he was a nonunion mill worker. Torrence is an undersized boy with a face mostly of freckles, teeth, and grin. He is twenty-four years old, and exactly half those years have been spent in the mills. He's a nonunion worker, he tells the defense, because there's never been a union around for him to join, but does he believe in unions!!! Clarence stepped into the box.

John Phillips is passed by the state; tendered and passed by the defense; and now steps up into the box. Twelve men, good and true, have finally been chosen; the panel is complete.

An uneasy breath stirs the courtroom; then everybody is quiet. The tall, pale clerk of the court rises and faces the jury.

"Gentlemen of the jury, please rise when your name is called . . . G. L. Benson! S. L. Caldwell! J. G. Campbell! . . ." One by one, as their names are called, the jurors rise to their feet. The clerk turns to the defendants.

"Prisoners before the bar, rise as your name is called . . . Robert Allen! Fred Erwin Beal! Vera Buch! K. O. Byers! . . ." One by one, the prisoners stand up.

"Gentlemen of the jury, look well upon the prisoners and hearken to their cause . . ."

They stand there, twelve men and boys, coatless, white shirts loose at the throat, in two long lines. Below them, spreading across the court, stand two longer lines, of three girls, and thirteen young men and boys who are coatless with loosened white shirts like themselves. Twentyeight of them, and in the hands of twelve lie the destinies of the other sixteen. Twelve young men, and on the luck of the sleek words of contending mercenaries, stumbling through their dark, unexplored minds, on the chance of their whims, their prejudices perhaps unknown to themselves, on the condition of their stomachs and bowels that last fatal day, hang the lives of thirteen other young men and the freedom of three women. This is the court of justice, the finest refuge man could build himself in all the ages. This is the flower of our civilization.

The clerk drones on, tonelessly incoherently repeating the portentous words. The two groups patiently stand and wait. They stare at their shoes, or with folded arms watch flies crawl across the ceiling. Here and there a prisoner and a juror pick each other out to exchange glances. The prisoner grins feebly; but if the juror sees another human being, with carefully parted hair, sensitive eyes, lips, thoughts, loves, hates, and beating heart like himself, he shows no sign of it.

"—sit together and hear the evidence, and render your verdict accordingly." The clerk is finished. "Gentlemen of the jury, be seated. Prisoners, be seated."

"Oyez! Oyez! This honorable court takes a recess still in ninety-three tomorrow morning, God save the state and this honorable court!"

Down comes the judge's gavel. The preliminaries are over; the game is begun.

WILLIAMS ROLLINS, JR.

QUATRAIN

*I hum my thoughts to rebel tune
Each note becomes a radical.
They group seditiously and plan
How to abolish Capital.*

FRANK THIBAUT.



Drawn by William Gropper.

AS WE GO TO PRESS

Guns are blazing in Gastonia. The right of workers to organize in the South is being won at a terrific cost of evictions, kidnapping, flogging, dynamiting and murder. The rope and faggot face the workers of Gastonia. J. C. Campbell, a juryman, went insane at the trial when a gory figure of the dead police chief was brought into court. The jury was disbanded and the trial postponed. A few days later, three strikers were kidnapped, and one, Ben Wells, seriously beaten and flogged. Evidence against the kidnapers led by the prosecutor was not allowed on the grounds the victim "did not believe in God." Strike quarters are raided and strikers arrested for "overthrowing the government". A striker, Ella May Wiggins, mother of five children, is killed by the company mob on the way to a meeting. A few days later another striker is kidnapped and beaten. As we go to press these are a few of the recent events in the Gastonia class war and every day brings additional news of the terror of the mill-owners and the heroism of the workers. The best legal defense obtainable has been secured for the workers. Protest meetings and collection of funds for defense and relief are being conducted thruout the country. The *Gastonia Joint Defense and Relief Committee* (80 East 11th St., New York) is directing activities. Active, immediate assistance to the workers of Gastonia in this great historic struggle is a duty of every member and every friend of labor. For this assistance, we call on every reader of the *New Masses*.

—Editor.

NEW MASSES



Drawn by William Gropper.

"Gastonia Law"

I. IN THE COURTROOM

A tall Thing, black-shrouded, wobbles in on wheels, pushed by the sheriff. Aderholt's widow and daughter, carefully placed at the lawyers table near the jury, start and cry. Defense attorneys leap in protest.

"I'm so sorry—I don't know why that was done," says Carpenter smoothly, rushing up to unpin the shroud. He reveals a spittin' image of the late Chief, in his last bloody uniform. Spectators sputter, the widow weeps, while reporters shout in helpless mirth at the most brazen legal(?) trick of their experience.

"Remove that model," orders the judge, anxious for the honor of his court.

"I just wanted—" Carpenter gains time to straighten the bloody collar with little modiste pats, and raises the hat till the dark accusing eyes stare straight into the jury's astounded mugs. How "sorry" he is . . .

"I said take that out," snaps the judge.

It goes at last. Carpenter, crestfallen, must be content with passing its gory garments to the jury, and hanging its gory BVDs on a friend who plays the dummy.

Gastonia law's first gun. Law is logic, logic is proof—blood is proof that sixteen unionists conspired to murder. Do you not see?

The next guns are the eye-witnesses. Gastonia law itself comes on the stand—officers fat and jowly, with rotten mouths.

First Roach, with his ingenuous grin. "I did not fire a shot until I was wounded. I did not see the other officers fire at all."

"Do you deny," asks Jimison, "that you were drunk?"

"I hadn't had a drop."

"Do you deny that you are under indictment for a drunken assault committed the very evening of June 7, 2 hours before the shooting of Aderholt?"

Roach shifts and grins. "I *am* under indictment. There is a little tangle. But I haven't had a drink in eight years."

"Do you deny that you have been twice sentenced for liquor manufacture?" He does, although the defense holds in its hands certified copies of the court record.

Jackson is an important witness. He is the one who heard Beal tell the guards and picketers to "shoot and shoot to kill" if anybody bothered them.

"Did you report this to headquarters?" Asks Jimison.

"I didn't have time," says Jackson sheepishly.

"Do you mean to say—" thunders Jimison.

Chorus from the prosecution "Object to his bullying the witness". Confusion and counter argument. When suddenly Mangum of the prosecution jumps up. "Just a minute—let the witness finish, didn't I hear him say something about a call?"

Thus reminded, the witness testifies he called police headquarters three times but couldn't get any one.

"Why didn't you tell me that the first time?" asks Jimison.

"I didn't have time," Jackson replies, more sheepishly than ever.

He admitted that shortly afterward he saw Aderholt dispersing the picket line, but did not walk up to tell him about Beal's statement. "Aderholt wasn't near me," said this conscientious officer.

II. VENGEANCE

Monday evening all bets are off. Gastonia's expensive law farce has blown up. The Lord in his wisdom allowed a juror to go insane. A trick, of course.

Tomorrow the seething "upper" crust of Gastonia will hear from no less a crony than the *Charlotte Observer* that the jurors were solid for acquittal, after hearing nothing but the evidence of the prosecution's star witnesses.

Tonight, however, Gastonia's leaders do not know. Tonight they rage like bloodhounds balked of their quarry. Vengeance upon the union postponed three weeks! Intolerable! Gastonia law brooks no delay.

And so Gastonia lawyers encourage their friends to wreck union headquarters in Gastonia and Bessemer City, kidnap and beat union organizers and threaten opposing counsel. Saylor, one of the three they took, swears in an affidavit that he saw Col. Carpenter and Maj. Bulwinkle lining up the mob in front of Carpenter's office. Mr. Lodge, recognized them among the crowd in his front yard. A union man in Bessemer City still has Maj. Bulwinkle's glasses. Others report Ferguson, speed cop who accompanied Aderholt



Drawn by Max Feldman.

last time officers violated union property, leading the parade on his motorcycle, and Tom Gilbert in the crowd with the Loray boss men. The *Charlotte Observer* itself writes that the mob was accompanied by two carloads of "Gastonia peace officers".

Gastonia police, however, questioned by reporters after the mob had broken into union headquarters and torn up literature, declared they had seen nothing. They had not heard a mob shouting that there would be no union in the south, because they would kill any one who joined. They had not noticed a parade of a hundred cars led by Ferguson going anywhere. They had not noticed the mob break into 512 W. Airline, chanting "Praise God from whom all blessings flow" and carry off Wells, Saylor and Lell with vile oaths and the threat "You'll never see them again."

In Charlotte the law was equally indifferent. "Charlotte and Mecklenburg County police," reports the *Observer*, "called out when the disturbance first started here, were required to exert little effort. The mob was a quiet one, apparently intent on but one purpose—to capture and punish communists responsible for labor unrest and subsequent disorders in this section."

Quietly, no doubt, the mob hurled vile names at the house of Jimison—who is not, by the way, a "communist responsible for labor unrest." Quietly "two men, in plain clothes but carrying guns, and calling themselves 'Gastonia law' exhorted the crowd to 'get Jimison and lynch him'" (*Observer* account). Gently, of course, the mob broke windows in the Court Arcade, looking for the I.L.D. offices. And just as softly tore up the register and smashed a lamp in the Walton hotel when it failed to find Bill Dunne, I. L. D. attorney Josephson, and organizer Hugo Oehler.

No record of all this appears on the Charlotte police blotter, though the police were "called out when the disturbance first started." And when John R. Neal asked for protection after hearing threats against himself and Jimison, headquarters answered, "We can't give you a bodyguard."

It was not "peace officers" who saved Wells, after he had been beaten and threatened with a rope around his neck. Two possum hunters happened to drive along the lonely road in Cabarrus County where Loray bossmen had taken off Wells' pants and applied dissuasion to the union. At the sound of a car, the brave bullies covered and ran, crying "Here comes the law". Not, you understand, "Gastonia law."

Wells fell unconscious. Saylor and Lell carried him until he could walk—toward Concord, eight miles away. There the policemen who examined him betrayed surprise at the Gastonia and Mecklenburg cops. "They asked us what kind of law we had in Gaston County" says Saylor's affidavit. "They said it was a disgrace to the United States. They told me they understand now what happened on June 7."

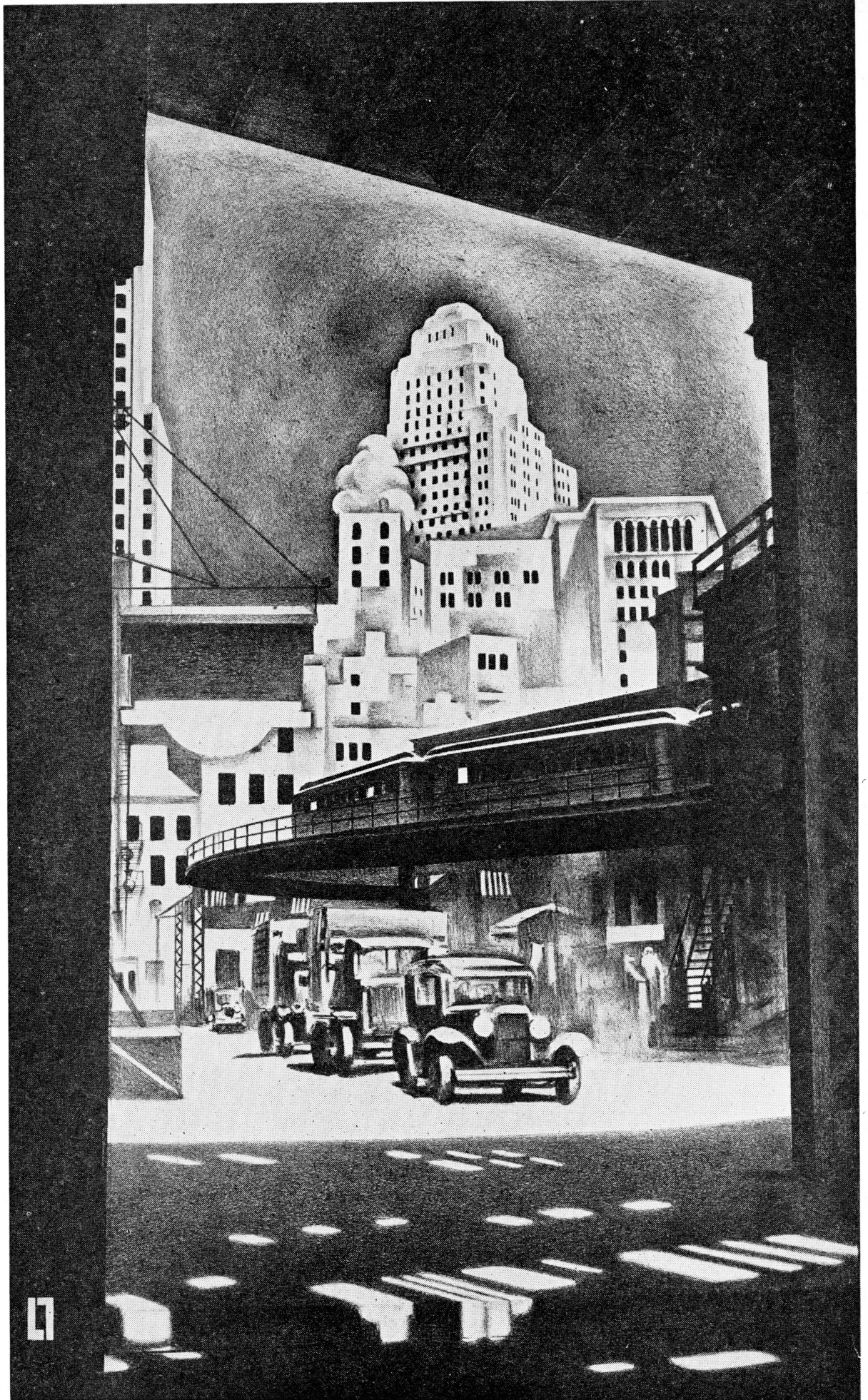
John R. Neal, a moderate gentleman, declares "an unofficial military dictatorship has been established in Gaston and Mecklenburg counties, center of the cotton spinning industry. The actual meaning of this whole series of events, to the underpaid and pellagra ridden textile workers of this district, is that the mercenaries are saying with guns in their hands that there shall be no union and no betterment of living conditions in this section."

Liberals who continue to deplore the use of the term "class warfare" should go down to Gastonia and reality.

JESSIE LLOYD.



Drawn by Max Feldman.



**9th
AVENUE**

*Lithograph
By Louis Lozowick*



LENIN ON WORKING CLASS LITERATURE

Translated by ANNA ROCHESTER

The following article by Lenin is addressed to writers who think their primary desire is to serve the working class movement. It is taken from a volume of his writings recently issued in Germany by the Verlag für Literatur und Politik under the title *Party Organization and Party Literature*. Only small excerpts have previously appeared in English. A paragraph was quoted in the article *Lenin On Art* which appeared in our January, 1929 issue.

—Ed.

Literature must become party literature. In opposition to bourgeois standards, in opposition to the press of bourgeois business and trade, in opposition to bourgeois literary competition and individualism, to "noble anarchy," and to the hunt for profits, the class-conscious proletariat must set up the principle of party literature. We must develop this idea and make it a reality as completely and comprehensively as possible.

What does this principle of party literature really mean? Not only that for the proletariat literature must not be a source of wealth for any individual or any group, but more than that: literature must not be regarded as an individual matter independent of the general proletarian movement. Away with non-party writers! Away with these literary supermen! Literature must become a part of the general proletarian movement, a "cog and screw" in the one great unified mechanism driven by the whole class-conscious vanguard. Literature must become one element of the organized, systematic, united party work.

Every simile limps, as the German saying has it. So my comparison of literature with a screw is lame, for a living movement is not a mechanism. And hysterical intellectuals will set up a hue and cry over any such figure as degrading, destroying, bureaucratizing free intellectual combat, freedom of criticism, freedom of literary creation, and all the rest of it. Such an outcry would be essentially nothing but expression of bourgeois-intellectual individualism. It is true that literature is not adapted to a mechanical simile; it cannot be weighed and measured; it cannot be judged by a majority vote. It is true that in this field it is absolutely necessary to assure free play for personal initiative, for individual inclination, for thought and imagination, freedom in form and in content. This cannot be gainsaid, but it only proves that the literary section of party work cannot be patterned like the other sections. It does not contradict in any sense the basic principle—so alien and strange to the bourgeoisie and to bourgeois democracy—that literary work must be always and unconditionally bound up closely with the other branches of party work. The newspapers must become organs of the different party organizations. Writers must belong to party organizations. Publishing houses and wholesalers, bookshops and reading rooms, libraries and other channels of distribution must be developed as party enterprises, subject to party control. The organized proletariat must pursue all these activities, supervise them, and bring into all such work the living spirit of the living proletarian movement.

We would not assert of course, that this transformation could be carried out at one stroke. We are very far from being able to set up any inflexible system or to solve the problem by a couple of decrees. No, in this field it is not a question of rigidly schematic planning. The important thing is that our whole party and the whole class-conscious proletariat shall recognize this new problem, set it forth clearly, and everywhere and at every point work toward its solution. When we are free of the censorship of the political rulers, we will not and must not yield to a bourgeois-commercial-literary domination. We must create a press free not only from police interference, but free of the capitalist competitive idea, free of bourgeois-anarchistic individualism.

These last words may sound paradoxical and derisive. What is this? some intellectual will shout, some temperamental disciple of freedom. What! You would subordinate to a group a matter so

sensitive, so personal as literary creation! You would have workers decide by vote question of knowledge, of philosophy, of aesthetics! You deny the absolute freedom of the absolutely individual creative spirit!

Calm yourselves, gentlemen. We must remind you bourgeois individualists that your talk about absolute freedom is sheer hypocrisy. In a society built on the power of money, where the working masses starve and little groups of rich men enjoy a parasitic luxury, there can be no actual, genuine "freedom." Are you authors free in relation to your bourgeois publisher and your bourgeois public who demand from you a nicely presented and glossed over pornography, and want prostitution as the supplement to the "sacred" drama? This absolute freedom is only a bourgeois or anarchist phrase—for as a philosophy anarchism is the bourgeois idea turned up side down. To live in a society and to be free from its domination is impossible. The freedom of the bourgeois writer, the bourgeois artist, the bourgeois actress is simply an invisible (or hypocritically concealed) dependence on the money bag, on corruption, and on what the capitalist public wants.

We uncover this hypocrisy, tear down the false signboards, not in order to arrive at a classless literature and art (which will be possible only in the socialist, classless society), but in order to oppose to the hypocritically "free" literature that is actually tied up with the bourgeoisie, another literature actually free and openly tied up with the proletariat.

That will be a free literature not self interest and careerism but the idea of socialism and the feelings and experience of the workers will be recruiting new and ever new forces into its ranks. It will be a free literature for it will not serve the bored society girl, the "upper ten thousand" suffering from tedium and obesity, but the millions and millions of workers who are the flower and strength and hope of the country. It will be a free literature which impregnates the achievements of revolutionary human thought with the experience and the living work of the class-conscious proletariat, creating a constant interplay between the experience of the past (with its development from primitive utopian forms of socialism to the scientific socialism of our movement) and the experience of today (in the present struggle of the comrade workers).

To work, then, Comrades. We have a new and difficult task before us, but it is a great and rewarding task: to develop in close, inseparable relation to the workers' movement a body of literature comprehensive, many-sided, diverse in form. All kinds of literature must become party literature. All papers, magazines, publishers, etc., must attack the work of reorganizing until they are, in one way or another, closely bound up with the party. Only then will literature be able to meet its responsibility; only then will it be able within the framework of bourgeois society to free itself from the domination of the bourgeoisie and to blend with the movement of the genuinely forward-moving and uncompromisingly revolutionary class.

PLATFORM OF A GENIAL POETASTER

*Militarists who are proud to fight
for someone else's country,
safely I sing of birds.
dictators of my unformulated knowledge,
I kiss the hem of your feet
that you may the better kick me.
I sing safely of trees and flowers,
that no one may be offended.
I hymn to the sexology
of retired bankers
that they may be amused.*

NORMAN MACLEOD.

BIGGER & BETTER BELLES LETTRES

By JACK WOODFORD

Sir Joseph Duveen remarked that in his opinion, as an expert, a Kansas City lady did *not* own the original *Belle Ferroniere* by Leonardo, supposed to be at the Louvre, in Paris.

The Kansas City Lady, with true American aggressiveness sued the astounded Sir Joseph.

Otto Kahn has been sued for two hundred and fifty thousand dollars because he *denied* that a certain singer had the most beautiful voice he ever heard.

These incidents are only two of the most outstanding among many similar ones recently. The time is almost at hand when the speaking of any sort of truth will be specifically forbidden by law, just as it is tacitly forbidden in most newspaper columns.

If anyone wishes to accept the wager, I should like to post a sum of money not in excess of that which an author might be expected to have, that within the year (1929) some Forward Looking book publisher will calmly notify the literary critics that any derogatory statements concerning his books will be prosecuted in the civil courts and perhaps even in the criminal courts, if a degree of malice can be trumped up.

After such a manifesto, a Go Getting publisher could proceed to advertise his wares and his tares much as cigarettes are advertised. And, because by far the largest portion of American citizens are public school educated simpletons, he could sell more books using high pressure advertising methods than he could with all of the better critics in the United States recommending his junk.

Did the publisher wish to throw a highfalutin galloping lettres smoke screen around his book he would need but hunt up half a dozen professors of literature and buy their recommendations, just as cigarette advertisers prostitute ship captains and society ladies.

Of course, there is one drawback to this scheme. It is a draw-

back, however, which will hold back no American publisher, if he is indeed a Man of Vision and a typical native son: After one publisher has started the business, all, or most of the others, will be forced to follow suit whether they wish to or not. A situation will be created as ridiculous as that of the cigarette advertisers, who spend millions monthly stressing the imaginary differences between their cigarettes. Of course, their advertising efforts neatly cancel out, as one against the other. The net effect, nevertheless, on the gross sale of all kinds of cigarettes, is probably worth the money.

Nobody who knows the advertising business, and consequently the gullibility of the Average American, will for one moment think of denying that any book publisher who went direct to the masses, over the heads of the critics, with a liberal advertising appropriation, could fail to outsell a publisher who depended upon the quality of his books for his success.

If an unlimited advertising appropriation can lead millions of average citizens to lick up a mild antiseptic, to cure them of bad breath, instead of going to their doctors to see what is wrong with their stomachs, another large advertising appropriation will sell a million copies of a meretricious book.

With a majority of publishers hawking their books through page ads. the whole book business should gain tremendous impetus. Since book publishers are just as keen business men as those who market bananas, prunes, raisins, flowers and telegrams, it is almost certain that eventually they will combine in an association to advertise the extensive reading of books. That this would make business better for publisher, bookseller, printer and the members of the Author's League of America, there is no possible chance for doubt. And when such an association is formed, there will be no place for the "knocker" as he will be called: the literary critic who persists in telling the truth. He will be shouldered out of the business, and kept out, by the civil courts, if necessary. He will be treated just as would a mechanical engineer who dared to say, in print, that a given automobile was a bunch of lean junk that would certainly fall to pieces.

In the past, high pressure selling and advertising has skipped over literature, leaving it the one thing in American life not degraded and prostituted to the American deity, King Dollar. But that has been because there were not possibilities for rich pickings in the book publishing business. At least there were not possibilities for as rich pickings, let us say, as could be easily had in other investment quarters.

Now, however, with Prosperity in full cry, and billions being wasted annually, things are different. There is a culture rush on that is in every way the equivalent of the gold rush of former years. . . . And of course, culture cannot be holed in quite that way. What happens is a sort of "Culture Complex." And as a corollary of the Culture Complex, widespread reading of books.

At a recent booksellers convention in Boston, the book-of-the-month clubs were damned. A waste of time, since their business is certainly as legitimate as any other form of bookselling. Eventually, through every publisher starting his own book club—as several of them have done already—the whole book club system will become a farce. But, at the same convention, it was suggested that publishers and booksellers get together to form an association for advertising *all* books. When that is done, book sales will "run into money"—and no group who has invested millions in such a project will permit "knockers" to jeopardize that investment. Truth will be hurled out of the book racket, just as it has been hurled out of every other department of American life, and books will be sold like chewing gum through page ads, billboard signs, street car placards, direct-by-mail pieces, and the whole nauseating program of American high pressure advertising.



Drawn by William Siegel.



Drawn by William Siegel.



Drawn by A. Z. Kruse.

ON THE WHARF

POETRY AND REVOLUTION

By HENRY GEORGE WEISS

The revolution—the stirring up of the workers to the point of revolt and protest—comes before art at this stage of our history—or should. This does not mean no attempt or encouragement must be given to creating new art forms, new mediums of expression; it does mean, however, that the channels of expression best calculated to carry the revolutionary message to the masses must not be glutted by couching said message and appeal in forms mostly unintelligible to the average working man.

Yet this is the very thing that has been done. I know some people are going to yell blue murder when I say that most of the poetry in *New Masses*, judged from a revolutionary standpoint, has been a dead loss. But let them yell. I want them to yell. Perhaps after they are thru yelling they will cease cussing me—who in the hell am I anyway—and begin to realize that it is damn hard for an ordinary working stiff to get all stirred up over a poem that doesn't mean anything to him.

And yet it is important that that worker, and thousands like him, should be stirred out of his lethargy; more important to the

revolutionary movement than writing brittle, esoteric lines that only the initiate will understand and applaud. Of course if it is one's ambition to follow in the footsteps of Gertrude Stein or E. E. Cummings, well and good. One may even build up a great reputation among the high-brows—given some genius.

But of what possible use is a great name to the workers and labor movement? None at all. A poet to be of use to labor must win the broad mass of workers for an audience. He must write for them. Joe Hill did; that is why thousands of workers chant his crude songs. To a lesser extent Ralph Chaplin did; strikers sing "Solidarity Forever". Connell wrote the "Red Flag," sung wherever militant workers meet. Who has not thrilled to the stirring chorus of the "International," felt his whole rebellious spirit surge "to arms! to arms!" when the Marseillaise is sung? Verse that can be inspiringly put to music or recited has well-nigh an irresistible appeal.

But do not misunderstand me. This doesn't mean that it necessarily has to be cast in old forms. Carl Sandburg (in his earlier socialist poems), Jim Waters, and Giovannitti succeed in being intelligible, and widely read by workers, in free verse. I have no objection to *vers libre* as long as it says something the average worker can read and respond to. But let me emphatically howl against the poetry output of the *New Masses* being almost wholly pitched in this key—and in its most cryptic, ultra form at that.

Long ago Lenin warned against allowing workers' art be judged by the yardstick of intellectualism. The *New Masses*, in the January issue, carried an article, *Lenin On Art*. I presume all the poets appearing in *New Masses* have read it. Lenin is quoted as saying: "Why worship the 'new' as a God which one is bound to obey simply because it is the 'new'?" And further he is set down as stating: "I cannot understand the products of expressionism, futurism, cubism, and other isms, as the highest manifestations of artistic genius. They give me no joy." And again: "Art must have its deepest roots in the vast creative masses. It must be understood and loved by the masses." So Lenin. But can art be of the masses, loved and taken up by them, nourish its roots in the soil of the workingclass, if it is not understandable in form? It is useless to tell me I am mistaken here. When even a Lenin confesses to not understanding free verse, being stirred by it, then how wrong am I when I assert it leaves the average worker just as cold and aloof?

Perhaps it is better to pause here and bring forth another point. The most loved poet of the Russian masses, the most influential from the revolutionary standpoint, was Demyan Biedny, whose "straightforward propagandist verse . . . is refreshing," we are informed by the introduction to an anthology of *Russian Poetry*. The index to the same work tells us that he wrote in verse that sometimes approaches doggerel. Doggerel! But that didn't keep it from being a weapon in the revolution—and a considerable weapon at that. The Soviet government is issuing all his works in twelve volumes. One wonders what the fate of a Biedny would be in America, and if the revolutionary doggerelist would get much space in the *New Masses*.

Y. M. C. A.

(Reflections in one of the Branches)

*There's something over-ripe and musty here,
The odor of a sick-ward and dead flowers,
The stuffiness of quarters without air,
The stickiness of equatorial hours.
Youth has grown old with stencilled shibboleths,
Sedate and stolid with a "grip on things"
And "eye to the main chance"; clean nails, sweet breaths—
Sartorial, tonsorial, life sings!*

*The spirit that is Beauty breathes not in
This place; the thirst and hunger of the mole
Will not be slaked where Righteousness and Sin
Make mystics who choose business for their goal.*

*This is the dwelling of an ancient ghost
That wears a modern garment, yet is lost.*

IRA BENSON.

OCTOBER, 1929



Drawn by A. Z. Kruse.

ON THE WHARF

MUSHROOMS IN BRONX PARK

(From A Book of East Side Memoirs)

By MICHAEL GOLD

1.

Yes, the summer. It was painful to draw one's breath. The sun blazed with sheer murder all day. At night, steam rose from the ghetto stones like a Russian vapor bath. There was never any relief from the weight pressing on our necks and skulls. People were sick, doctors were busy.

The Jewish babies whimpered and died. The flies thrived. Everyone was nervous; there were many quarrels down the air-shaft. I would wake in the dead of night and hear the whole tenement groaning and twisting in the bedrooms. People went out exploring for sleep as for a treasure. Hollow-eyed ghosts stamped the streets all night. Families slept on the docks, in the parks, on the roofs. But the world was hot.

2.

Some nights my mother spread the bedding on the sidewalk in front of our tenement. While she and my father fanned themselves on the stoop and gossiped with the neighbors, my sister Esther and I slept there in the street.

The street cars, the wagons, the talk, the sudden shrieks, the million shoes of passersby grinding like an emery wheel on the pavements did not disturb my sleep. But one night something did happen that left a permanent mark on my mind.

It was the evening before the Fourth of July. There was the usual debauch of patriotism. Kids were shooting off toy cannons and firecrackers and their fingers in every street. The skies were lit with a city's bombardment. Grinning Italians shot their revolvers at the sky. Roman candles popped red, blue and yellow balls at the sky. Pinwheels whirled, Catherine wheels fizzed and turned, torpedoes crackled, and rockets flew like long golden winged snakes above the tenements. It was fun, but then I fell asleep on the bedding spread by my mother in front of our tenement.

I had slept an hour, when some careless person threw a lighted cannon cracker out of a window. It exploded on the pillow beside my face. I leaped up with a scream of fright, and ran to my mother. I trembled and sobbed, and saw my blood stream. A big slice of flesh had been torn from my left shoulder; I still bear the scar.

This shattered meat healed quickly; the blood was soon forgotten. What remained was the nightmare. For weeks after that Fourth of July I woke every night, with a scream. I was reliving the explosion. My parents did not know what to do. The fat and cheerful Dr. Mirelsu gave me pink pills to take. They did not help. The thin and gloomy young Dr. Solow mumbled something about sending me to the country. But was that possible, my parents asked? So he gave me greenish medicine to take. It did not help.

I was losing weight. My mother took the advice of a neighbor and called in a Speaker-woman, Baba Sima the witch-doctor. It was she who cured me.

3.

There were many such old women on the East Side. They were held in great respect. The East Side worshipped doctors, but in nervous cases, or in mishaps of the personal life, it reverted to medievalism.

Lovers sought philtres of the old Babas, to win a victory over a rival in love. Deserted wives paid these women money to model little wax figures of their wandering husbands and torture them until the false one returned.

Baba Sima called one summer night, as I lay pale and exhausted by the dark mental shadows. She was a hump-backed kerchiefed old crone, with red rheumy eyes, and protruding belly. Her flabby mouth was devoid of teeth, and was sunken so deeply that her nose and chin almost met. She was dressed as poorly as any old synagogue beggar. She sniffled and panted after the climb upstairs, and my mother gave her tea. She talked a bit, took a pinch of snuff, then waddled into the bedroom to look at me.

"Nu, nu," she said, cheerfully, wiping her nose and sweaty face with a green rag out of a mysterious satchel, "if it was only a firecracker, I can cure him. The boy has been frightened, but I will pass the fright away from him. He will be sound in a few weeks, with God's help."

She turned me on my stomach, and with a blunt knife traced magic designs on my bare back, mumbling over and over in sing-song:

*"Tanti beovati,
Tanti sabatanu.
Tanti Keeliatu,
Tanti Lamachtanu."*

"To him, and to her, and to us, and to it! The serpent and the fire, the ocean and the sun! God is Jehovah, and Jehovah is God! Rushyat! Cushyat! Cum! Tum! Sum!"

She rubbed my back lightly with a pungent oil, and the first treatment was over. My mother paid her a dollar and invited her to tea. The old lady grew amazingly greedy; she drank four glasses of tea heaped high with my mother's best rose-leaf jam. She gobbled at least a dozen butter cookies. Then she sniffled off to her next call.

I was left irritable and sceptical. This foreign hocus-pocus did not appeal to me, an American boy. I was ashamed of it. I feared the boys in my gang would hear of it, and would tease me. My mother stroked my hair.

"But no, my dear," said my mother with great earnestness, "no one will tease you. Don't you want to be cured of your fright? It isn't good to be frightened in this world; one can't go through life with a fright inside. One is not a man then. This is a famous Speaker; your poppa knew her in Roumania. She knows more than most Doctors. She learned her wisdom from a famous Zaddik. She is sure to make you well."

The next visit Baba Sima went through the same ritual and drank another gallon of tea with dozens of cookies. The third visit she left a prescription. My mother was to walk through the pushcart market on Orchard street, and buy a glass at the first pushcart selling household things. She was forbidden to bargain, but to pay the first price the peddler demanded. The same night, I was to take this glass to the East River. If there was a moon, I was to drink a glass of river water; no moon, two glasses. Then I was to throw the glass into the river, and repeat the words: Cum, tum, sum.

I did this. On the fourth visit the Magic-Maker prescribed a paste of horse-droppings gathered in the street; mixed with a spider's web, honey, grits, thyme, my own urine, and paper. This was smeared on my forehead for a week.

On the fourth visit the Magic-Maker brought many things in her bag. She set them out in the kitchen stove, muttering weird rhymes. Then she poured the lead from the melting ladle into the pail. The lead hissed and steamed as it dropped into the water. As it cooled, it took on a jagged outline. The Magic-Maker regarded the lead long and painfully. Her toothless jaws worked; her eyes watered as if she were crying, and she took many pinches of snuff.

"It is a horse!" she announced triumphantly at last. Our little family group, watching her fearfully in the gaslight was startled. "Give me another glass of tea; my cure is done, it is a horse!"

We stared at the chunk of jagged lead. Yes, we assured each other in amazement, it had taken on the shape of a horse. And the next night, exactly at midnight, my father led me into the livery stable, and I whispered into the ear of one of the coach horses:

"My fright in your body; God is Jehovah," I said, giving the horse an apple which he munched sleepily. "Cum! Tum! Sum!"

And thus I was cured. The nightmares did not return. I woke no longer screaming in the night. Yet I was sceptical, and could not believe in the magic. I asked Vaska the stable-hand whether



Woodcut by Gan Koltski.

Weight of Sorrow

the horse now woke at night, screaming. He said the horse didn't. I tried to make things fit, but couldn't. I was cured. It was magic, all right; that greedy, dirty, foolish old woman knew some deep secrets of life. She had cured me, all right. I never told any of my friends about the magic, I was too ashamed. But I marvelled all that summer, and not even my parents could explain it all. They had not heard of the greater magic: Suggestion.

4.

After I was cured, our family life went back to its normal summer routine. My father went out to work, my mother cooked and baked, my sister Esther played jacks and skipped the rope with her girls. I played with my own gang, I fought, stole apples, read Buffalo Bill stories, went swimming, watched the prostitutes. At night my father told fairy-tales to his admiring friends, and we drank beer. Then we searched for sleep on the roof, or on the sidewalks. The world was hot.

Every Sunday morning in summer my father itched to be off somewhere. He did not want to stay in town on his one free day. But my mother hated trips. When he rode to Coney Island to bathe, my mother never went along. She hated the pushing and excitement of a million frantic people.

"It's a madhouse," she grumbled. "Why must I fight a lot of hooligans because it is a Sunday? I can rest better sitting here on my own stoop."

She made my father angry. He loved swimming; he could swim way out beyond the lifelines. And he loved, too, as much as I did, the razzle-dazzle, the mechanical blare, the gaudy savage joys of Coney Island.

"But the fare is cheap, only a nickel," he said. "Where else can one go for a nickel?"

"I don't care", said my mother, "It's a madhouse. Coney Island is a place for monkees."

"Bah!" my father sneered. "You are an old Baba grandmother. You would like to sit by the stove all your life!"

"No," said my mother, calmly, "in Hungary I went to places. I used to walk there in the fields and the woods. But Coney Island is different. It has no fields."

"Nu," said my father, irritably, "let us go to the fields then. I will take you to Bronx Park next Sunday."

"Has it a forest there?" asked my mother.

"Yes, it has a forest," said my father.

"Nu, we will see then," said my mother, casually, "maybe I will go."

She was not enthusiastic. My mother had the peasant's aversion to travel. In her little Hungarian village no one ever travelled far, except to America. The East Side was her village now, and she saw no reason for leaving it even on Sunday. She still lives on the East Side, on the same street, in the same tenement, an un-hurried peasant. She has never been out of New York City. There are millions of such peasants in New York.

5.

Sunday came. My mother had evidently decided to make the trip to Bronx Park. She rose at six to get things ready. She ironed a dress for Esther, a waist for me; she darned our stockings, and packed a lunch of salami sandwiches, pickles, cake,



Weight of sorrow

Weight of Sorrow

Woodcut by Gan Kolski.

oranges and hard-boiled eggs. Then she swept the house, cooked breakfast, and woke us.

"Stand up!" she said, yanking off our bedclothes.

"Why so early?" my father groaned sleepily.

"We are going to your Bronx Park," sniffed my mother. "Have you forgotten?"

At breakfast my sister and I were crazy with excitement over the trip. My mother had to slap us. She was flustered and grumbly; the thought of travel confused her.

In the elevated train her face flushed purple with heat and bewilderment. No wonder; the train was worse than a cattle car. It was crowded with people to the point of nausea. Excited screaming mothers, fathers sagging under enormous lunch baskets, children yelling and puking and running under everyone's legs, an old graybeard fighting with the conductor, a gang of tough Irish kids in baseball suits who persisted in swinging from the straps—sweating bodies and exasperated nerves—grinding lurching train, sudden stops when a hundred bodies battered into each other, bedlam of legs and arms, sneezing, spitting, cursing, sighing—a super-tenement on wheels.

Northward to the Bronx! And at every station new mobs of frenzied sweating families loaded with lunch baskets and babies burst through the doors. There was no room for them, but they made it for themselves by standing on our feet.

My father cursed each time a fat wet matron flopped in his lap or trod on his corns.

This was New York on Sunday. All the trains and street cars were crowded like this. Seven million people rushing to find a breath of fresh air! Pfui, said my father.

"In Roumania it is only a little walk to the country," he said. "Here it is a fight for one's life. What a crazy land!"

But my mother became happier as the train rolled on. She leaned out of the window and smiled. In the streets below, the solid palisades of tenement had disappeared. There were small houses, each set among green weedy lots, and there were trees.

"It's a pleasure to see green things again," she said. "Look, another tree! I am glad we came, Meyer! When we come to Bronx Park I will take off my shoes and walk on the grass. I haven't done it for fifteen years."

"They will arrest you," snarled my father, as he glared at the fat Jewish woman standing next to him, who persisted in grabbing him around the neck each time the train lurched.

"I want to pick daisies!" cried my little sister.

"Yes, yes, my darling," said my mother, fondly, "daisies and mushrooms, too. I will show you how to find mushrooms. It is more fun than picking daisies."

6.

Ach, at last the Bronx Park! My father bought us popcorn to eat, and red balloons. Then we walked through some green fields. My mother sighed as she sniffed the fragrant air.

"Ach," said my happy mother, "it's like Hungary! There is much room, and the sky is so big and blue! One can breathe here!"

So we walked until we came to a menagerie. Here we saw a gang of crazy monkeys in a cage. They were playing tag. We fed them peanuts and watched them crack open the shells. Then we saw a lion, two tigers, a white bear, some snakes, birds, and an elephant. All of them we gave peanuts.

Then we walked far into a big lonesome country. It had a big field with no one in it. It had a forest at one end. We looked for signs: *Keep off the grass*. There were no signs. So we walked into the middle of the field, and found a wonderful tree. This tree we made our own.

We spread newspapers under the tree, and my mother laid out the lunch. We were hungry after our long ride and walk. So we ate the salami sandwiches and other good things.

My father drank two bottles of beer. Then he stretched on his back, smoked his pipe, and looked at the sky. He sang Roumanian shepherd songs. Then he fell asleep, and snored.

My mother cleaned away the newspapers. Then she looked to see if no policeman was near. There was no policeman. So she took off her shoes and stockings and walked around on the grass.

My sister and I left her and went hunting for daisies. We found some and brought them to her. She made two daisy crowns out of them, the sort children wear in Hungary. Esther and I put on each of the crowns.

Then my mother took our hands. "Come," she said, in a whisper,

"while poppa sleeps we will go into the forest and hunt mushrooms."

My father heard the whisper. His snores abruptly ended.

"Don't get lost," he mumbled, not opening his sleepy eyes.

"Pooh," said my mother, "lost in a forest? Me?"

"All right," said my father, turning on his side and snoring again.

7.

In the forest everything suddenly became cool and green. It was like going into a mysterious house. The trees were like walls, their leaves made a ceiling. Clean, sweet voices sang through the house. These were the birds. The birds lived in the house. Little ants and beetles ran about under our feet. They lived on the floor of the house.

I smelled queer, garlicky smells. I saw a large gold coin lying in a bed of green. I looked closer, and knew I was fooled. It was sunlight. The sun made other golden lines and circles. I heard running water.

My mother walked in front of us. Her face looked younger. She sniffed the air, and stopped mysteriously every few minutes.

"I am smelling out the mushrooms," she explained. "I know how to do that. I learned it in Hungary. Each mushroom has its own smell. The best ones grow under oak trees."

"I want to pick some," said Esther.

"No!" said my mother, sharply, "you must never do that. You are an American child, and don't know about these things. Some mushrooms are poison! They will kill you! Never pick them!"

"Do they come on strings?" I asked.

"Those are the dry mushrooms", explained my mother. "Ach, America, the thief, where children see mushrooms only in grocery stores! Wait, I will show you!"

There was a flush of excitement on her black, gypsy, face. We were surprised at our mother. She was always so slow-moving and careful. Now she jumped over big rocks and puddles and laughed like a girl.

"Stop! I think there are mushrooms under those leaves!" she said. "Let me scratch a little and find out. Yes, yes! do you see? My nose is still sharp after all these years! What a pretty silver cap it has! It is a birch mushroom. Its parents are those birch trees. When mushrooms grow near pine trees they are green, and taste of pine. But the oak mushroom is the finest of all. It is a beautiful brown."

She broke off pieces of the mushroom for us to nibble. "It is better with salt," she said. "But how good it is! It is not like the rubbish they grow here in cellars! No, the American mushrooms have no worth. They taste and look like paper. A real mushroom should taste of its own earth or tree. In Hungary we know that!"

We followed her, as she poked around under the trees and bushes for her beloved mushrooms. She found many, and lifted her skirt to make a bag for them. Each new mushroom reminded her of Hungary and of things she had never told us. She talked to us in a low, caressing voice. She stooped to the mushrooms, and her eyes shone like a happy child's.

"Ach, how people love mushrooms in Hungary! In the season everyone is in the forest with a big basket to hunt. We had our own favorite spots where we went year after year. We never plucked mushrooms, but cut them close to the roots, like this. It means they will grow again next year."

"Momma, can mushrooms talk to each other?"

"Some people say so. Some people say that at night mushrooms not only talk, but dance with each other. They are little jolly old men with long beards. In the morning they become mushrooms again."

"Birds talk to each other, too, people say. I used to know the names of all the birds, and their songs. I knew good snakes and bad, and killed the bad ones with a stick. I knew where to find blueberries and huckleberries. I could walk twenty miles in a forest and find my way back. Once, two girls and I were lost in a forest for days and found our way back. Ach, what fun there was in Hungary!"

Suddenly my mother flung her free arm around each of us, and kissed Esther and me.

"Ach, Gott!" she said, "I'm so happy in a forest! You American children don't know what it means! I am happy!"



SUNDAY AFTERNOON

This drawing by William Gropper, and "Another Kid" published in the August issue, are from an autobiography in drawings to be published soon.

COLLEGE MEN AND MEN

By JOSEPH NORTH

I once knew a college man about whom I had no doubt.

He was the only man in the world I know who knocked two deans fully unconscious.

The last time I saw him he was driving a taxi in Philadelphia. "Hello, mate" he cried out, swerving his car up to the pavement. "I'm through with college" he said. I noticed for the hundredth time the obscene tattoo on his fist. He had been a sailor, a prize-fighter, a laborer, a strike leader and now a taxi-driver. In other moments he had been a student at the University of Pennsylvania, Yale and Harvard.

"Harvard finished me" he said, waiting for the light to go green.

"If I spent another year in the eminent university of New England," he said, "there'd have been a chapter written about me by a future Kraft-Ebbing as a man who began to wear corsets and lingerie at twenty-five."

He punched the dean of Harvard in the mouth for asking questions concerning his ancestry. He repeated with the dean of Penn's summer school in an argument concerning the necessity of wearing a necktie to psychology class.

He was the only man I know who did those things. Upton Sinclair did similar things in later life, throwing fierce uppercuts from a printed page.

I have seen sons of workers, youths who came out of the shipyards and steel foundries go to college and stay to teach Latin and Greek and marry masculine women. I know other sons of workers, youths who left their fathers in shipyards and foundries, go to college and come out strikebreakers.

Every college of America today is a Pinkerton factory. The graduates are all scabs. The exception is either a revolutionary, a tiny minority so small as to be negligible, or else he has hung himself up on a rafter of his father's house.

In 1925 in the general strike in Great Britain, college men toiled eagerly as strike-breakers. In 1929 they hailed the Prince of Wales for shaking hands with starving Welsh miners. In America their cousins are willing to break strikes at \$5 a day or less.

In the Middle Ages, and even as far as the latter part of last century, college men used to go out into the public square and get shot or burned up for heresy, for having an idea or ideal. They did things. The protoplasm of the college men of that day was heartily masculine.

But hold, I am wrong in saying all college men are lost. In Mexico City there is a university that still has students who can go out and picket to victory. They possessed enough masculinity several months ago to defy the police and fly a red flag from the top of the college until they won their points.

Ninety-nine and nine-tenths per cent of the students of the University of Pittsburgh never say a word about Pennsylvania's Coal and Iron police because Andy Mellon owns the university through subsidy, and the mines and steel plants of the state through stocks and bonds.

Ninety per cent of college men come from the petty-bourgeoisie, from small traders and craftsmen, anxious to get into the big league of moneydom.

Some may point to the college man's sport, as at least an indication of masculinity. Football, you say, is not played by molycoddles. Nor is it played by college men. Like the fat old Romans who hired mercenaries to fight their wars from among the barbarians who finally overthrew them, college men of today, through their fraternities, hire professional athletes from the Anthracite, from the steel mills to play their football.

Go through a list of football stars of any college. You'll find names like Utz, Magai, Mogolefsky, Hannigan—boys from the mines who go to college for \$2500 a year.

The Big Three, Harvard, Yale or Princeton, still have blue-blood on their teams. Colleges like Center, with 100 students come out of a southern woods and make Harvard lose all the rest of the R's in a scrimmage. And all colleges hire their mercenaries to do their dirty work for them while the raccoon coats sit up on the grandstands with Stotesbury's daughters singing "Rah-Rah-touchdown," or else twist their spines leading cheers.

The college man of today is the product of the subsidized college, as much as Senator Reed, of Pennsylvania is the product of the subsidized Senate. Upton Sinclair's *Goose Step* will give you the figures. You will discover how many millions the philanthropical Rockefellers, Morgans, and Dukes hand out to the colleges to perform illegal operations on our bright young men.

Get into an argument some day with a college man concerning economics. Find out how much the average college man knows about Marx. He knows Groucho and Harpo. But he does not know Karl.

If he knows any economics, it is Foster and Catchings tabloid, class-collaboration economics.

Suggest to him the possibility of equity in the scheme of things—of the world leveled to the right proportions—of wealth going to the producers instead of the exploiters. Try it some time, to get a peculiar stare, a cynical smirk, or a wild retreat.

If he does know something, he will talk through a wistful nose like the *Nation* philosophers about the destruction of modern society, about the twilight of civilization, about the inevitability of disaster.

We had one instructor at our college who was interesting. He thought Anatole France was the acme of civilization. "France has chartered the human emotions" he said, "and there is little that he does not know about the meanness of human nature."

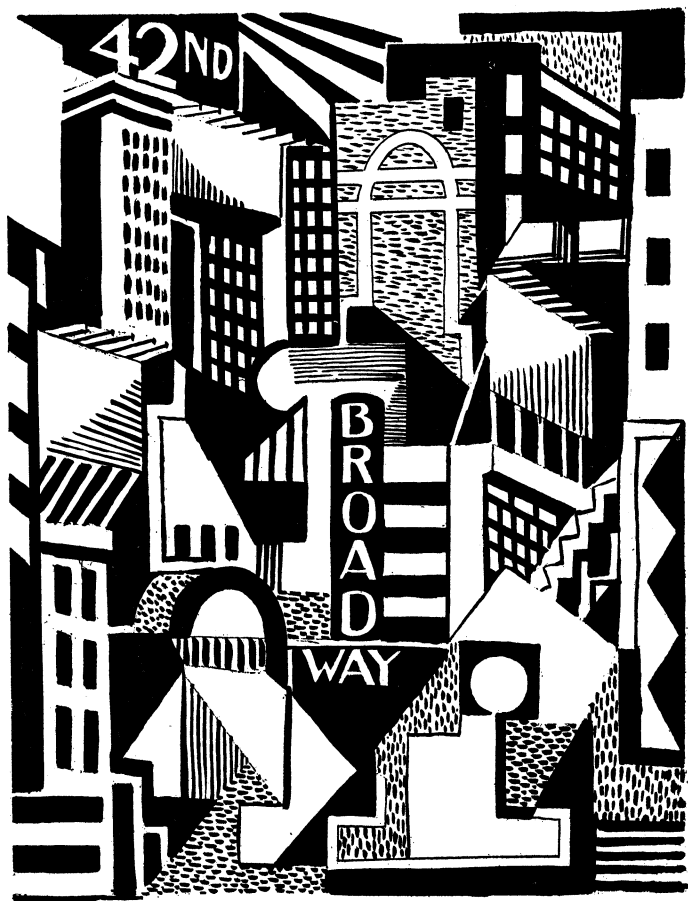
The highest this professor ever rose to in the class room was this. "When you cease loving your girl, always let it appear as though she gave you the gate. That's a man's way of doing things. Woman's pride is greater than her love."

But he knew no Marx. He knew no class struggle. He served as a lieutenant in the United States army in France. He still wore his army top-coat in 1925. He talked sometimes of "the bankruptcy of Anglo-Saxon leadership in the world" and let it go at that.

There were rumors in my day of a professor by the name of Scott Nearing. But nobody talked out loud about him. Or the instance of Sol Auerbach who saw the United Socialist Soviet Republics while on a student's tour. He dared talk about it in the frigid air of the philosophy room and on the campus. He was requested to refrain or depart. He did the latter with grace. The college now wallows in satisfaction in the mud of reaction and diffidence.

I have an uncle in Soviet Russia who was a harness maker before the revolution. Today he is studying engineering in Lenin-grad. He is a graduate of the Red Army where he learned to read and write. He can now write, "In Russia we have been born over again in a fire that shall sweep across the world. We are making a new world, burning out the cancer of the old. The working-class of the world sees in us an inspiration to become men, not slaves."

Here is a college man who is not a strikebreaker. He is a college man and a man.



Drawn by Jan Matulka.

MOVIES: U.S.A. & U.S.S.R.

By EM JO BASSHE

HALLELUJAH. Produced by Metro-Goldwin-Mayer. Directed by King Vidor. Cast: Daniel Haynes, Nina Mae McKinney, William Fontaine, Harry Gray, Fannie Belle De Knight, Everett McGarrity, Victoria Spivey, Milton Dickerson, Robert Cutch, Walter Tait. Embassy Theatre.

Having but recently emerged from a defensive war with the dramatic critics I had hoped that my first assignment as a movie reporter would give me an opportunity to praise, laud and otherwise demonstrate to all concerned that fortunately I had not yet drunk at the fountain of invective, bitterness mudslinging and egotism. Still innocent and sober I considered myself very likely when tickets for *Hallelujah* were offered to me. Certainly an auspicious beginning; praised by most critics, an all-Negro cast, a year's labor, directed by one of Hollywood's hopefuls . . . "all talking, singing, dancing."

First shot: dusk . . . cotton pickers going home, happy, gay, full of song in praise of . . . "Cotton, cotton, cotton." Picnic? Well—looks like it. Clean, rested, full-bellied. No, they did not work all day trying to pick enough cotton to fill the big wagon. Yes, they were costumed and some even looked as if they could pick cotton and others seemed to have suffered at the hands of the make-up expert who had never heard of sweat, of sticky clothes, of lint sticking in nostrils, ears, eyes and . . . but powder and grease paint belong in the movies. So be it. But it's a nice scene. A pretty picture leading to:

An outdoor feast where pappy and mammy and the rest of the family are having their evening meal. Suddenly the scene is disrupted by the entrance of Mr. Burlesque and his Troupe: man, woman and thirteen children. To be married by pappy. Then the age old joke about being respectable even though you've had thirteen children out of wedlock. The ceremony over we are

treated to a few elemental contortions by the groom, the bride and the thirteen children. (The Negro is a clown, ain't he?)

Follows: a plot which is jerky, muddy, full of sounds one expects from senile and ailing phonograph records. The eldest son of the family loves the adopted daughter (how new and how Negro!) . . . she is sweet and innocent and (for the sake of the plot) rebuffs him. All heroes get the same treatment at the beginning of Hollywood operas . . . the hero and his younger brother take a load of cotton to the gin mill . . . at the mill for no reason at all a crowd of Negroes appear and group themselves about the wagon and sing (What? Mr. Irving Berlin's theme song! Get it in the lobby, at so much a copy!) The hero gets paid for the cotton and puts the money in his shirt . . . sounds of revelry . . . you know that that's where he'll go to now . . . the pretty tart won't dance with our hero at first but his money changes her mind . . . dance hall . . . the tart and her cadet accomplice egg him on to gamble . . . (Yes he loses his all, all, all.) He fights the cadet-gambler who used phoney bones and shoots his brother: "Excuse me, brother, it was a mistake." The wagon on the way once more. Wailing and shouting and then the scapegrace gives up the world and will, from now on, atone for his sins by preaching, evangelizing and otherwise making a nuisance of himself. (Religion, marriage and the bullet! What would the movies do without this holy trinity?)

Religion: Our hero wraps himself in "holy" vestments and enters the town on the top of an ass. Revival meeting. "Gettin religion" a la Joe Frisco. Baptism with hysterical females being dragged out of the water screaming and kicking (to the vast amusement of the audience). But who gets religion? The little tart herself. Who gets the little tart? The hero. But how about the villain? He appears again and takes her away. Who runs after her? Blank. Who is killed? Blank. Who dies? Blank. Who is left to carry on? The hero of course.

Chain gang for the poor hero. But he sings which is alright. What happens now? He goes home. Do we hear him singing as he nears the old homestead? We certainly do. How? Almost as good as Al Jolson. Who receives him with open arms and real mammmmy tears, with a real mammmmy bosom etc? Mammy. And pappy. And the little ones. Who else. One guess. The innocent girl he loved before he saw the tart before he killed the villain before he got religion before he ran away with the little bad girl before he killed the villain before he was sentenced to the chain gang where he sang a heartbreaking song. The end.

Oh, we're a hard gang to please. We are un-American, anti-Hollywood, we are the damned.

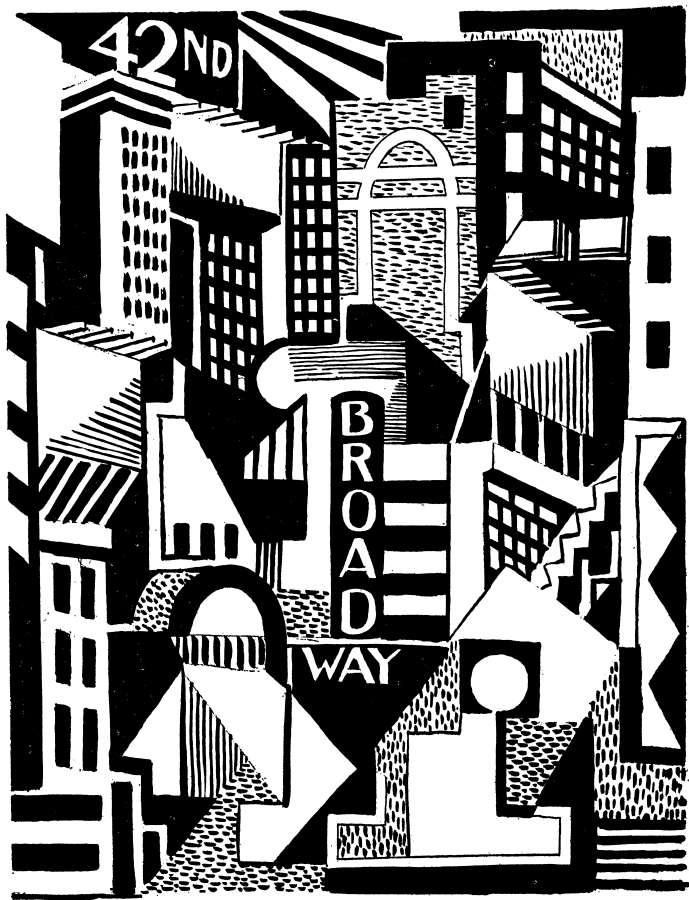
THE MAN WITH THE CAMERA. A Sovkino Production. Director: Dziga Vertoff. Cameraman: Kauffmann. Film Guild Cinema.

At this very moment, a hot afternoon in September, I am not advocating Revolution. I have no desire to languish in one of Hoover's jails nor do I want to see this magazine banned from the mails by Burleson's successor. Therefore I expect the reader to read between the lines: Russia had a revolution. The Russian theatre is the finest in the world. The Russian cinema has reached a point within a few years which may be truly called amazing. Russia at present is not rich. Operations cost money. The Soviets would not mind if they made, say a million dollars on every movie they produced. They need the money for schools, for new factories, for irrigation systems, for dynamos, tractors, motors. They have, as we have seen, great actors and directors. They have cameras. They have writers who can concoct pretty good scenarios. Why then no Hollywood there? Why don't they make a couple of hundred million dollars? Hollywood is doing it and has done it for years.

Well, I guess it's because they have had a Revolution there. Or perhaps they don't know what the public wants . . . or they have no actresses who are willing for the sake of publicity, to marry cast off dukes, princes or lapdogs.

Instead their directors experiment. They live in one room apartments, have no wolfhounds, butlers, yachts, Rolls-Royces, valets or Spanish castles. They experiment. *The Man with the Camera.* The director states that there are no actors in this film. What he means is that we have no rehearsed, made-up, cajoled, mannered, pushed, poised actors. No cardboard settings. No Klieg lights. But life without a veil, without a guide, without shutters. (And no propaganda here Mr. Government. Don't be afraid, no

OCTOBER, 1929



Drawn by Jan Matulka.

one's going to hurt your little god, your sweet little home or upset your ever-so-guarded equilibrium).

The cameraman wakes up to catch his city sleeping . . . a girl moves in her bed . . . early traffic stirs in the street, shutters open, the city preens itself for the day ahead . . . the girl bathes and dresses, the streets are washed . . . all things that move in the early city fog are caught on the film and then:

We see ourselves in the theatre . . . the film cutter . . . the projector. The cameraman goes on again . . . no shutters for him. He is out to see Life in a great city . . . all . . . pains of childbirth twist a woman's body on a hospital cot . . . pains of death twist the faces of mourners: a corpse deposited in the ground. The city moves on and we follow. A couple being married. The triumphant carriage rolls along. A couple getting a divorce. No carriage. A girl's angry face flashes for a second before us—the camera caught her asleep on a park bench. Wealthy fingers in the hands of a manicurist . . . working girls' fingers making and filling cigarette boxes. Obvious contrast probably but it was not meant for that . . . the camera wants only contrast movements . . . so . . . the working girl laughs and shows her skill with flying fingers—fingers against time . . . dancing fingers . . . fingers embracing everything about them. The manicured nails turn slowly for our inspection.

Eyes open camera eyes open camera shutter open. Factory scenes, whistles blowing . . . time to stop work . . . out in the streets we go . . . mingle with peasants marketing . . . with promenaders . . . with picnickers home from an outing . . . tourists. Trees in the wind. An accident. Ambulance. A fire. Fire engines. The camera clicks on. The camera is high in the air . . . in the midst of traffic . . . running here and there. Nothing must escape him. Symphony of a city, laughing, yelling, swearing, building . . . moving: what would happen if it stopped? Obligingly the camera shows us:—a horse is running . . . camera stops . . . horse stops—feet in the air. The audience roars. A crowd of women laughing . . . their faces are frozen by the camera. Traffic halts: a still born city waiting for its time. Camera clicks and the city moves again.

No titles. No million dollar appropriations. No full page advertisements. No phrases out of Barnum's corpse: greatest show in the world singing, talking, sounding, barking, screeching, hissing. Just an experiment by a Russian director and his cameraman trying to find out what can be done with a camera and a will to create.

We are not hard to please. We are pro-Russia, pro-Vertoff, pro-Kaufmann, pro-beauty. We ought to be deported.

EMJO BASSHE.

GOD HELP ART

You're a shy young artist and in some fear you visit the little but o so exclusive gallery owned by the daughter of a titled man. You arrive and see a hawknosed rather young woman painted beautifully (christ what ud she be without it just a church guild person reciting longfellow and sure she'd do less harm that way). Anyhow shes supposed to be one of the particular bright sparks of some fool clique in Society that calls itself the Bright Young People. She stands surrounded by a mob of oxford-and-cambridgy handonhip youths.

She talks to you of the pictures *terribly beautiful arent they sometimes terribly good or amusing but not art* you want to say art me bottom or something real vulgar but you dont as you know that tho shes no prude o no prude shes read her joyce, she has really got no use for real earthy vulgarity she might keep a stiff lip but in her heart she'd get all suburban. Anyhow after a lot of her bilge you begin to feel sick and the cezannish and maybe rather good other modern efforts become detestable in the same room with this woman you are beginning to hate not so much for herself as for her interference with the delicate mechanism of the artists mind and her bloody cheek in presuming to help the young artist. Anyhow a grasping business man preferred,

you come out for breath board a car for home and passing a great cigarette factory see a million beautiful young girls pouring out after their days work; they also are beautifully painted, little evening primroses many of them but their real strong language gets way past the acquired stewed prunes obscenity of the art gallery mob and they dont care a whisker of jesus about art at any rate art gallery art.

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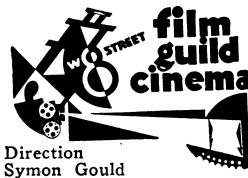
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We are lying out in front of our wire waiting for the signal to leap up. It is quiet. Now and then a white Very light sizzles into the air and illuminates the field as though it were daytime. We lie perfectly still. Over in the German lines we hear voices—they are about fifty yards from where we now lie.

I look at the phosphorescent lights on the face of my watch. Two minutes to go.

MacLeod, the officer in charge of the raiding party, crawls over to where we lie and gives us a last warning.

"Remember," he whispers, "red flares on our parapets is the signal to come back . . ."

In that instant the sky behind us is stabbed with a thousand flashes of flame.

The earth shakes.

The air hisses, whistles, screams over our heads.

They are firing right into the trenches in front of us.

Clouds of earth leap into the air.

The barrage lasts a minute and then lifts to cut off the enemy's front line from his supports. In that moment we spring up and run. We fire as we run. The enemy has not had time to get back on his firing-steps. There is no reply to our fire. We race on.

Fifty yards—forty yards—thirty yards!

My brain is unnaturally cool. I think to myself: This is a raid, you ought to be excited and nervous.

Twenty yards. I can see the neatly-piled sandbags on the enemy parapets.

Our guns are still thundering behind us.

Suddenly yellow, blinding bursts of flame shoot up from the ground in front of us. Above the howl of the artillery I hear a man scream as he is hit.

Hand grenades!

We race on. We fire our rifles from the hip as we run. The grenades cease to bark.

Ten yards. With a yell we plunge towards the parapets and jump, bayonets first, into the trench. Two men are in the bay into which we leap. Half a dozen of our men fall upon them and stab them down into a corner. Very lights soar over the trench lighting the scene for us.

We separate looking for prisoners and dug-outs. Depth-charges are dropped into the underground dwellings and hiding-places. The trench shakes with hollow, subterranean detonations. Somewhere nearby a machine-gun comes to life and sweeps over our heads into No Man's Land.

The enemy artillery has sacrificed the front line and is hammering the terrain between their lines and ours.

Green rockets sail into the black sky. It is the German call for help.

The whole front wakes up. Guns bark, yelp, snarl, roar on all sides of us.

I run down the trench looking for prisoners. Each man is for himself. I am alone.

I turn the corner of a bay. My bayonet points forward—on guard. I proceed cautiously. Something moves in the corner of the bay. It is a German. I recognize the pot-shaped helmet.

I lunge forward aiming at his stomach. It is a lightning, instinctive movement. In that second he twists and reaches for his revolver. The thrust jerks my body. Something heavy collides with the point of my weapon.

I become insane.

I want to strike again and again. But I cannot. My bayonet does not come clear. I pull, tug, jerk. It does not come out. I have caught him between his ribs. The bones grip my blade. I cannot withdraw.

Of a sudden I hear him shriek. It sounds far-off as though

heard in the moment of waking from a dream. I have a man at the end of my bayonet, I say to myself. His shrieks become louder and louder. We are facing each other—four feet of space separate us. His eyes are distended, they seem all whites, and look as though they will leap out of their sockets. There is froth in the corners of his mouth which opens and shuts like that of a fish out of water.

I put my foot up against his body and try to kick him off. He shrieks into my face. I kick him again and again. No use. His howling unnerves me. I feel I will go insane if I stay in this hole much longer . . .

It is too much for me. Suddenly I drop the butt of my rifle. I start to run down the bay.

A few steps and I turn the corner. I am in the next bay. I am glad I cannot see him. I am bewildered. Out of the roar of the bombardment I think I hear voices. In a flash I remember that I am unarmed. My rifle—it stands between me and death—and it is in the body of he who lies there.

I am terrified. If they come here and find me they will stab me just as I stabbed him—and maybe in the ribs, too. I run back a few paces but I cannot bring myself to turn the corner of the bay in which he lies. I hear his calls for help. The other voices sound nearer.

I am back in his bay. He is propped up against his parapet. The rifle is in such a position so that he cannot move. His neck is limp and he rolls his head over his chest until he sees me. Behind our lines the guns light the sky with monster dull red flashes. In this flickering light this German and I enact our tragedy.

I move to seize the butt of my rifle. Again those terrible shrieks!

Suddenly I remember what I must do.

I pull my trigger. The blade at the end of my rifle snaps in two. He falls into the corner of the bay and rolls over. He lies still.

I am free.

It seems as though I have been in this trench for hours. Where are the red flares? I look towards our lines and see only the flickering gun-flashes leaping into the black sky.

The air is full of the smoke of high explosives. Through the murk I see two heads coming out of the ground. It is the entrance to a dug-out. The heads are covered with the familiar pot-shaped helmets—we use a more vulgar term to describe them. Apparently this was a dug-out our men had overlooked. I cock my breech-lock and raise it to my shoulder. The first one sees me and throws his hands high into the air.

"*Kamarad, Kamarad,*" he shouts. His mate does likewise.

Suddenly the sky over in the direction of our lines becomes smudged with a red glow. The flares! The signal to return!

"Come with me," I shout into their ears. I start to drag them with me. They resist and hold back.

They stand with their backs glued to the side of the trench and look at me with big frightened eyes. They are boys of about seventeen. Their uniforms are too big for them and their thin necks poke up out of enormous collars.

"*Nicht schiessen!—bitte—nicht schiessen!*" the nearest one shouts stupidly shaking his head.

I reassure him. I search them for weapons and then sling my rifle over my shoulder as an evidence of good faith. We start off down the trench towards a gap which leads out into No Man's Land.

This Wonderful Age

(From the observation car of an overland train)

The man with the squint in his eyes, that pinched closer together his already narrow features, pulled triumphantly from his pocket a battered postcard. He poked it into the pudgy hands of the lady next to him.

"Do you know what that is? No? See that? That's the Graf Zeppelin stamp." He squeezed his mouth into a long thin line and nodded his head impressively. "Think of that. See the postmark? Mailed to me, it was."

"Well now," the fat lady drew in her bulging cheeks to convey her wonder. "Well now," she repeated, "aint that grand? Say now that is something. Something to keep, that is."

"Yes mam, it sure is. One of the first ones it is."

"Well now, is it really?" said the fat lady. "That's something to keep, that is. Something you can hand down to your posterity, it is. Just think of what they will say when they see that now."

The blond flapper, with the moving jaws and the short skirt, which she kept continually, but ineffectually, tugging at to cover her exposed thighs, leaned over her mother's shoulders and stared at it. For almost thirty seconds she managed to keep her jaws immobile. Then the interminable chuzzling began again and she relaxed to go on laboriously spelling out the gossip of the screen, and Hollywood, in her movie magazine.

"Yes mam! That card rode on the Graf Zeppelin, it did." The man with the squint raised his voice so that everybody in the car might become aware of his valuable possession and gazed proudly, but angularly, around.

"Yes sir!" echoed the fat lady bouncing her words from her double chins down onto her expansive bosom, which in turn tossed them into the car. "Someday who knows but what they'll look back at us and say 'Just think of them folks, four days on a stuffy train from Los Anjealous to Chicawguh' we've certainly got marvelous inventions these days."

"Show it to the gents across the way," said the man with the pinched face that seemed to open a little at the idea of his own generosity. The lady handed it to the sailor who gazed at both sides uncomprehendingly and handed it back as if it were a delicately shelled egg.

"Pretty good, I'll say," said the sailor. Then he smoothed out his brow which had become quite knotted with the effort of contributing this bit of repartee to the gathering and resumed his blank staring at the swiftly passing landscape.

"Yes sir!" said the fat lady handing the card back to the man with the squint. "You want to keep that for your posterity."

"I'm going to," said the latter, "this sure is a wonderful age we live in now, aint it?"

"It sure is," said the fat lady, "and that aint the only thing. Take the radio now. That's what I call a marvelous invention. Just think of all those noises in the air, the latest music, the stock reports, President Hoover's voice, and the radio sorts them all out and there you are listening as if you were right in the room with them. That's what I call an invention."

"Yes mam," said the man with the squint, "the radio sure is a complicated thing, all right."

"Complicated?" said the fat lady indignantly, "I should say it is complicated. Why do you know there's dewdabs in a radio the engineers don't know, themselves, how they work. But they're there and they do. And we just sit at home and turn a dial and we can listen to the whole world just as if we were there."

"Yes mam", agreed the man with the squint, "but the Graf Zeppelin now . . ."

"Yes sir," interrupted the fat lady, heaving excitedly, "it sure is a wonderful age. But what I want to know is what becomes of all those voices and sounds that are floating around in the air. I mean those things that the radio don't catch, what becomes of them? Can you tell me? They must go somewhere. Why I read once that Abraham Lincoln's speeches were still in the air if only we could get tuned in right to hear them. Think of that now. It's a wonderful age, it is."

"Yes mam," said the man with the squint, "it's a wonderful age. That card now . . ."

WILLIAM CLOSSON EMORY.

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The Bandits by Panait Istrati—Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

There is a certain irony in the American title of Panait Istrati's recent novel. That *Les Haidoucs* should be translated as *The Bandits* is indicative of more than one may at first suspect. The *haidoucs*, at least the leaders among them, and certainly as in this instance, the headman Groza, were no more bandits than were many Russian revolutionaries. If one were to describe them more precisely, they were rebels in an agrarian country in which trade unions and political parties had as yet no place. They were more than the Robin Hood's of their time.

"All that you see here", cried Groza, later to be one of the great leaders of the *haidoucs*, "all this that pleases you so much, all this beautiful earth, so farstretching and so broad, must belong equally to us all: for we come upon the earth naked, and she offers herself to us, so that we may labor upon her and enjoy her fruits. She does not belong to us now. But she must one day be truly ours. We must wrest this lovely earth of ours from the hands of those who hold it without working it. This we must do!"

And again we have Floarea Codrilor, who herself became a fighter in the *haidouc* ranks, describing Groza's attitude toward the church:

"The *haidoucs* are the only ones who do not think as the rest of the world. To hear what the world says, one would suppose that God willed it that there should be serfs and *gospodars*, poor and rich, the chastised and those who castigate them. But the *haidoucs* overreach the will of God. They do not go to church; but instead, they withdraw into the forests, whence they sally forth to make horrifying incursions upon the possessions of the tyrants, and even upon those of the churches, sacking, killing, and—relieving the poor and the oppressed!"

These are no bandits—they are rebels with a social vision.

By way of literary reciprocity one should write a novel about our Industrial Barons and entitle it *The Headmen of the Lord*.

Panait Istrati's novel provides a wonderfully vivid picture of the Roumanian country, its inner strife and oppressions, its *gospodars* and *haidoucs*, and its dark backwardness as a nation. Istrati is a radical, and into this novel he has poured his revolutionary passion. While his sympathy is entirely with the *haidoucs* and against the *gospodars*, he has sentimentalized neither. Certain of his *haidoucs* are far from ideal in type, and Istrati makes no attempt to excuse their weakness. Nor does he ascribe a social vision to all of the *haidoucs*. Some are mere plunderers. It is the leaders, however, whom he portrays as men of great character and purpose. The sacrifice beneath their struggle, the courage that is necessary to the very nature of their life, are implicit in their every action. Their conflicts with the land-barons are described with real vigor, and in the final climax, in which the priest-turned-*haidouc*, Joakime, gives up his life in order to save the lives of his comrades, we are face to face with a scene which almost rivals the whale chase in *Moby Dick* in intensity and tumult.

Whatever of power Istrati has communicated to his narrative has come as much of himself as of his material. Without his own revolutionary vision, his material might have become mere melodrama. After all, battles between *haidoucs* and *boyars* mean little more than the excitement of conflict to those who do not see the social significance behind them. Istrati never fails to see this. And, what is more important, is that he never fails to point it out with challenging emphasis, for, when all is said, that is what he aims to do in all his work. When he returned from France he swore to himself that he would

"proclaim to the Occident the crimes against humanity which are practiced by (the) executioners of the Roumanian people. I swore to think no more of Art, until I had avenged the victims who cried from their tombs: 'Before art, a little pity for us!'"

For all who see the need of revolutionary vision in our world, there is but to cry—"Here, indeed, is a man."

While Frank Norris declared: "I never truckled; I never took off the hat to Fashion and held it out for pennies. By God, I told them the truth. They liked it or they didn't like it. What had that to do with me? I told them the truth,"—there was lacking in his words that vision of truth that was revolutionary in its sweep. Istrati has told the truth too, but with a revolutionary insight and emphasis. He has not written to amuse and entertain, but to arouse and challenge.

"I have perceived too well that the Occident grows most tender," Istrati writes, "in the presence of the strings of pearls and the 'superb solitaires' which Americans lose in the cabarets of Montmartre; in the presence of master thieves and pandering Messiahs; in the presence of men before whom it breaks its back because they earn a hundred thousand francs a minute; in the presence of everything that does not disturb the digestion of the masters of the world.

"It is this that I henceforth have to say!

"And now, if there are among my readers any who no longer wish to follow my words let them know that I do not ask them to feed me, and that I am alike indifferent to their wrath."

These are the words of a writer who has gone far beyond Frank Norris! He is the Nekrasov and Shevchenko of our age. He has carried on, in the form of the novel, their passionate fight against oppression.

This novel of Istrati is not a finished piece of work. It lacks something of that fine-formed continuity, let us say, of a novel such as *Madame Bovary*. It is a roving, formless fiction, rich with varied episode and stirring characterization. Its very simplicity of style is exquisite. Its main weakness lies in its failure to sustain its suspense throughout its many threaded themes. There are too many individual stories to detract from the main theme, and the general looseness of connection between them tends to destroy something of the unity of the whole conception.

These criticisms, however, are as nothing beside the spirit of the work. In these pages there breathes a man, and in these characters there lives the great struggle of the oppressed against their oppressors.

V. F. CALVERTON.

"EXQUISITE"

Overshadowed, by Eugene Lohrke. Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith. \$2.50.

The blurb on the jacket of this book says: "The story of a young man with a mother complex. (She) was a widow, and she had sent her only boy and greatest treasure in life to the war 'with a blessing that was to have shone around his head like a halo.'

"Mr. Lohrke, who is the author of this . . . novel, writes his story in exquisite prose, but behind all the poetry of it there is an undercurrent of inevitable frustration . . ."

I have nothing to add to this description of the book unless it is to say that the book drips with "exquisite prose," if you know what I mean.

C.Y.H.

Working Women

Victorian Working Women, by Wanda Fraiken Neff. Columbia University Press. \$3.50.

This is actually a study of Victorian working women in the literature of that period, and hence a more limited inquiry than the title implies. The result is that the emphasis is rather on the social attitude toward working women than on the lives of the working women themselves, in so far, at least, as the industrial worker is concerned. The author includes only those classes which received special investigation and reform during the years 1832-1850—the period marking the emergence of the working woman in England as a definite social problem presented to a wide reading public. Wholly omitted from the study are “such hopeless slaves as the hand loom weavers and the immortally toiling agricultural laborers and domestic servants.” And while a great deal of space is devoted to the dressmaker, the governess, and even to the “idle woman” of that period—as personified in all the silly heroines of Victorian fiction—not a word is said of the obscure millions of housewives with whom neither writers nor reformers were concerned, whose endless sweeping and baking and scrubbing and child bearing and rearing entitle them to be classed as workers. Miss Neff has industriously combed tracts, magazines and parliamentary reports of the period as well as fiction, and the book is almost too well documented, with a disconcerting number of references, but little critical analysis.

The first and longest section is devoted to the textile worker. Since the harsh drudgery of the mill girls' existence made unlovely coarse creatures of most of them, they were obviously not fit stuff for heroines of novels, and most of the material for this section was gathered from parliamentary Blue books and articles by reformers in current *Christian Ladies' Magazines*. The records show that by 1832 women were employed in almost every department of the cotton factories, working up to 16 and 18 hours a day, for from 5 to 15 shillings a week—longer hours and far less pay than the men were receiving. The women were only occasionally admitted to the men's labor organizations, and while here and there a few valiant spirits had been active in the Chartist movement and some of the early strikes, their own organizations were weak. There were a few women's societies with such piquant names as “Odd Females” and “Ancient Virgins”, and certain Friendly Societies combined sick and burial benefits with provision for social meetings at public places where the members “drank, swore and smoked together,” where timid husbands occasionally appeared to beg their wives to come home to the crying bairns, but which, according to Miss Neff, “seemed to have resulted less in the beginnings of union organization . . . than in the development of the independent female.”

It was not until large numbers of women were massed in the factories that the reformers got excited and gave them the attention denied them when they worked under even worse conditions in their homes and small workshops. When the reformers finally were around, they were more preoccupied with improving moral conditions than making life easier, and there was, of course, a great outcry about the breaking up of the home resulting in women going to factories. Sporadic welfare work relieved conditions here and there, legislation brought gradual improvements, and the efforts of the reformers brought about what Miss Neff calls the “final victory” of a 10 hour day for women and children in 1847—a year, she points out, when trade conditions made it impossible to keep the mills running even ten hours. After 1850 Miss Neff finds the moral character raised, a “better class” of young women in the mills, women less overworked, general improvement through education, and so on. Women in the non-textile trades fared worse, conditions were still more intolerable, and there was no corrective legislation to relieve them during the period chronicled.

The author's conclusion is that on the whole the industrial revolution has been good for women—the factory has emancipated her—mechanical inventions have dignified the home—modern plumbing and general education in sanitation have made crowded cities healthful—electric washing machines and vacuum cleaners (she says) are common in working class homes in the U. S. A.

But Mrs. Neff has spent too many hours among the dusty volumes and yellowed journals of the British Museum—too few in Lancashire—Paterson—Gastonia to talk about the working woman of to-day. Is there much difference between 10 or 15 shillings a



Drawn by M. Pass.

week in England in 1832, and \$6.50 in the United States in 1929? Twelve hours in a cotton mill then, twelve hours in a cotton mill now? Hunger and sickness and dirt then and now?

Mrs. Neff's facts are valuable and important, here conclusions inconsequential and sometimes erroneous. That conditions among mill workers today are frequently almost as bad as in the days she describes, she seems unaware. What concerns her more, is that the working woman has not come into her own in literature. She hails as a great gain the sense of “sex solidarity” gained through women of the aristocracy developing greater sympathy for the dressmakers who toil for them, through mothers and governesses being able to meet on common ground. But she ignores completely all the wider social implications of the working woman's struggle, the fact that it is only in part a sex struggle, and that the working woman will not be free until her whole class is free from exploitation.

JESSICA SMITH.

The Gastonia Struggle

Gastonia, Citadel of the Class Struggle in the New South, by William F. Dunne, \$0.15. Workers Library Publishers.

In the trial of the Gastonia strikers the prosecution has tried to show that there was no reason for the unionists to fear attack on their headquarters: but this pamphlet describes the despoiling of the first headquarters and relief store by masked bands—after the union guards had been conveniently arrested by the police. It tells how a mill thug attempted to shoot Beal at the union meeting on the afternoon of June 7th. It includes the affidavit of a worker who saw Officer Gilbert and A. J. Roach make a drunken assault—for which they are now indicted—three hours before they invaded the tent colony. It tells how the union guards did not shoot at the officers until after they shot and guard McGinnis has a hole from a police revolver bullet through his cap.

An amazing testimonial to Loray mill practices is the story of a mountaineer brought from South Carolina to scab on the strike—transcribed as he told it in his own pithy dialect—an article like the unusual human document of Ella Ford in a recent issue of the *New Masses*.

The pamphlet is rich with direct quotations from Chamber of Commerce circulars and the press—including some fine authentic specimens of the *Gastonia Gazette's* ravings, more ridiculous than the most absurd conceit of a satirist.

With this readable account is a thorough analysis of the whole southern textile situation. Bill Dunne in fifty pages has successfully pictured the background of the greatest southern industrial struggle.

JESSIE LLOYD.

NEW MASSES



Drawn by M. Pass.

Soviet Russia and Peace

Soviet Union And Peace. Introduction by Henri Barbusse. International Publishers. \$2.25.

Since the end of July, 1914, war news and peace news have made good "copy" in the newspaper offices of the world. Tens of millions of newspaper readers have been presented with tens of thousands of columns in which war and peace have been the theme. In the early days readers lapped up war news and scoffed at peace talk. Later they became interested in peace. How interested? The mad delirium of Armistice Day, 1918, was an unforgettable answer.

During the ten years that have passed since the "Peace" Treaty, with its League of Nations Covenant, drawn up by the Allies and signed by the Central Powers, the masses who do the world's work and who carry the world's burdens, have been hoping that "the war to end war" would really bring peace on earth. But during every one of the ten years, in Nicaragua, in Syria, in Morocco, in Afghanistan, in China, in Turkey, in Palestine, war has raged and in every case one of the great capitalist empires has made the war, or backed the war, or, at the very least, supplied the ammunitions of war from its manufacturing plants.

Through the warfare of these "post-war" years, the Soviet Union alone, in word and in deed, has stood consistently for peace. Since the days of the October Revolution in 1917, the Soviet spokesmen have insisted that necessary steps be taken to abolish war and the means of war-making.

Henri Barbusse, author of *Under Fire*, and for the past dozen years, one of the world's outstanding peace agitators, has written an introduction to a collection of official documents setting forth the Soviet attitude toward war and peace. The introduction tells the story. The documents supplement it. For a dozen years Soviet spokesmen have been voicing the demand of the Russian masses and the masses everywhere, that war be abandoned and abolished and that peace be established. In the early days of the Revolution; at the Peace Conference; during the discussion of disarmament. In their acceptance of the Kellogg Peace Pact the Soviet spokesmen have been explaining war, demanding peace and insisting that the necessary steps be taken to insure peace.

It is a noteworthy record,—a record without parallel. Yet the reasons for it are clear enough. The Russian masses, like the masses everywhere want peace. But, underlying the mass desire for peace in the Soviet Union alone there is an economic foundation on which peace can be established. Profiteering has been largely eliminated. Exploitation has been wiped out. The economic drive toward war, which persists in every capitalist country, has been destroyed. The Soviet Union is for peace because the economic and social system on which it is built is a peace system and not a war system.

There is nothing surprising in this contest—the capitalist world preparing for war—the Soviet Union demanding peace. War is an essential part of the capitalist system of social organization. The logic of Sovietism is world peace. These documents, showing the Soviet attitude toward peace illustrate a truth which becomes daily more apparent: the masses of the world who want peace, can get it only by following the lead of the Russian masses: destroying the structure of capitalist imperialism and setting up the social machinery of a co-operative world society, controlled by workers and run in their interest.

SCOTT NEARING.

The Call Within, by Boris Dimondstein. Be Dee Publishing Co. \$2.00.

No Russian peasant has ever been converted literally overnight into an ardent revolutionary (which includes vegetarianism and sex abstinence) simply thru having heard one of Tolstoy's stories of submission and Christian Love. No expression of Jewish merchants' class has ever been hailed as the voice of the Revolution.

Journalistic energy or intelligence can often compensate, at least partially, for the lack of literary qualifications. Mr. Dimondstein's book lacks both. It is immature, incompetent and childishly sentimental.

V. V. K.

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ONE OF THE FEW

BY STANLEY BURNSHAW

Industrialism—large scale production, specialization of labor, standardization of everything, has been inevitably changing life from the comparatively simpler existence dependent basically on the land and the human being, to one complex and completely urbanized. We are leaping inevitably into an utterly mechanistic era in which the traditions of relatively natural life must be abandoned for the completely civilized, specialized, artificial. Concomitantly, the intuitive-instinctive type of thinking characteristic of man as an animal, is gradually being discarded for the efficiently functioning, reliable, logic-machine-mind.

But annoyed and grieved by the wretchedness of living today, we often fail to realize that there are titans among us—in the ranks of those we may call, for want of a better name, “human” artists. They cannot help witnessing the relentless crushing of this antagonist-civilization, but are creative in Olympian serenity. There comes to mind a man among them, glorious for many things: Charles Erskine Scott Wood.

As a human being he is an amazing figure. Born seventy-eight years ago he has done almost everything, from practising law to exploring Alaska, from graduating from West Point and fighting in the Indian campaigns against Chief Joseph to denouncing military life and imperialism. Specifically, he was appointed by Grant to West Point, a few years later returned from Alaska to enter the Nez Perces campaign; aroused agitation at the faithless violation of understanding by the United States, and finally was responsible for partially righting this wrong. A few more years of military life and then Wood began law practice in Portland, Oregon. He now realized that every “Indian campaign was produced by political intrigue and injustice and objected to shooting Indians whose simple rebellion against broken faith” he respected. He had been a Jeffersonian Democrat of the extreme type which borders on anarchism, but had not opposed “imperialism until it arrived at the close of the Spanish-American so-called war.” Meanwhile, as a lawyer he was achieving success (he had begun in 1884 at the age of thirty-two), but he was mixing with the materials of art and life as well. Besides his business office he had a “secret chamber to which came poets, peasants, artists, etc.” and finally, ten years ago, he gave up law to turn wholly to literature, “moving to California to live in the sunlight.” Besides his literary work, he is considered by many an authority on gems, on Elizabethan literature, and a crack shot. In his own opinion he is none of these, particularly not a crack shot. He is “too lazy to be an ardent hunter and preferred fishing—fly-fishing and lying under a tree with a book or a water-color pad.”

But this is not an essay on Wood, the Man. Such an article recently was printed in the *New Masses*, and tho it is a rich subject, we are here concerned primarily with Wood as a creative artist. Nor is this matter less interesting. For a man who has endured seventy-eight years his literary output is small. But it is varied, full of extremes, original. For purposes of simplicity it is best to consider his contribution to *human* art first in poetry, second in prose.

He has written three kinds of verse: a classical type of sonnet in the admirable *Maia* (1918); a group of lyrical poems hewn out of the raw poetry of nature and the West; and a third kind which is not easily pigeon-holed. It is *The Poet in the Desert**, generally considered his masterpiece, and so indescribable in certain respects, that it requires quotation in full. Its theme is no less than man's life in relation to himself and the universe: a dialogue between the Poet and Truth. Out of these formidable materials is created a poem of huge passion—a terrifying cosmic outcry against things as they are—and a prophetic urge toward the triumph of justice and joy (thru revolution).

Those who believe that social theory has no place in art find much fault with this book. Perhaps the whole fabric is spoiled for them by its “propaganda”. Yet even tho they fail to see the invalidity of this charge (since propaganda in this instance is

human happiness and justice), they must admit that as art it is the finest extant work in free verse. Specifically, it is a group of poetic passages—many of them complete poems in themselves—fused into a unity by a plea for human happiness. Where the book is scorned for its propaganda, it must also be admired for its art.

Wood's verse-indictment of war is the most fundamental I have yet seen. It strips down to the truth. And yet, from the attitude of art the lyrical passages of the book are the finest; and it seems logical that a selection be made of the book's sheer poetry, for here (as in so many fine poets) the high art exists in snatches. Indeed, *The Poet in the Desert* is two books: a collection of fine lyric verse and a social philosophy of burning passion.

The same fine lyricism in which this book abounds, expresses itself in Wood's shorter poems and songs. *Poems of the Ranges*** is a mere handful (twenty-two poems) but a rich sheaf. Here are cowboy songs that ring true—together with four or five lyrics which belong in future anthologies. Somehow the verses beginning “Here's a pretty pink shell” are left out, but the book contains “Migration” and “First Snow”.

Contemporary American taste is responsible for Wood being best known for his *Heavenly Discourse* (Vanguard Press, 1928), which is no reflection on that book other than that as art it is inferior to the poems. Americans—both ignorant and intellectual—crave books that amuse. *Heavenly Discourse* not only amused but stung. It branded Wood a mercilessly honest critic with wit and consummate satiric artistry. To taste a few discourses is to taste them all, which is one proof of their authentic originality. Indeed it is indisputable that *Heavenly Discourse* is the only major work of humanistic satire born out of America.

And now Wood's *Book of Indian Tales**** is published for the first time. It was first printed in 1898 when Wood's fourteen-year old son (now dead) asked for a small book to print on his boys' handpress in the attic. Wood wrote out the Indian myths and tales he had collected—and to make quantity composed the last one. A hundred twenty-five copies were printed for subscribers. Recently one of these was catalogued at \$600. The present edition is a good replica of the original, I am told, and that is a good thing for it blends with the spirit of its pages. To describe the volume, one might call it nineteen tales recorded from the lips of American Indians by an honest and gifted reporter, to which is added one original tale as fine as the others. The prose has the simple beauty of Indian poems to which is added a dash of English melody. Wood has done a service more to American readers than to the Indians whose art he helps to preserve. Having done that than which there is nothing viler under the sun—having annihilated Amerindian civilization, we indeed need to suffer the bitter accusation implied in the remains of these superb creatures.

It is urged that this latest book of tales be read by all who are really alive. For not only are they precious documents of a wise and murdered people, but along with the poems they help one to fully realize the work of C. E. S. Wood. *Poet in the Desert* is a spiritual katharsis, cosmic experience rare in literature. The lyrics, *Heavenly Discourse*, and the *Indian Tales* are sound contributions to American literature. Every work Wood has begun seems to maintain from beginning to end its high intensity. Indeed it is hardly possible for an honest person not to be thrilled by Wood as a passionate human being, or for a student of literature not to revere him for his moments of high art.

**The Poet In The Desert*, by Chas. E. S. Wood. Vanguard Press. \$2.00.

***Poems of the Ranges*, by Chas. E. S. Wood. The Lantern Press. \$3.50.

****Book of Indian Tales*, by Chas. E. S. Wood. Vanguard Press. \$2.00.

Stories of The Red Army

Red Cavalry, by I. Babel. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

Babel was born in Odessa in 1894 of intellectual Jewish parents. During the pogrom of 1905 his family fled to a distant town.

In 1914 he took his degree at the University of Saratov. In spite of the fact that Petrograd was forbidden to him as a Jew, 1916 saw him located there with the aid of false passports for the purpose of pursuing his literary career. His first published stories appeared in Gorki's famous paper *Annals*. Two charges, pornography and inciting class hatred, were brought against him by the Tsarist tyranny. The revolution intervened and they were never heard.

On the advice of Gorki, Babel stopped writing and in 1920 joined the army to "study life at first hand". From his army experiences he has snatched a few types of the Red Cavalry and has sketched them, like a dispassionate observer, against a background colored by restlessness and ferociousness of the Polish campaign. He is neither horrified by the cruelties of war nor intoxicated by the grandeur of its cause. He merely watches with critical interest its phases swarming with grotesque, romantic varieties of life.

Babel seems especially fascinated by the reckless and savage ignorance of the Cossack. The wild incongruities of his unbridled character figure most prominently in this collection. The representative of the intelligentsia, an intellectual hero and a physical coward, is also portrayed with merciless vividness. The idealism of the Jewish dreamer, the negativeness of the army prostitute, the naive loyalty of the peasant boy, are all masterfully sketched in a manner as naked, unconventional, and stirring as the character of their historical background.

Babel achieves remarkable, almost cinematic effects in his presentation of the war background. He has a marvelous sense of color and movement, richness and fine mould in the romantic twists of expression.

The translation tends to make it somewhat heavy. There is also an occasional distortion of meaning brought about by literal translation. Its main handicap, however, is its inability to preserve the characteristic differences of the dialects in which the book is so abundant.

With all these drawbacks, the book remains curious and fascinating.

VALENTINE V. KONIN.

MEN IN WAR

War, by Ludwig Renn. Translated by Wills and Edwin Muir. Dodd, Mead and Company. \$2.00

How can one explain the present popularity of realistic war books? Is the success of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *War* and other war books based on a passing style or are there other and more fundamental reasons?

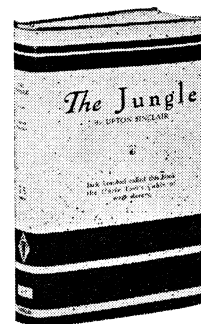
From 1920 until 1925 not even the flamboyant, swashbuckling war book of the Guy Empey type could find a market and the same was true of war plays and films. Since 1926, however, people began to evince an interest in war books again. There are two reasons for this reawakened interest.

First, the war had receded into the past far enough to enable writers to take an objective view of it. The suffering when one thought of the war was not so intense—time had lent its helping hand.

Second, during the last four or five years the danger of another world war has become patent even to the most reactionary mind. In 1913 the statement that a war was impending was greeted with sneers and charges of radicalism. Today a similar remark is accepted as almost axiomatic.

I recently checked off a list of ten leading foreign news stories in the *New York Times* and discovered that six dealt with war,

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(preparation for war disarmament, limitation of arms, etc.) and peace treaties.

The world knows today that it stands on the verge of another military catastrophe. Manual workers, white-collar workers, bankers, farmers and even columnists know this to be a fact. There is no denying it. It is inescapable. When the diplomats frame "peace" pacts and issue yards of blather about their love of peace they do so in order to lull the fear of war in the hearts of millions who are beginning to live in daily dread of being called to die in another "war for democracy."

In these times it is natural that there should be an interest in art which has the last war as its central theme. People want to know in detail what it is that is capable of destroying tens of millions of young men in four years and yet leaves the world in ghastly misery and want for years afterwards.

War is the second of the great war books which have come out of Germany in the last year. It is a simple, direct narrative of a non-commissioned officer who lived through the war from the defeat at the Marne to the collapse and mutiny of the Imperial Army in 1918 (a fact which Remarque does not mention in *All Quiet*.)

The style of *War* is staccato, concrete and behavioristic. It does not concern itself with introspective studies of its relatively few characters. Stroke by stroke, Renn manages to build a towering picture of the life of the non-Com and private in modern war. With short, matter-of-fact sentences he describes the animalistic pleasures and pain of men in war—wet clothing, a warm fire at night, lice, shell-fire, the delight in eating hunks of greasy pork when one is famished, fear, death,—until one feels oneself immersed in war itself.

Renn makes no attempt to rationalize or romanticize about war. He does not weep over the fact that men are killed. He paints the picture and lets it go at that. The book as a result, is an excellent piece of realistic writing. It is a pity that the book was published simultaneously with *All Quiet*. The publishers of *War* should have waited for the furor of Remarque's book to die down. As a matter of record it should be said that *War* was written in 1923 while *All Quiet* was written in 1928.

Ludwig Renn is the secretary of the Association of Proletarian Writers of Germany and is a member of the Communist Party. In 1927 he fought in the streets of Vienna and took an active part in the storming of the Palace of Justice. In an article in *Monde* he says: "After writing my book I read John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World* which helped to convince me of the inevitability of the world revolution. Shortly afterwards I became a Communist. I am now writing a new book, *After the War* in which I recount my experiences since the Spartacist revolution."

CHARLES YALE HARRISON.

The Electric Chair

Boston, by Upton Sinclair. A. & C. Boni. \$5.00.

Seven hundred years ago they burned heretics at the stake.

"Do you believe in Father, Son and Holy Ghost? Do you believe in Immaculate Conception and Resurrection?" was the stock question.

"No" and a mob of black-cowled 100 per cent Christians walked you to the public square where a pyramid of faggots was heaped sky-high.

In America today they burn heretics on the electric chair. There are sixteen candidates waiting for the flames today at Gastonia. If the chair is not available, they will refine the torture.

They call the mob, the lynch mob, which no longer walks behind a silver cross held aloft, but rides on Buicks and Packards led by the flag straining in the breeze.

At Gastonia the other day the bosses' lynching party did not ask its victims to renounce Judaism or Protestantism.

They asked "Do you promise to give up unionism?" And they bade Ben Wells, National Textile Workers Union organizer to grasp a small American flag and denounce trade unionism.

His refusal and declaration that he was a worker who had come South to help the workers in the textile mills better conditions (\$12 a week for 60 hours of speed-up) was considered sufficient heresy.

"That's enough" said the mob that had broken into his home

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THE SAN FRANCISCO BULLETIN, says:

The CALL WITHIN, by Boris Dimondstein. "With a strange intermingling of romanticism and realism, this story of a Russian Jewish boy takes us through the first Russian revolution. There is something beautiful and something terrible shining and writhing in turn through these pages... It is handled in a manner that leaves a haunting fever in your veins. Here is starkness wrapped in a veil of gauzelike beauty. The idealism of the mind and the grossness of the flesh contrast themselves vividly, under the hand of Dimondstein. You will not forget this story.

THE BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT, says:

"Emotion, mysticism, idealism and imagination are brought together into the pages of this story of Russia, of the First Revolution."

THE OAKLAND, Cal., TRIBUNE, says:

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singing the hymn "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow." The inquisition was over. The flogging began.

Two years ago in Massachusetts, the blue-bloods did it with more eclat. Upton Sinclair in *Boston*, makes Sacco and Vanzetti as real as Wall Street.

When Sinclair is through with his two volume book, the blue-bloods of Boston, the Cabots, and Coolidges, (the right Coolidges) stalk before your eyes like a procession of lepers in evening clothes.

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Boston compresses inside of two volumes the life of 120,000,000 Americans in the Age of Blood, the twentieth century.

I was in a position August 22, 1929, the second anniversary of Sacco and Vanzetti's death at the American stake, to get all the reports of workers demonstrations throughout the world.

They poured out of 40 American cities, of which I had record, and damned the Fullers, the Thayers, the Boston bluebloods, the American and international bosses to hell.

In Rosario, Argentine, the shopkeepers put up the corrugated iron shutters over the windows and listened for the reassuring machine gun. They heard the tramping feet of thousands of proletarians, brothers of the ones reading Sinclairs' *Boston* in America today. In Montevideo, in twenty cities of Mexico, in Germany, in France, in England, the workers linked the names Sacco-Vanzetti with Gastonia.

The execution of Sacco and Vanzetti branded an indelible scar on the forehead of the masses, in good old Puritan fashion. It branded class consciousness into a hundred million workers throuout the world.

In Upton Sinclair's book you can see that process. The branding iron and the scar, the smoke and the stench of flesh is there. Historians of today read the Iliad to learn about the old Greeks, the Bible for the old Jews. In the future they will read Sinclair to learn about the old Americans.

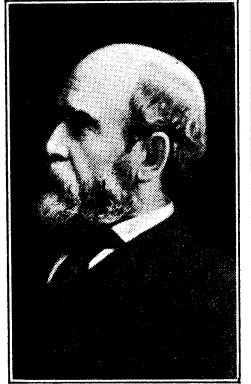
In 1927 it was Sacco and Vanzetti. Today it is Gastonia. Tomorrow?

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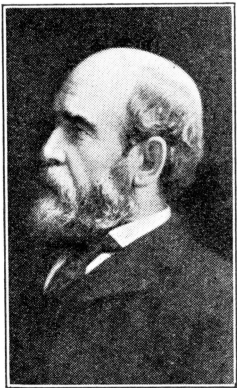
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Science and Pseudoscience

Modern Scientific Knowledge of Nature, Man, and Society: a symposium edited by Frederick A. Cleveland. The Ronald Press. \$4.50.

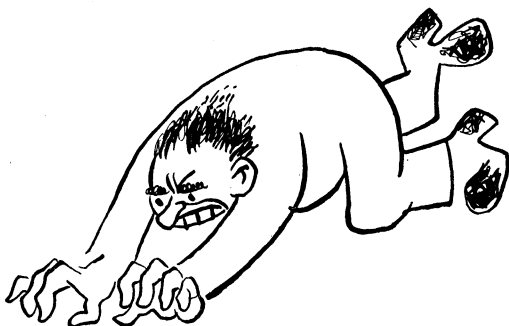
Just as fast as our capitalistic system of production on its downward journey speeds toward increasingly greater anarchy, the system of ideas built on its rapidly declining foundation becomes more and more confused and contradictory. The intense specialization produces individuals whose vision is restricted within very narrow limits; the scientist who spends his lifetime in the investigation of the crystalline structure of certain minerals in the spinel family usually loses the connection not only between the various fields of science, but even between the major branches of his own science. Due to the immense mass of detail it becomes extremely difficult for the individual to form a unified and satisfactory view of the cosmos. Every attempt, therefore, whose aim is to bring order into this chaos of conflicting notions should be welcomed by readers. This book, however, which started out to "present a view of the world in which we live as seen by men of science," under the careful editorial guidance of F. A. Cleveland, professor of United States Citizenship at Boston University, degenerates into an empty glorification of American sham-democracy.

Besides the introductory chapters the book consists of three parts, dealing with inanimate nature, animate nature, and human nature. The first of these summarizes astronomy, geology, physics, and chemistry; the second colloidal chemistry and biology; and the third, anthropology, psychology, and sociology. The chapters dealing with the natural sciences are on the whole very good. The collaborators are noted scientists, authorities in their respective fields, which fact insures the reader against semi-scientific or pseudo-scientific trash. At times they tend to overemphasize the theoretical as against the practical; thus the static atomic model

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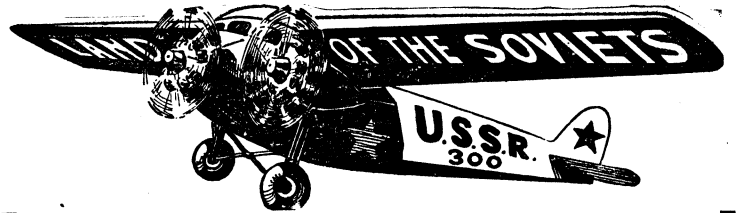
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of Lewis and Langmuir, which has already lost the most of its scientific significance, is discussed at length, while little attention is paid to the principles on which electrical and mechanical machines are based. On the other hand, all of them show the praiseworthy inclination to present the most recent advances in their respective fields, such as the tidal-evolution theory in astronomy, the theory of relativity and wave mechanics in physics.

The discussion of human society in the last part of the book, performed mostly by Mr. Cleveland himself, is pure, unadulterated rubbish. It is not so easy to find the way in the labyrinth of different sociological theories, states Mr. Cleveland, and to prove it, he enumerates nine different schools of sociological writers, each school consisting of several sub-groups. And lo! behold! there is in Group 7, Sub-group e, the name of "economic interpretation of history." In his discussion of human society he draws on the resources of all these contradictory mess of theories, with the exception of Group 7, Sub-group e, of course. A special chapter is devoted to the defense and glorification of private property; economic exploitation is carefully explained and justified; the class divisions of the present social system and the struggle of classes are not even remotely suggested. This theory of government is taken from the constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, official murderer of Sacco and Vanzetti: "Government (democratic) is instituted for the protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness of the people; and not for the profit, honor, or private interest of any one man, family, or class of men." How little is the difference between the theory of the working class and of the capitalist class! Just shift the "not" from the second part of the sentence to the first, and you will get the essence of Lenin's *State and Revolution*.

If you want to get a good cross-section of contemporary natural science, get this book and read it. If you haven't much time to waste, skip the last few chapters on sociology, and read Bucharin's *Historical Materialism*, instead.

STEPHEN BARABAS.



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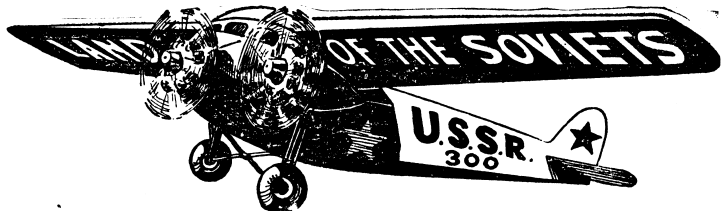
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**THE SOVIET FLYERS
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Black and White

Congo Gods, by Otto Lutken. Coward-McCann. \$2.00.

Congo Gods, translated from the Danish of Otto Lutken, is a romance of white-and-black contacts in the heart of Africa. It is so ravishing a story that one reads the 255 pages without the slightest flagging of interest. There are no wearisome technical passages; the blacks of the great wilderness and the white invaders are simply living their life, in forest and hut and on the mighty Congo River, "grandfather of waters."

Perhaps no American writer, with the American color complexes of today, could ever write such a story of white and black. For this story has one almost unprecedented "difference": it stops with the blacks standing in the place of victory. It matters not that one can go on in his imagination, as every American will certainly do, and picture how subsequently the organized white military power of Europe would rally and send reinforcements and ultimately crush the young African leader with its superior weight. An American writer would have had to achieve that result before the end of his story, to appease the superiority complexes of white American readers. But Lutken dares to leave the scene with the young black Masua standing with the colonial Belgian whites under his feet.

Masua, son of a chief, is the hero of this story; altho it also relates the history and experiences of a young white man, "little Lucien Dubois, of Brussels". Lucien is made to embody the weaknesses of the white governors in Africa, as Masua embodies the strength of the black natives and their possible future. The story of the people and the descriptions of the country could have been written only by one who knows that part of Africa by intimate personal experiences. There is nothing unnatural or far-fetched in any detail; no pretenses of supernatural witchery or unearthly voodoo, such as white writers usually revel in when they deal with primitive Negro stories. In this story, altho some are white and others are black, they are all normal human beings, alike in all respects that are really important. They worship similar gods: in Belgium the priest had told Lucien about the great white god, creator and controller of the universe; in the African village, the old witch doctor had told Masua about the great African gods, creators and rulers of the world.

Lucien, a weakling of which no civilization can feel proud, went out to the Congo service as an alternative of suicide, and all because he had lost his girl to some stronger white man. Masua decided to go into the service, voluntarily, as a soldier of the white Congo regime, in order to learn "the white man's *mayele*," or the white man's "wisdom," cunning and skill in things. He reasoned that the only thing that could make a handful of whites dominant over a multitude of blacks, was this "mayele" of the white world, and he observed that the blacks could learn this wisdom. And if the great black people ever had the "mayele" of the whites, he reasoned that they could brush off the handful of colonial whites as he might brush an annoying ant from his leg.

The lives of Lucien, the white, and Masua, the black, became naturally intertwined. The girl wife of Masua, Yaja, who left the native village with him, after her young husband was supposed to have been drowned in the Congo, became the concubine of whites; first of Lucien, whose weakness finally lost her to stronger white men. Practically all of these white men she "wrapped about her finger," made them pay dearly and accumulated a small fortune in a Congo bank. She became a beautiful and voluptuous brown woman, as were other women of her country. After four years Masua turns up as an officer of the Belgian Congo forces, having learned the white man's *mayele*. The whites, by double-crossing each other and stealing each other's white wives, had gotten themselves into a pretty mess, and were nearly all drunk at a banquet, celebrating the eve of their departure on an expedition to crush a certain African rebellion, in which Masua was to be one of their subordinate officers, and because of his skill and influence over natives, was to be relied upon largely for the success of the campaign,—altho the whites, as usual, were the superior officers and were to get all the glory and the rewards. But while the whites were carousing and cuckolding each other, Masua harangues the native soldiers and leads them in an attack which wiped out the whites,—all except the weakling, Lucien, whom Yaja saved out of pity. It is notice-



Drawn by J. L. Wells.

AFRICAN MASKS

able that as soon as Masua reappeared, Yaja, who had supposed him dead, took her first opportunity to leave her last white man and return to him. He was the only man whom she had ever loved and respected. But Masua, while he understood the situation, was so absorbed in his great aim that he had no immediate use or time for Yaja,—and the story actually concluded (un-American again!) without having the black man to take up again with this strayed black wife, whom he had once loved as the apple of his eye.

In short, there is no effort made in this whole story to stilt or protect or to save the illusion of innate white superiority. It is just a story of two cultures of humans, one more scientific, the other more primitive. The whites have their brutality, even to each other, hidden under a mask of social formalities and polite formulas; but their social and political massacres and murders of each other are more merciless than the direct killings of the savages; the wiser blacks noticed that the whites dagger each other with terrible words, and concealed thrusts. And the greatest disillusionment of all was to watch the way of the white masters with the black women. It would seem that the black woman is the nemesis of the white man in such a situation. As the whites concealed their selfish thrusts and brutal rivalries under clothing of social formalities, so they clothed their animal bodies under pretentious garments; while the blacks, dressed in their lacerated features and tattooed bellies, do not suffer much by comparison.

WILLIAM PICKENS.



Drawn by J. L. Wells.

AFRICAN MASKS

WORKERS' ART

An appeal addressed to Workers' Art Groups was printed in our September issue. The response has been splendid. We received letters from workers' organizations and individuals from all parts of the country. We print the first received. Beginning with the next issue, two pages will be devoted to workers' cultural activities. Tell us what your organization has done; what its plans are for the coming season; write us your experiences. Send us photographs of theatrical productions, movies, singing societies, workers' sports clubs. The *New Masses* will give expression to these groups. It will help to unite them into a national organization.—Ed.

Dear Mr. Gold:

Permit me to outline the following in connection with your appeal on "Workers' Art Groups" in the September issue of *New Masses*. I believe that this is the first and most essential step toward the realization of your aims:

Recruit five men or women, capable and—of course—willing to place themselves at the disposal of this movement, as superintendants of each of the five main branches of art: Literature, Music, Stage, Screen and Graphic or Applied Arts.

Let them form or appoint an organization committee with headquarters in New York and use a column or page in the *New Masses* as their temporary speaker's platform.

Let then the organization committee evolve a workable organization plan and submit it to the officers in charge of the existing individual clubs for their approval or criticism.

Let them initiate and sponsor the forming of such local clubs where there are none.

The purpose of the organization committee will be:

To foster the individuality of existing or forming clubs, but centralize them by creating an executive center of the literary, graphic, theatrical and cinema arts that would be the same to us what Hollywood, or the Art League, etc., are to the bourgeois class.

To guide individual clubs in the right direction, advise them and map out ways for them.

To facilitate exchange of ideas and productive efforts between individual clubs.

To maintain sporadic or permanent exhibits, demonstrations, competitions, lectures. Compile material for individual performances or exhibitions.

To have representatives tour individual organizations and stimulate, counsel and direct their activities.

To have each club contribute a feasible sum toward the upkeep of this Central Management.

Other details will be worked out by the organization committee after the officers of the existing clubs have submitted their opinions.

Incidentally, I am professionally employed in the motion picture industry, know all its branches by practical experience and if necessary, would gladly offer my services and my spare time to help organize the movement. I am also well versed in the field of literature and the graphic and applied arts.

Wishing you the best of success in the sorely needed organization of this movement, I am

cordially yours,

J. GRIMM.

New York, N. Y.

Dear Friends:

Michael Gold's letter in your September issue comes at the right moment. The *New Masses* by serving as a spokesman for proletarian cultural groups can help us a great deal.

You will be glad to learn we have already established in New York a base for such a movement. The New York Dramatic Council has been organized of 12 existing groups. Included are the Workers Laboratory Theatre, the Hungarian, Finnish, Jugoslav, Scandinavian, Czechoslovak and others workers theatre groups. Within the month others will join us.

The following has already been done:

A monthly Bulletin will make its first appearance in September. A laboratory course in playwriting, acting and producing will be given at the Workers' school with weekly classes. About fifty are already enrolled.

A movie department has been established in a modest way.

Movies have been taken of the Anti-Imperialist demonstration in Union Square on August 1 and of the Sacco-Vanzetti demonstration and other working class events.

Workers interested in these activities, wishing to join the dramatic class, any of the affiliated groups (speaking English or any other languages) or wishing to receive the monthly Bulletin can address the New York Dramatic Council at the Workers' School, 30 Union Square, N. Y.

SECRETARY.

Dear *New Masses*,

In reference to Michael Gold's letter in your September issue we are submitting this report of the activities of the Bronx Hungarian Workers Club.

Starting with three members approximately three years ago we now have a regular attendance of 120 at our weekly open meetings. At some of our more ambitious undertakings, as for instance a mass recitation on the Tenth Anniversary of the Soviet Union, we have played to an audience of 500. About the same time we produced a Hungarian one act play which was also given out of town. More recently Michael Gold's *Strike* was produced with considerable success.

Our plans for the future in the field of dramatics include the production of another one act play in September and possibly the production of *Gods of the Lightning* in Hungarian.

As to our other activities. We run an extensive circulating library, hold a weekly Open Forum and affairs whose proceeds we utilize for rent, publicity, donations, etc. These affairs (dances, recitations) are extremely popular with the Hungarian element of the Working Class movement.

At present the Club has three soccer teams participating in the pennant race of the Metropolitan Soccer League of the Labor Sports Union. Membership in these teams is one of the main factors responsible for our growth.

A monthly publication of general interest, *Spartacus*, is issued, featuring articles both in English and Hungarian.

We do not think there is need to stress the importance of the suggested organization of workers' cultural activities thruout the country. If successful it will indeed be a "big thing". However, we assure you of our enthusiastic cooperation.

Fraternally,

WILLIAM WEINBERG, Vice Pres.

Bronx, N. Y.

New Masses:

The Workers Laboratory Theatre of New York was organized in 1928. It is directed by a board of 15 and at present has a membership of about 50.

Last season, 14 performances were given of *Marching Men* a one-act miners play to about 7,000 people. It is now in rehearsal by the Finnish and German proletarian theatre groups who with our theatre, are affiliated with the newly organized New York Dramatic Council. The stage sets used by us last season are being used by the two groups.

100 copies of the play have been mimeographed and are sold at \$10.00 a set to other workers groups.

We have ready for production 100,000 an anti-Fascist one act play; *S. S. Hellenback*; a mass play *Revolutionary Interlude* and a mass pantomime *R. O. R.*

We are now casting for *White Trash*, a play on Gastonia to be presented soon. Workers wishing to take part can communicate with the Workers Laboratory Theatre thru the N. Y. Dramatic Council at the Workers School. No previous dramatic experience is essential.

L. A. DeSANTES, Sec'y.

New York, N. Y.

LETTERS FROM READERS

He Wants Facts

New Masses:

After not having seen a copy of the *New Masses* for a year I picked up the September number. Here are some of my impressions:

You are getting too damn literary; 6 pages devoted to book reviews is preposterous—in the *New Masses*.

Then it seems to me as if you boys in the *New Masses* editorial rooms do a lot of protesting against something you're not exactly sure about. Protest just for the sake of protesting. Maybe I'm wrong but I'd almost be willing to add to Mike Gold's list of mobs the Protesting Mob.

You can't convince anybody that way. You only succeed in making us wonder if you're just kidding us along. Give 'em facts, like Carlo Tresca's story. Get Tresca to write some more.

Now this poetry you're printing. It makes me suspect, like Joseph Kalar, that you're using the magazine as a training ground for writers. No good.

No, what you've got to do is to make the *New Masses* a sort of trade paper—a trade paper for revolutionaries. Give us all the dope on the progress of labor, communism and what not.

Here's a dollar and a half for a year's subscription.

ARTHUR CLIFFORD.

Detroit, Mich.

We Make Him Impatient

Dear Michael Gold:

What makes you think bourgeois art is breaking up? Has the Literary Guild gone out of existence? And if the targets for your tomatoes are running to the Pope, so much the better. But at least the Catholics don't think they're "chosen," with a mortgage in perpetuity on all intelligence.

Your letters from readers are interesting. You might remind Mr. Kalar that people who sweat don't read. The worst crime now seems to be potential writing. Does Mr. Kalar want to choose the writers? And the readers? Why doesn't he try bucking his head against granite?

Would it ever occur to Miss Kinkead that "The New Innocents Abroad" was Ruth Kennell's honest reaction to the Russian Kuzbas? Kinkead measures people by their intentions. A traditional method, but sentimental. And bedbugs can't be overlooked. Is it possible that a *Masses* reader doesn't know that? If the bathing habits were as described, why omit them? And as for faulty water closet flushes, only a corpse could be unaware of them. There are people who cannot stand outhouse plumbing and it is futile to upbraid them. If there had been no thirty simoleons involved, would matters have been different? It looks like it. Can't you folks see round a dollar at all? You make me impatient. I suppose that's a feather in your cap.

SESALY NIKLAS.

Passaic, N. J.

Literary Graveyards

Dear Mike Gold:

You have spoken several times of *transition* in *New Masses*, but have failed to note its evil influence on young writers—its ridiculousness is apparent without calling attention to it. The matter goes back farther, to Ezra Pound, who not so many years ago started and encouraged numerous groups invariably dropping them later, or being dropped. Ezra, it seems, is incapable of good influence as the Church. Recently he tried to organize a group of writers in this country, but the only success—or harm—he achieved was the taking of a smaller Pound under his wings, namely Louis Zukofsky. Others of the group, including Spector, Moore, Gould, myself, somehow didn't grab the rope.

One of the droppings Pound left behind is *transition*. And the harm *transition* has done is evidenced in a contagion about to spread in this country in the form of a crop of new magazines, which will appear in the near future. *Blues* appeared months ago, a washy imitation of its mama in Paris.

The harm done and about to be done on a larger scale is this. Soon after a young writer experiences a setback from standard magazines . . . the next step is to try the smaller magazines. To get his work published, let us say in *Blues*, he must drop commas, sense, and adopt freakishness. Therein lies the harm, because *Blues*, for instance, has persistently avoided life and human beings. The work in it has been metaphysical, treating with petty emotions, describing souls of lousy poets, including Jolas with his Oh, my soul! and Ah, America!

There is a use for experimental writing when it serves experimental purpose. Experimental writing by Americans saw its full development years ago, and yet *transition* and *Blues* continue with experimentalism that is old, that repeats, that becomes weaker and weaker, that serves little purpose because used as an end in itself and presented as serious, finished work *transition* started out with an intelligible goal, but its goal, once reached, has now been elevated to God's own footstool, or perhaps some other kind of stool. *Blues* and other magazines to follow, will trail along where *transition* leads. Since these magazines have already become unmanageable in the hands of metaphysicians who run away from any form of life that may threaten a boot in the rear, it is time that young writers disassociate themselves from all these abstractions, as many have long ago done from Pound, the dean of corpses that promenade in graveyards.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH VOGEL.

Binghamton, N. Y.



William Gropper—was born and raised in New York City. He is 31 years old. In 1917, he was secretary of the Printers and Publishers Union of the I. W. W. His drawings have appeared in the *Liberator*, *Revolutionary Age*, *Good Morning*, *Irish Worker*, *Daily Worker* and in most revolutionary publications for the last twelve years. He spent a year in Russia where his drawings appeared in *Pravda*, *Gudok*, and *Bezbozhnik*. His book *56 Drawings of Soviet Russia* was published a year ago in Paris. He has been staff artist on the *N. Y. Tribune*, *Post*, *World* and a contributor to the *Bookman*, *Dial*, *Vanity Fair*, *Judge* and most leading publications. He has illustrated a number of books. His book of drawings *The Golden Land* has been published by the *Freiheit* where he is staff artist. He is a work now on the story of his life in drawings. He has been a contributing editor of the *New Masses* since its beginning.

IN THIS ISSUE

William Rollins, Jr.—author and newspaper correspondent is now covering the Gastonia trial. He was formerly publicity director for the Civil Liberties Union.

Jessie Lloyd—correspondent for the *London Daily Herald* for two years in Geneva and Moscow, also covered for the *New York Times* for two months in Moscow. At present she is staff correspondent in Gastonia for the *Federated Press*.

Jack Woodford—of Chicago has contributed to over sixty publications. He is author of *Evangelical Cockroach* a collection of short stories recently published.

Henry George Weiss—now living in Arizona, was a dishwasher, railroad worker and on a hundred jobs that are the lot of a proletarian. He has contributed to various publications and to the labor press for years.

Joseph North—publicity director for the Gastonia Joint Defense and Relief Committee, makes his first appearance in the *New Masses*.

Em Jo Basshe—roving proletarian, prize-fighter, director, playwright, author of *Earth*, *The Centuries* and other plays beginning with this issue, will contribute a monthly article on the theatre and movies.

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