

NEW MASSES

NOVEMBER, 1929

15 Cents

WHARF NIGGER A Play by PAUL PETERS

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SCOTT NEARING
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EM JO BASSHE
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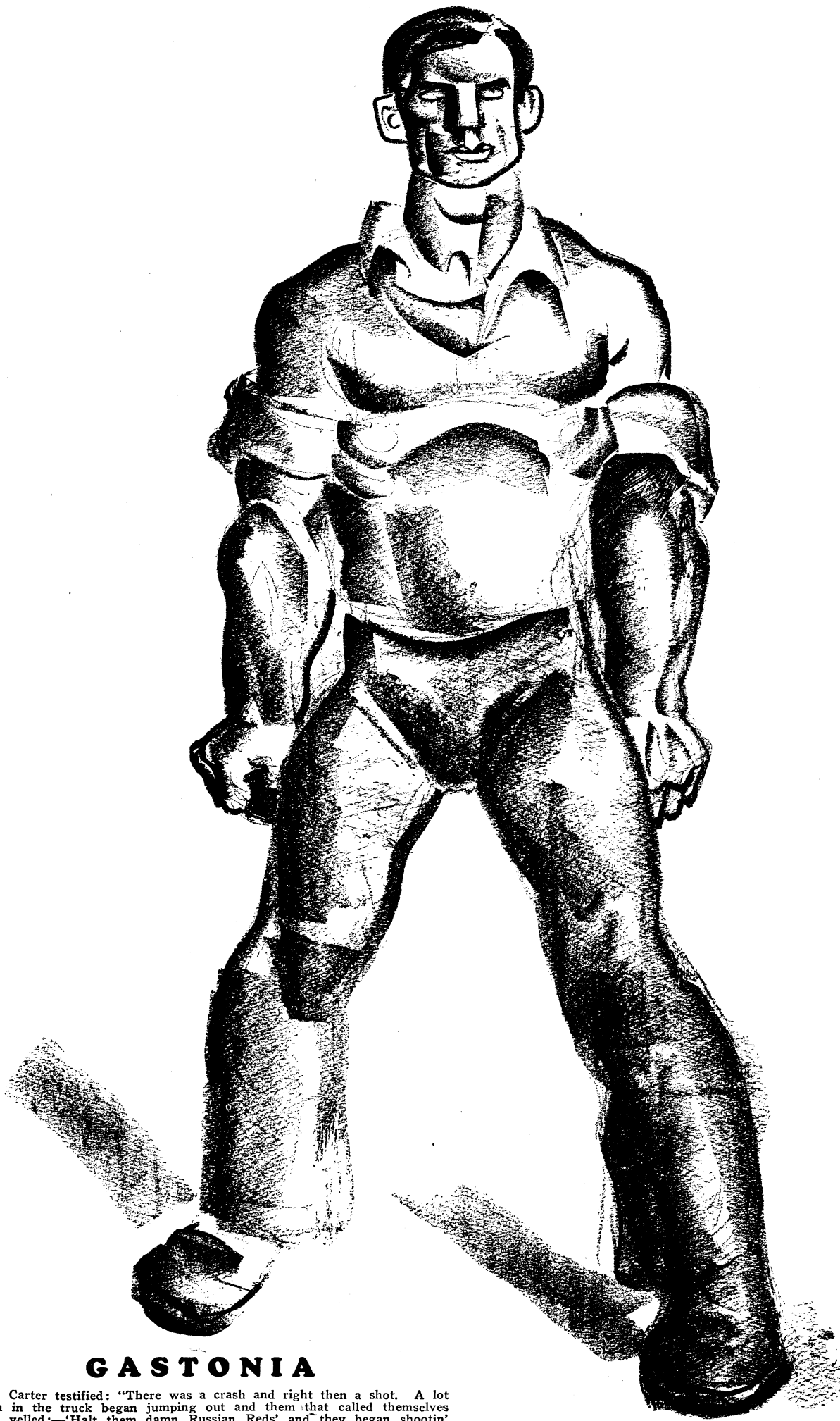
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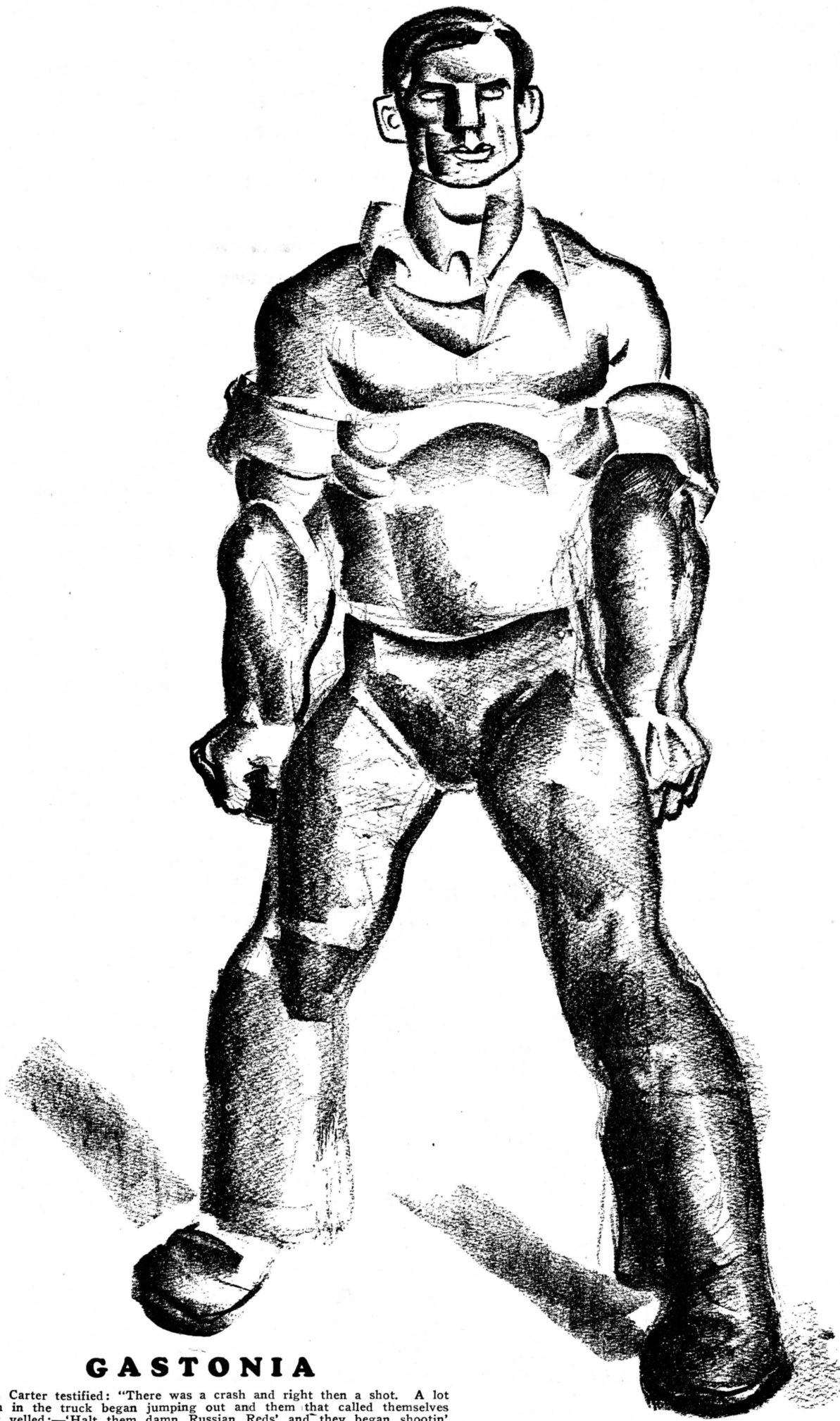
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"No, I don't come from a sellin' out country."

"Folks where you come from don't run?"

"No, they h'ain't apt to."

—At the inquest into the death of Ella May Wiggins, killed by mill thugs in Gastonia—as reported by the N. Y. Telegram, Sept. 25, 1929.



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THE STORY OF ELLA MAY

By MARGARET LARKIN

The Mays were hill folks. They farmed a little patch of rocky ground far up in the Great Smoky Mountains. They had yams, cabbages, and beans, some apple trees, and a corn patch, and in the Fall they killed and cured "hawg" meat and hunted rabbits and 'possums. But they never had enough money for clothes, and the family was large. So when Ella May was ten they came down to the logging camps.

Old man May worked first in one camp, then in another, around Andrews, North Carolina. Whenever the camp was changed, the company would move the rickety shanty they lived in on a flat car.

Mis' May and Ella, her second oldest girl, took in washing for the bachelor loggers. They heated water over a brush fire in the big iron soap kettle, and washed out of doors.

Schools in the logging camps were casual affairs, but somehow Ella May learned to read and figure, and to write a neat hand. She was popular in camp, for she was a "purty young 'un". She had a fine, ringing voice, and nobody else could sing "Little Mary Fagan," "Lord Lovel" and "Sweet William" with such plaintive sweetness as she. "All she needed to a-ben a doll was to have the breath squeezed outen her" said a man who remembered her brief girlhood, when she lay dead at twenty-nine.

When Ella May was sixteen she married John Wiggins. Myrtle was their first baby. Just before their second child was born, John Wiggins slipped and was crushed by a log. He didn't die, but he was crippled for life.

There is no work for a crippled man in a lumber camp, and there was no way for Ella Wiggins to earn a living there, either. When a mill agent came through, gathering up whole families to work in the new cotton mills of North Carolina, Ella May and her babies went back with him.

They taught her to spin, and for ten years she spun yarn in the mills. She never made more than nine dollars a week. Every year she carried another child, until there were nine to feed on a spinner's wages.

John Wiggins helped out at first, but there are few odd jobs around a mill town, and besides, each mill makes cripples of its own. He had been a steady fellow in the mountains,—a logger, and the husband of the prettiest girl in camp. In town he idled and drank, till Ella May wished she was shut of him. At last he deserted her.

Ella May proudly took back her own name. While Myrtle looked after the younger children, she worked in American Spinning Number One, in Bessemer City.

When the National Textile Workers' Union called a strike in her

mill, Ella May was one of the first to join. Then there opened for her six months of intense, eager living. Like many another mill worker whose life has been cast in a drab, uneventful pattern by the mill, she gloried in the vivid strike. Meetings, speeches, picket lines, and that strange mass power we call solidarity, developed the latent talents of the spinner from the mountains. She learned to speak; she worked on committees; she helped give out relief; she organized for the defense of imprisoned strikers. She was proud that she could keep neat and accurate account books.

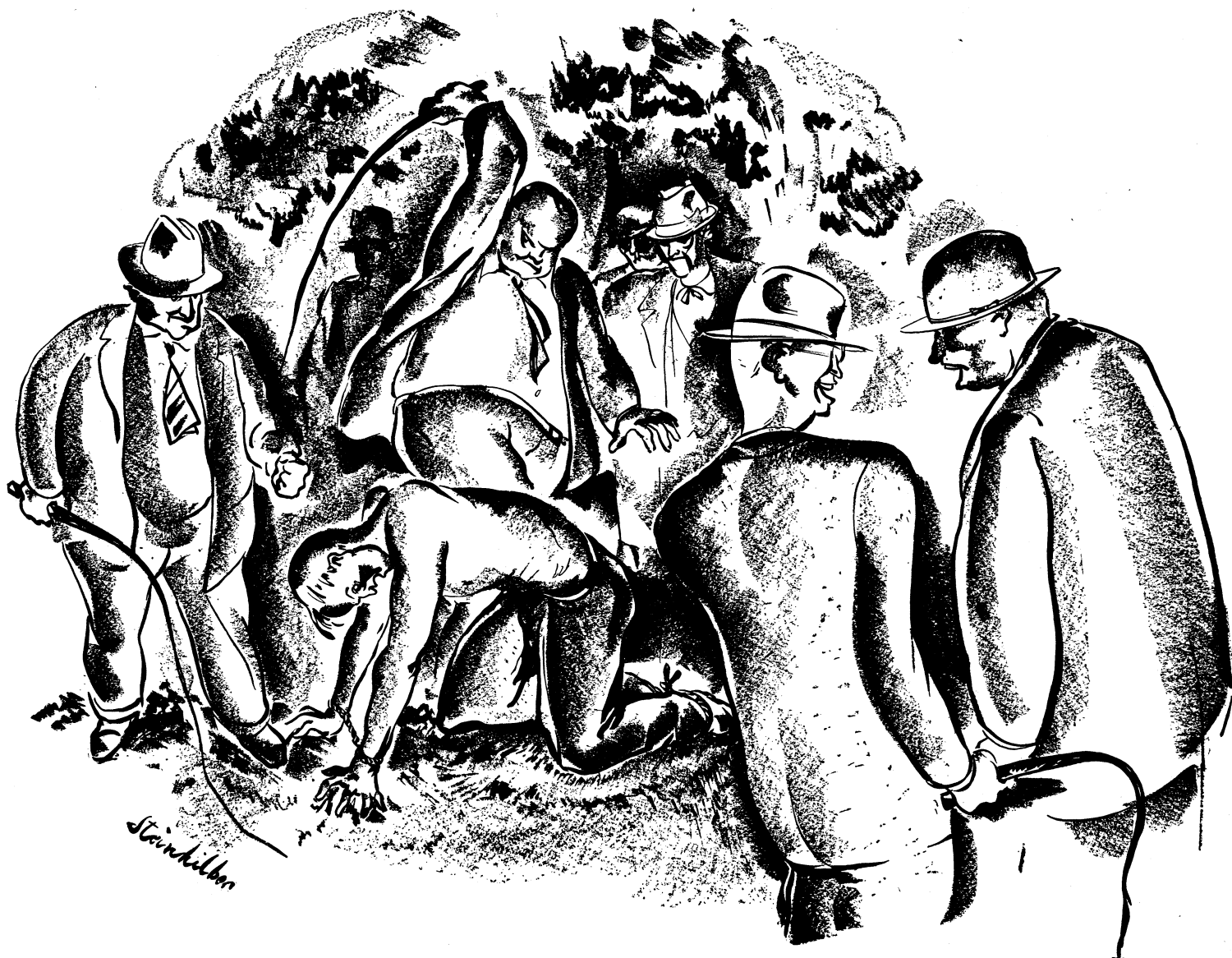
She would tell in union speeches of her struggle in the mill villages. "I never made no more than nine dollars a week, and you can't do for a family on such money," she would say. "I'm the mother of nine. Four died with the whooping cough. I was working nights, and I asked the super to put me on days, so's I could tend 'em when they had their bad spells. But he wouldn't. He's the sorriest man alive, I reckon. So I had to quit, and then there wasn't no money for medicine, and they just died. I couldn't do for my children any more than you women on the money we git. That's why I come out for the union, and why we all got to stand for the union, so's we can do better for our children, and they won't have lives like we got."

The immense vitality of the mountain woman, that ten years in the mills had not quenched, overflowed into songs about the union and the strike,—*"Song Ballets,"* she called them. On the backs of union leaflets she wrote new words to the ballads she had sung as a girl. In her deep tones she sang them out of doors at the strike meetings. The strikers loved to hear *"Chief Aderholt,"* *"Come and Join the I.L.D."* and *"The Mill Mother's Song."* Like all true poets she wrote of the things she knew and had suffered. When Ella May sang,

*"How it grieves the heart of a mother
You every one must know,
But we can't buy for our children,
Our wages are too low".*

every woman in her audience did know, and responded to the common feeling. When she sang *"We're going to have a union all over the South,"* the strike meetings thrilled to the ring of militancy in her voice.

Ella May was martyred on September 14, when she tried to attend a union meeting in Gastonia. A truck load of workers from Bessemer City was turned back and wrecked by a mob that had roamed the highways all day to prevent anyone from reaching the meeting. As the truck was wrecked shots were fired



Down South: "The hell it ain't legal" I says, "why we got the county prosecutor doin' the floggin'!"

Drawn by Walter Steinhilber

into the crowd of helpless workers. "Oh Lordy, I'm killed," cried Ella May, and fell dead.

Perhaps it was chance that the bullet hit Ella May, but not one of her fellow workers believes it. "The bosses hated Ella May because she made up songs, and was always at the speakings," they will tell you. "They aimed to git Ella May. They was after her."

They laid Ella May in a ten dollar grave on a gray, drizzling morning. On the door of the union headquarters in Bessemer City was a wisp of black crepe and two little bunches of fall flowers. On a black sign was written:

Everyone come to the burying
of Sister Ella May
at the seminary.

Two hundred people followed her body over the wet, red road. All along the way workers left their spindles and lined the windows of the mills. At American Spinning Number 1 they even came down to the gates—breaking the rules to honor Ella May.

Friends looked the last time on the quiet face, covered with fine wrinkles, aged early. Six fellow workers lowered her coffin into the deep red grave.

Dewey Martin, Cliff Saylor, and Wes Williams told her friends how she had died. "You all knew our Sister Ella May. She was one of our best members,—always help the union the best she knowed how. Her death is on Manville Jenckes and on North Carolina, too. She died for us." They spoke words like these.

The Baptist minister was there. He hadn't known Ella May. He didn't know anything about her union. He didn't mention how she had met her death in that wild pursuit of the union truck by the Black Hundreds of the Loray mill. "I've stood at a thousand graves and said these same words of comfort. In my Father's house are many mansions," he said. Ella May was just another dead mill hand to him.

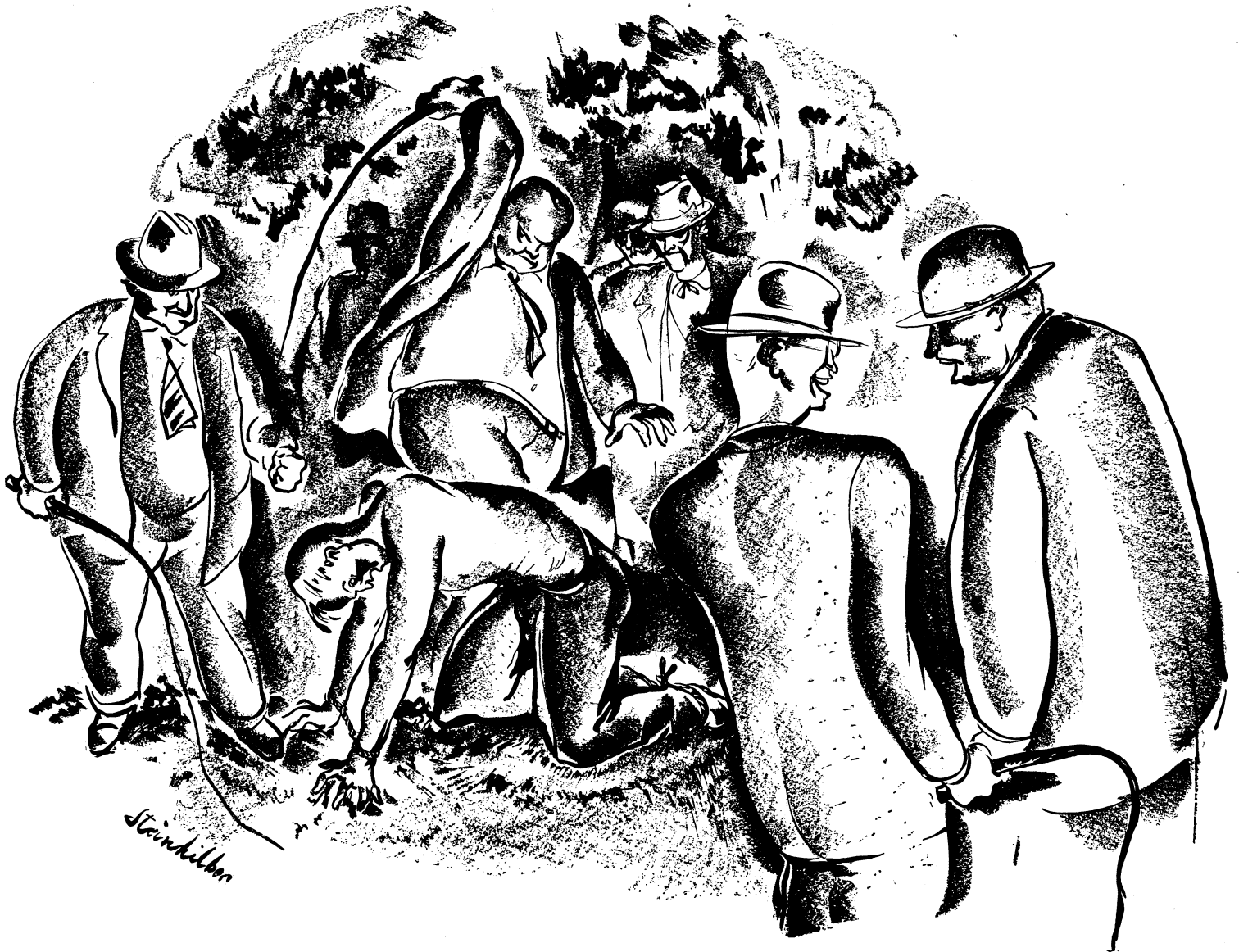
As the first clods of wet, red earth fell on the coffin, Katie Barrett sang one of Ella May's best loved songs.

*"We leave our homes in the morning,
We kiss our children good bye,
While we slave for the bosses,
Our children scream and cry."*

Eleven-year-old Myrtle, who had been a "sight of help" shepherded the four littler children at the head of the grave. The tiny ones did not know what was happening at the grave side, but Myrtle knew everything. Her small shoulders drooped; her thin face was full of grief and worry.

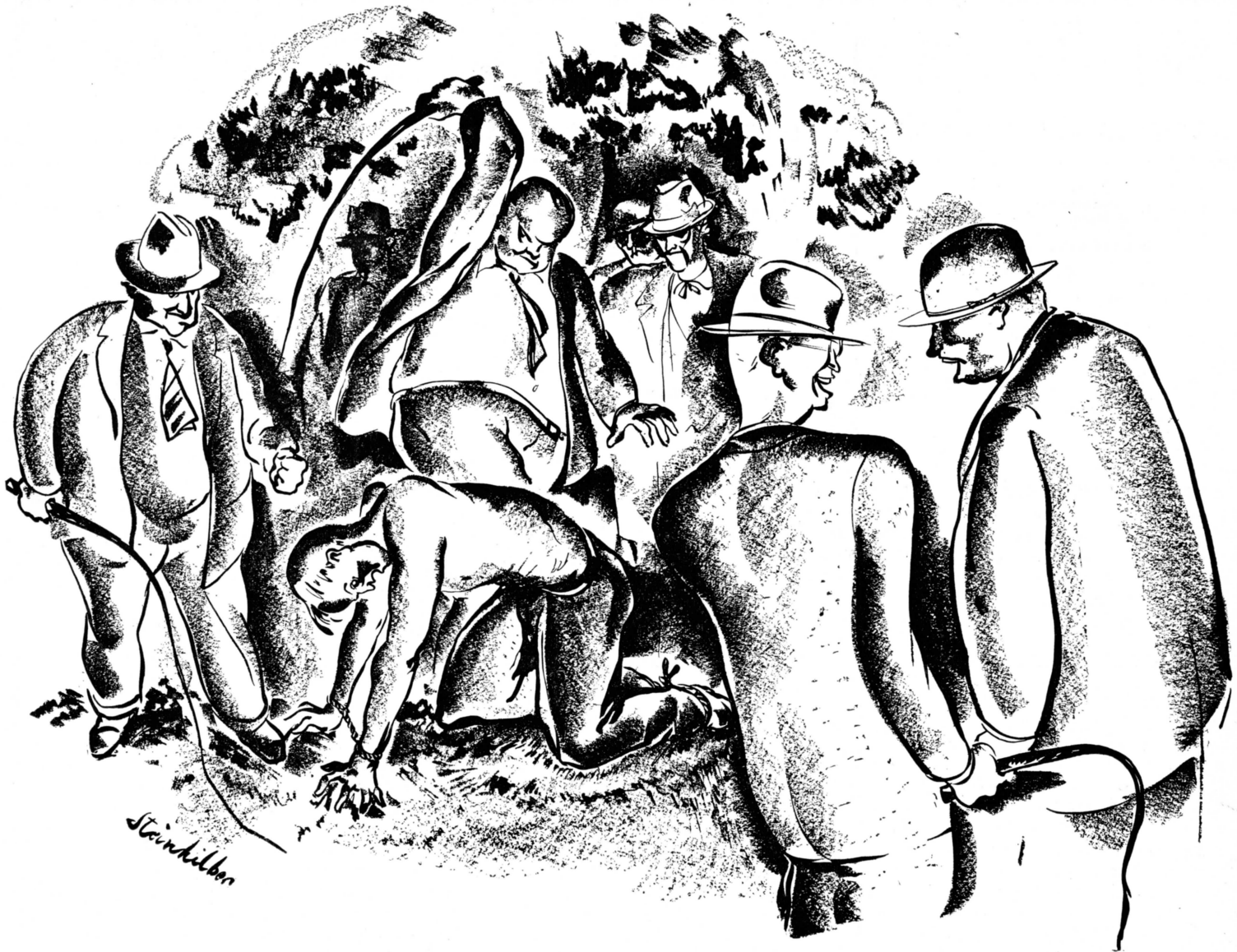
*"It is for our little children
That seem to us so dear,
But for us nor them, dear workers,
The bosses do not care."*

*"But listen to me workers,
A Union they do fear.
Let's stand together workers,
And have a union here."*



Down South: "The hell it ain't legal" I says, "why we got the county prosecutor doin' the floggin'!"

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IN A GERMAN MINING TOWN

By ED FALKOWSKI

I.....BOTTROP—RUHR'S HUNKEYTOWN.

Few people ever wanted to come to Bottrop. It's 80,000 inhabitants represent an accumulation rather than a settlement. Bottrop is a place people "fall into." A part of the Ruhr coal-pot.

Bottrop, like its sister towns—Gelsenkirchen, Buer, Hamborn—is a "hunkeytown". Over 80% of its inhabitants are Polish immigrants; 10% represent the Hungarian and Slovakian elements; and only the remainder are descendents of original Germans.

Within fifty years the onetime village blossomed into a huge, unhappy city. This was during the Ruhr's bigboom period. Thousands of foreigners were induced to part with their landpatches and seek their fortunes in the Ruhr. Peasants dreamed of this region as they dream of America—a place one can pick up sudden wealth.

Their disillusionments have printed themselves on their faces. Lean, hollow-cheeked, hoteyed, the men revolve in eternal circles of shifts, struggling to keep bread on the table. Dirty, underfed kids play on the local ash-banks, lambasting one another with rusty tin cans, or rooting for pieces of unburnt coal.

Mothers, whose wombs turn out offspring with an ominous regularity, fight the daily battle against dirt and hunger's monotony. These Polish and Hungarian women dream of their homelands with deep regrets. "Everything is so sad here," they tell you. "And there, everybody, although poor, seemed happy and content."

But nobody ever leaves Bottrop again, once he has got deeply enough into it.

II. STORY OF AN INCUBATOR.

Bottrop enjoys the dread distinction of being the Ruhr's first child-incubator. It is, to paraphrase the German expression, "child-rich with poor children."

Everywhere one sees children. Lean, undernourished creatures, turned loose upon the streets and grassplots to spend hours in play. Kids with withered arms and humped backs, and some with faces of idiots. One is amazed by the large swarm of unhappy children who "bless" the table of the miner whose income can no longer include meat on his bill of fare.

Church and officialdom encourage this enormous fertility. On one occasion a group of radical women tried to engage the Schauburg—a local kino—for a public lecture on "sex reform." The mayor refused permission to hold the lecture on the grounds that "Bottrop's honor must stay fast."

Priests advise women that remaining longer than three years without a child becomes a sin.

The government itself encourages the childbirth increase, the parents of a twelfth child receiving a handsome cup and saucer, of genuine Meissen-porcelain, and decorated with the black-red-gold of the republic, from the public welfare minister. The seventeenth child usually enjoys the distinction of having Hindenburg for its godfather.

The happy father's wages are increased 16 pfennig per day—"child-money." Not enough to buy a smokable cigar in modern Germany.

The "Work-paper" congratulates the "lucky parents" of a newborn child, and the social-insurance office covers all birth expenses. But the problem of income now assumes magnified dimensions for the poor father. So far as he is concerned, the birth could be listed among the "accidents" in the mining industry. It is merely the outcome of a sexual technique which still awaits its share of "rationalization."

III. STREETS HAVE MEMORIES.

1920—the Kapp Putsch year—singled out two Ruhr cities for bloody distinctions. Hamborn was one of these, Bottrop, the other. The Communists made their stand against the government troops in Wesel, retreating finally until they reached Bottrop where another battle was fought.

The townhall still bears bullet-holes from those dramatic days. The big battle however was fought in the "Polish gangway"—a

swampy miner-settlement on the northern fringe of the city. The communists fortified themselves behind the walls of Prosper 3, a Rheinischen Stahlwerk mine, while the government troops occupied the slaughterhouse about a kilometer away.

After the communists retreated still further, Bottrop was filled with policemen and a terrific vengeance followed. Hundreds of workers were stood up against the wall and executed. To be suspected of red sympathies was enough to place one in front of the firing line. Miners on their way home from work were dragged in front of the murderous squad and butchered.

The fact that Bottrop is a "hunkeytown," that the murdered victims were mere polacks and foreigners, inspired the "legal" butchers in their bloody occupation, made them more brutal than usual.

Everybody knows what followed. The republic was "saved," to the present dissatisfaction of the two extreme social groups—the workers and the capitalists. Germany has become an economic and political rocking-chair, rather wobbly in its entire internal structure. Its freedom celebrations (Constitution-Day) consist usually of police manoeuvres—an ironic comment on the tone of peace and freedom in the Germany of today!

IV. THE DISMAL SWAMP.

The town's center boasts of its Woolworth, its movie theatre, and its large, modern store. Bottrop has over 200 saloons, and not a library or a decent bookshop.

The business core is surrounded by long streets of monotonous brick houses, smoky and tired, one house looking exactly like another, with strips of black, dusty road between. These are the mine-dwellings, belonging to the coal company. 80% of the land belongs to the Rheinischen Stahlwerk corporation.

These swamps of depressing houses accommodate the miner and his family. A fifth of his income each month pays the rent for the three or four rooms which he enjoys. Frequently this narrows down to one or two, because of the pressure of population growth.

Crudest sanitary conveniences, flies, smoke from the mine, lack of breezes in summer and ungodly cold in winter, give atmosphere to the family's domestic history.

The pressing poverty inspires much thievery, so that every one lives under eternal lock and key. Cases have been known where pigs were chloroformed and slaughtered in their stalls by thieves, and the flesh hauled away during the night. No one trusts another in these miserable jungles of repeated houses.

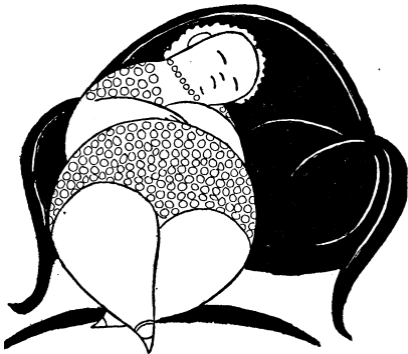
Poverty is everyman's common friend here. Its harsh touches are everywhere evident. Patched clothes, dried breadcrusts, the empty despairs stamped on pale faces, the murders and the suicides reflect its gruesome influences.

Meanwhile the coal production soars to maximum figures. The shakers shake faster; the bore hammers bore deeper; the shafts operate more intensely than before. Engineers have harnessed the miner within their new rationalization schemes. He works twice as hard as formerly, for about half the wages he previously received, as measured by purchase-power.

Every pay day the miner shakes his head. Payday is always for him a bitter day of reckoning, in his effort to foot living costs. But some day the table will be turned, and payday will be a day of reckoning for his lords. In that day the miner will be the paymaster."



Drawn by Cecil Boulton.



Drawn by Cecil Boulton.

WHARF NIGGER

(A Scene from a Proletarian Play)

By PAUL PETERS

SCENE 3.

(This is the wharf. You are looking through a shallow section of the shed toward the sunlight on the river. The stern of a rusted freighter juts out at the right. The shed is spotted with islands of freight: sacks, boxes, barrels, bales of cotton. Down the center is an aisle for stevedores.

(Black longshoremen in torn, dirty undershirts, or stripped to the waist, sit about, eating. Some are sprawled on sacks, some lie in the sun on the wharf apron, some sit on the boxes clicking dice.

(Fag Williams, a tiny, animated jack-in-the-box Negro, with his trousers draped around the bottom of his legs, snatches at a sandwich eaten by Bobo Valentine, a sporty buck.)

Fag Williams. What you eating dar, Bobo Valentine?

Bobo Valentine. Get yo' dirty black hands off my lunch. Did you ever see a fresh li'll nigger like dat?

Fag Williams. Dat's my sandwich. Give it hyar!

Bobo Valentine *(seizing him by the tail of his undershirt)*. Nigger, you better chase yo' li'll tail away from hyar befo' I cuts off both yo' ears and makes you eat widout no salt.

(he spins Fag around and kicks him. Everybody laughs)

Fag Williams. *(belligerent)* If I catches de nigger dat stole my lunch, Lawd! I's sho' 'nough gwine cut his throat.

Men. *(jeering at him)* Listen dat li'll black monkey talk, will you?

Bet he don't even own a razor.

What you need a razor fo'? You aint no man, Fag Williams.

Blacksnake Johnson. *(a huge, vital Negro)* Better keep yo' razor edge sharp, Fag. 'Taint no use wearing it out on de wharf nigger's throat. Maybe you gwine need it one of dese hyar nights.

(There is a hush. Everybody looks at him)

Jim Veal. *(a tall morose mulatto with a cavernous face)* What you 'sinuating, Blacksnake?

Blacksnake. Reading dem newspapers about de nigger, de nigger doing all de wrong, dat make my blood boil.

Bobo Valentine. *(with derision)* Ho! Hyar's another one of dem niggers, like Sam Oxley, listening to Yallah all de time.

Fag Williams. *(wagging his head wisely)* Yallah, he reads books.

Men. Books aint made no good wharf nigger out of nobody.

Dat Yallah nigger's stuck up. Thinks he's as good as de white folks. And he talk too much. Something gwine happen to him.

Blacksnake. 'Taint Yallah I been listening to. I been listening to de talk gwine on back of town. You know dem white boys dat calls demselves de Darcy Colts?

Joe Crump. *(an awkward, grotesque Negro with long side-burns)* Who don't know dat low white trash!

Blacksnake. Dey been talking about raiding Binnie Green's one of dese hyar nights. Saying dey's gwine wipe up de wharf niggers dat's fooling wid de white folks womans. Now you know dar aint no wharf niggers fooling wid de white folks womans.

Jim Veal. You like an old hen, Blacksnake Johnson. Always scratching in de back yard fo' gossip.

Fag Williams. *(jumping up on a sack)* If dey comes fo' dis hyar nigger, I'd shoot 'em, dat's what. My gun would do my talking fo' me. *(shooting with both hands)* Bang-bang, bang-bang! Dem would be my arguments.

(This springs an explosion of mirth)

Joe Crump. Lawd! Aint he de big roaring nigger, though!

Mose Venable. *(the stevedore-preacher: grey, gentle, sing-song pious)* "Vengeance is mine, saith de Lawd," brother.

Bobo Valentine. I bet dat li'll nigger don't know how to hold no gun.

Fag Williams. Say, listen, man! Back home I used to be de best nigger shooter in all of Yazoo County, Mississippi. And dem niggers up dar, dey does shooting what you calls shooting.

Men. *(jeering)* Yeh? What you calls shooting?

Dem cotton field niggers!

If dat nigger ever hyeard a gun go off, he'd run so fast, he'd have to stop at de corners and wait fo' his shadow.

Fag Williams. I got six nicks on de butt of my gun. You know what dem nicks is dar fo'?

Bobo Valentine. I reckon dat's whar yo' knees used to knock against it from shaking so.

(Laughs and hoots)

Jim Veal. You get funny wid de white folks, and you'll get nicks in yo' butt all right. But it won't be yo' gun butt.

(Shrill laughing, whistles and hoots.)

Angrum, *(a shuffling, melancholy Negro boy of 18, who sings with a dirge-like wail)*

*Oh, I been sick,
A-laying in a bed,
Aint got nobody
For to hold up my head.*

*De road was rocky,
De sun was hot,
Oh, my Lawdy,
What pain I got!*

Bobo Valentine. Dat crying-singing sho' give me de heeby-jeebies. *(he rises and prods Angrum with his foot)* Come on, nigger get up and sing something wid— *(clapping his hands in jazz rhythm)* some of dat in it.

Angrum. *(glum)* Aw, I don't know none of dem songs.

Mose Venable. Brother, leave dat po' boy eat his beans and rice, why don't you?

Bobo Valentine. Aint he de contrariest li'll nigger? *(he jerks Angrum up and jabs at him with a crow bar)* Come on, sing, nigger. Sing, I tells you!

(Angrum looks at him with dumb misery. It is Blacksnake Johnson who crashes out with a roaring song. By and by he begins to clap his hands. Then he cake-walks. His vitality is infectious. Negroes yip, shriek, clap, laugh.)

Blacksnake Johnson.

*Ole Aunt Dinah had a rawbone mule,
Got up one mawning when de air was cool,
Hitch him to de wagon, and what she do?
Started down de road fo' de barbecue.*

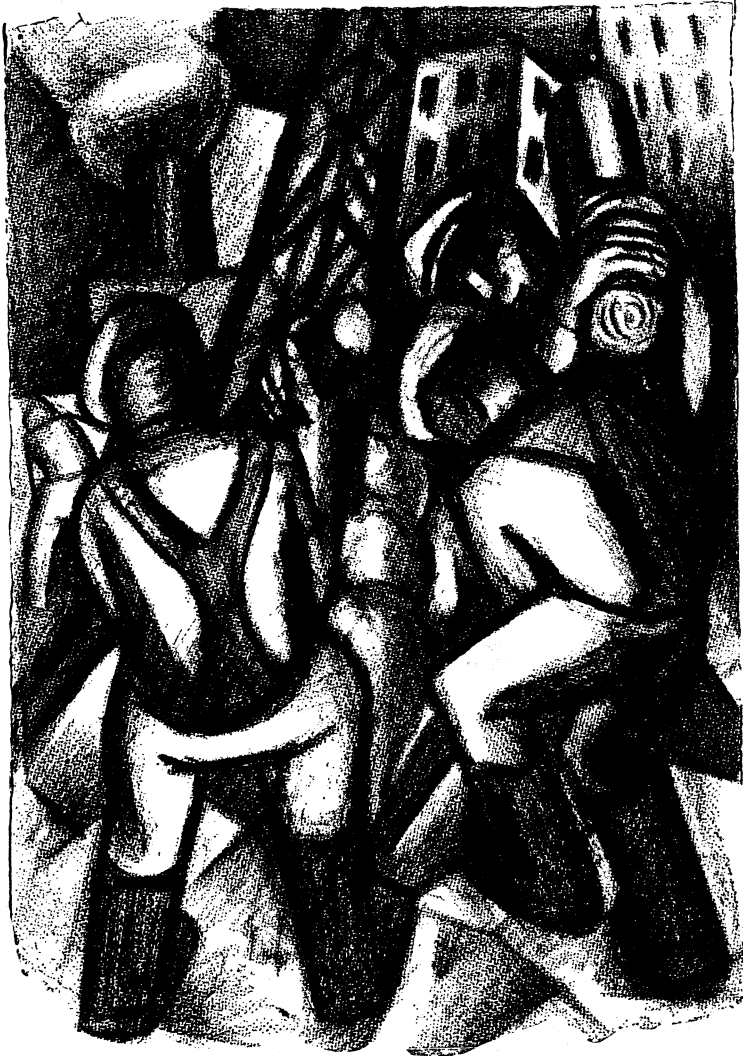
(begins to clap)

*And de ole mule holler bow-wow,
Anh-huh, anh-huh, Lawd he holler,
Ole mule holler bow-wow,
Wid a mouf chock full of rope.*

*Ole Aunt Dinah gwine down de road,
Ole mule pulling 'gainst a mighty load,
Sun gwine over to'ard de end of day,
Barbecue way yonder, fu'der away.
And de ole mule holler bow-wow,
Anh-huh, anh-huh, Lawd he holler,
Ole mule holler bow-wow,
Wid a mouf chock full of rope.*

*Hawse-fly sitting on a pumpkin vine,
Lit on de mule and bit his tail behin',
Mule kicked up and de dashboard bus',
Yonder come Aunt Dinah, rolling in de dus'.
And de ole mule holler bow-wow,
Anh-huh, anh-huh, Lawd he holler,
Ole mule holler bow-wow,
Wid a mouf chock full of rope.*

(The song ends in yelps of delight. Blacksnake, pleased with himself, goes around puffing and blowing: "Whew! Hot stuff. Shake 'em up. Whew, nigger!")



Construction Workers—

Drawn by Rufino Tamayo

Jim Veal. (scornful) Blacksnake Johnson, you sho' is de laziest, playing-aroundest nigger ever born.

Blacksnake. What I wants to work any harder fo'? I can't never be no mo'n a wharf nigger nohow. Look at Yallah. Dat's a smart nigger, Yallah. But de white folks, dey gwine hold him down. Dey aint gwine let no black man get no higher. I makes my three bucks a day and I takes my time. If I works any faster, de white folks gets mo', dat's all. *(with expansive pride)* Sho' I'se a lazy nigger. Dat's cause I's a smart nigger, Jim Veal. You works hard and you worries, and whar it gwine bring you at? First thing you know some li'll white folks girl find she gwine have a baby she don't want, and man! dey burn yo' po' heart out wid fire just like you was de laziest, no-countest nigger back of town.

Jim Veal. Dey don't burn no good nigger.

Blacksnake. Good nigger? What dat mean, good nigger? Dat you got to be ignorant all yo' life, like Joe Crump over yonder? Or go crawling on yo' knees full of Jesus, like Brother Mose, de preacher? Or be a fool like Fag Williams, so's de white folks laughs at you? Or scrape yo' face all over de ground every time you see a white man, huh?—like dat fancy-pants nigger, Bobo Valentine. Good nigger! Dat's just a scared nigger, dat's all. A nigger dat don't see and don't hear and don't talk and do just what de white folks tell him to. Sho', I knows you. I knows you all. *Good niggers!*

Men. Don't blaspheme de name of de savior, brother.

Who you calling a fool, Blacksnake Johnson?

I can't help it if I's ignorant.

Dat's Yallah talking in him again.

Blacksnake. (spiking Jim Veal) And de best nigger, dat's de

nigger dat does de white folks' dirty work fo' 'em. Specially de dirty work against de black man.

Jim Veal. (rising) Who you talking about now, Blacksnake?

Blacksnake. (innocent) What you getting so het up fo', Jim Veal?

Jim Veal. Look hyar, nigger. I aint gwine let nobody—

Blacksnake. (pulling himself up at full height and sauntering slowly toward Jim Veal) You aint gwine let nobody—what?

(so quietly you'd think they were the best of friends)

Sit down, black boy. Sit down befo' I sets you down—hard.

(Jim Veal turns away and sits down on a sack)

Jim Veal. (grumbling) I guess I's de captain of dis gang.

Blacksnake. (good-natured, but contemptuous) Dat's all right. I aint gwine take it away from you.

Joe Crump. (long pondering, now bewildered) Den what am de po' nigger to do? How am he to act wid de white folks?

Fag Williams. Yallah say us is got to be proud we's colored folks. Us is got to fight de white folks, Yallah say.

Blacksnake. 'Taint no use fighting de white folks—'cepting when dey starts to fight you. My idea is: *Enjoy yo'self!* De Lawd put you hyar to have a good time. Aint dat right, preacher? *(with great joy)* Good eats and good clothes and loving womans: dem's my principles.

Men. Now you talking, Blacksnake.

Dem's mine too, Big Boy.

Specially de loving womans.

(this brings yips and laughs; a voice sings:)

*Ashes to ashes,
And dust to dust,
Was dar ever a woman,
A burglar could trust?*

Fag Williams. (argumentative, like a little fox-terrier) Yallah say you wrong dar, Blacksnake. Dat's de trouble wid de black man, Yallah say: he go so far, den he sit down, like de mule. Done, through—hee-haw!—don't go no mo'.

Jim Veal. Yallah say, Yallah say! What am dat nigger, anyhow? De four gospel and de 'pocalypse?

Bobo Valentine. (doing an ape-like cake-walk in a circle, clapping, singing)

*Yallah say, De moon am brown,
Yallah say, De square am roun',
Yallah say, Just stick aroun'
And hyear what Yallah say.*

(Laughter. Enter Sam Oxley)

Men. Dar Sam Oxley.

Hey, Sam! Hello, Sam!

Bobo Valentine. Aint you brought Black Jesus wid you, Sam—de savior of de colored race?

Sam Oxley. I don't know whar Yallah. Dey chase us.

Men. Chase you!

Who chase you?

(all crowd about him)

Sam Oxley. Some white men on de odder side de viaduct. Just as us goes past 'em, somebody yells: "Let's get dem niggers." Den dey starts throwing stones and chasing us. I don't know whar Yallah run.

Jim Veal. What you done to 'em?

Sam Oxley. We aint done nothing to 'em. We aint even looked at 'em.

Joe Crump. Now what you suppose dey chase you fo'?

Blacksnake. Aw, nigger, hush up! Don't you never read a newspaper?

Joe Crump. How I read a newspaper? I never went to no school.

Fag Williams. Dat white woman last night—

(A hush falls over the men)

Mose Venable. The Lawd have mercy on us.

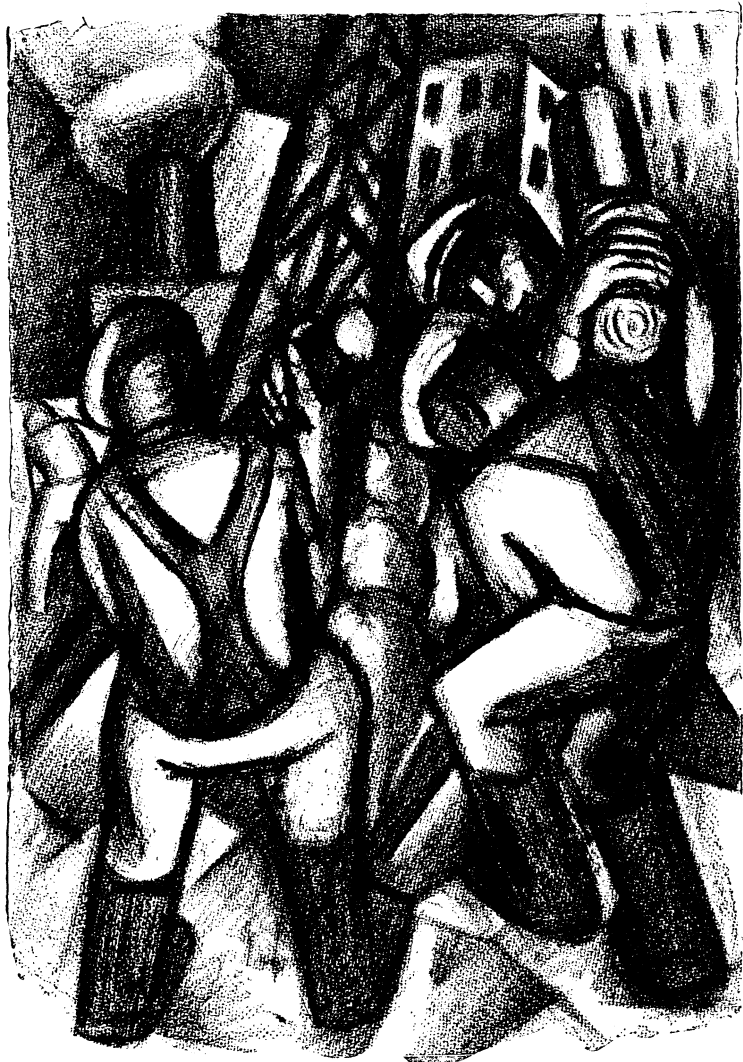
Blacksnake. Sho', de Lawd gwine do a lot fo' you. He gwine take you right up to heaven in a golden chariot after de white man kill you.

Men. (alarmed) M-m-n, dat look bad!

I told you something gwine happen.

Bet it was some of dem Darcy Colts.

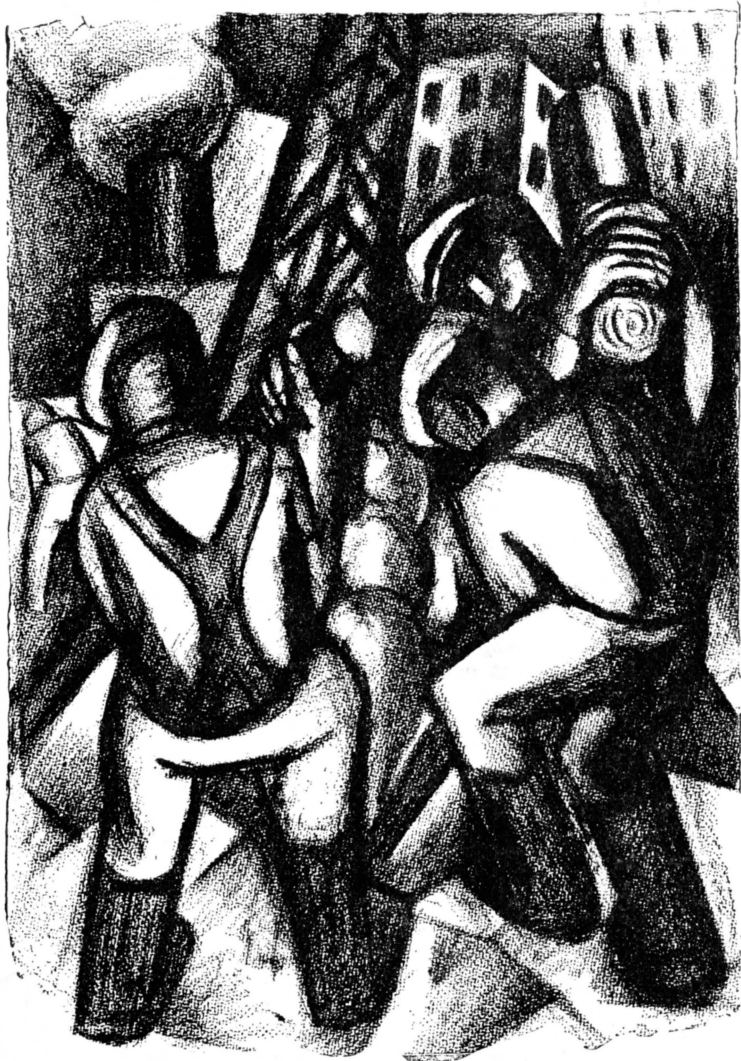
NOVEMBER, 1929



Construction Workers—

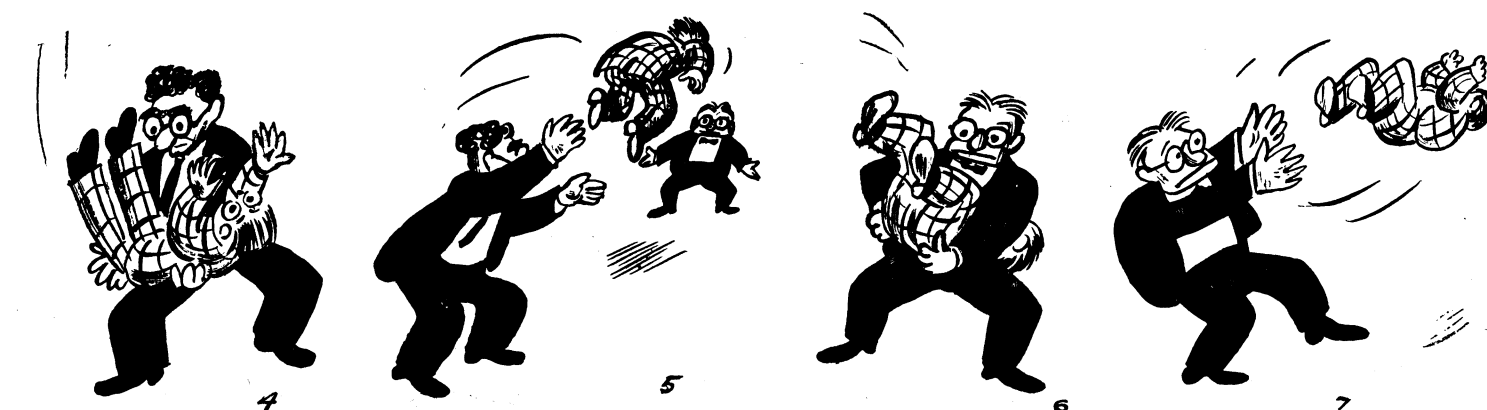
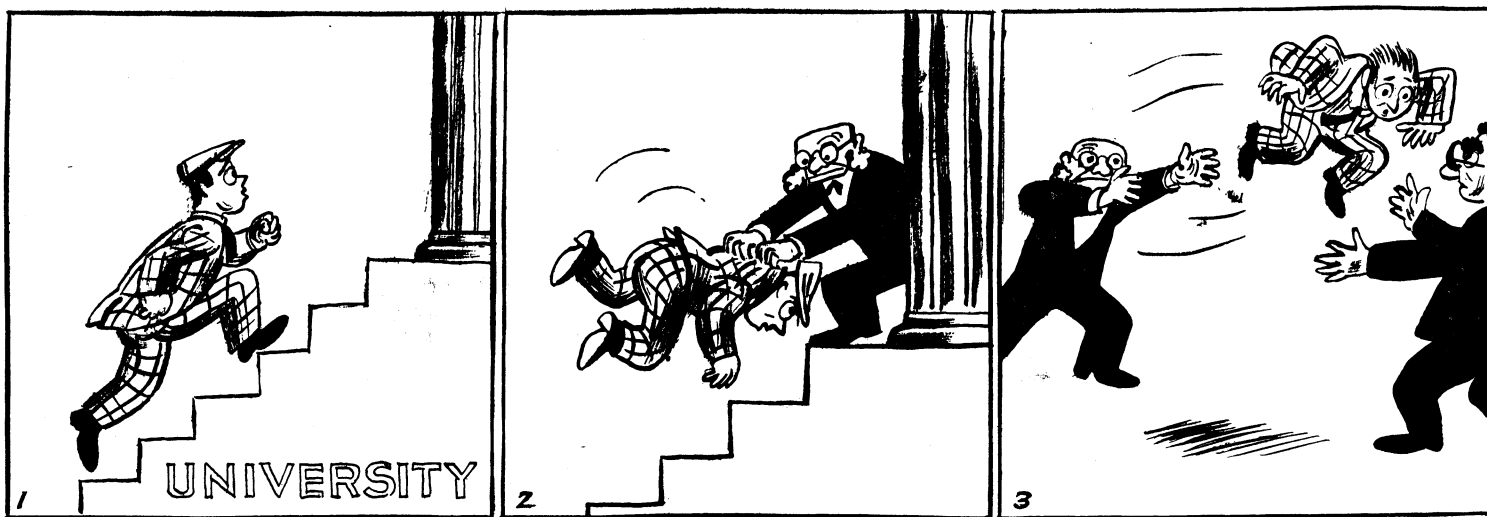
Drawn by Rufino Tamayo

NOVEMBER, 1929



Construction Workers—

Drawn by Rufino Tamayo



The Belt—Drawn by I. Klein.

Lawd o' mercy! Why don't dey let de po' black man live in peace?

Fag Williams. Look, dar's Yallah. Dar's Yallah coming yonder.

Joe Crump. Christ alive! Looks like dey split his head open.
(*Yallah enters with a cut on his forehead.... All flock around him*)

Men. What dey done to you, Yallah? Man, look at dat po' nigger's head. Yallah, what dey hit you wid?
(*Yallah searches the wharf, picks up a crowbar*)

Sam Oxley. Whar you gwine, Yallah?

Blacksnake. (*seizing him, as without answer, he moves off*) Whar you gwine wid dat crowbar, Yallah?

Yallah. (*quiet, determined*) I knows whar I gwine.

Blacksnake. Put dat crowbar down, Yallah.

Yallah. Leave me alone.
(*Blacksnake grapples with him*)

Take yo' hands off, I tells you.
(*Blacksnake wrests the bar away*)

Sam Oxley. Dey'd kill you, boy.

Yallah. Yeh? Well, let 'em kill me. It's high time somebody showed 'em dar's one nigger anyhow dat aint fraid. (*lashing at the longshoremen*) Look at 'em. Look at 'em standing dar like dey couldn't move. De white man spit in deir faces, day after day. De white man make slaves out of 'em, and cheat 'em and rob 'em—and laugh at 'em. And dey stands dar like mules and takes it. "Beat me some mo', white man. Sho' I likes it. Beat me some mo'."
(*The men stir uneasily and murmur*)

Bobo Valentine. I told you dat nigger gwine make us trouble.

Jim Veal. You burned out, Yallah. Go on home.

Fag Williams. How he gwine home wid dem Darcy Colts laying for him across de viaduct?

Sam Oxley. Pull yo' self together, Yallah.

Mose Venable. De Lawd walk wid de black man just de same as wid de white man, Yallah.

Blacksnake. Now, bredren, de preacher gwine lead us in prayer. A prayer meeting of indination against de Darcy Colts.
(*sanctimoniously chanting*)

*Hyar I lays me down to sleep
A big black mat fo' de white man's feet.
Amen, Jesus!*

Joe Crump. (*suddenly*) Hyar's one nigger gwine across de viaduct wid Yallah.

Fag Williams. I's gwine, too. Come on, Yallah, Come on, men.

Men. (*catching the fever*) Let's all go. Us'll show dem Darcy Colts. Let's clean up de street wid dat white trash. We show 'em what de nigger can do.
(*a few dissent*)

Dey kill you, nigger.
Dat's suicide, sho's you born.

Yallah. (*picking up the crowbar again, shouting*) Arm yo'selves, men! Get yo' crowbars, men!
(*There is a crazy scramble for weapons*)

Men. Whar's my axhandle? Give me dat shovel, Big Boy. I's gwine use dis canthook. Man, just look at dat club. (*whizzing it down*) Umphha!

Fag Williams. (*leaping on a sack, shrieking like a savage in war*) Yip! Look out dar, white folks! Fag William and de wharf niggers is coming. Run fo' yo' life, white man!
(*with a grunt he spears his canthook in the wharf. Shrieking he leaps after it. The blood of the longshoremen is up. They raise their weapons, roaring*)

Men. (*in mass*) De wharf niggers is coming! De wharf niggers is coming!
(*They surge forward clotted in a mass. Then the wharf whistle blows, a single sharp blast. Dinner is over. There is a halt in the forward surge, a moment of indecision.*)

Bobo Valentine. (*in the sudden silence*) Dars de whistle.

Jim Veal. You niggers better get to work.

Yallah. We don't care fo' dat whistle. You gwine follow me, men?

Men. (*undecided, arguing among themselves*) Now wait a minute. De hell wid work. Say, whar we gwine, anyhow? Dey aint no use in dis. Aw, shut up, nigger. Move on, move on.
(*Another sharp blast from the whistle. The men drop back, their weapons droop.*)

Jim Veal. Dar sho' gwine be lots of wharf niggers won't have no job tomorrow.

Bobo Valentine. (*slyly*) You sho' dem Darcy Colts is over yonder?

Joe Crump. Dat's right. Maybe dey done went home.

Blacksnake. (*bursting with derisive laughter*) De brave black man! Lawd o' mercy, just look at dem niggers pushing to fight!

Yallah. Hush up, Blacksnake. Dey's coming, I tell you. Listen to me—

Men. (*in utter confusion, throwing down weapons, arguing*) Dey aint no use being a fool. I's gwine work. You yellah-livered bastard! Don't you call me dat, nigger. Dis bunch of niggers sho' gwine crazy mad. Who started all dis 'ruption anyhow?

Bobo Valentine. Dat crazy yallah nigger from de nawth. He de one.

Men. (*turning on Yallah*) What you trying to do, nigger? Make trouble fo' de black man? Why don't dat li'll yallah monkey fight his own battles? I got a good mind to punch his face fo' 'im. If he wasn't always getting so fresh wid de white folks, dey'd let 'im alone.
Go on, hit 'im! Hit 'im!

(*the cry is caught up*)
Hit him in de face. Punch his jaw fo' 'im.
Yallah. (*white hot*) And you calls yo'self black men! Dat's a lie. You aint no black men. It takes men to make black men. You aint nothing but low-down white man's niggers!
(*A roar of anger from the men. Enter Walcott and the two plain-clothes Officers*)

Walcott. What's the matter, boys? (*looking them over*) Why aint you men at work?

Bobo Valentine. I's working, Mr. Walcott.
(*already he has a truck and is rattling off with it*)

Walcott. (*bellowing*) Didn't you hear that whistle blow? What the hell you men having here, a picnic?
(*the men slink back to their trucks*)

Where's Jim Veal?

Men. (*all anxious to be helpful*) Hey, Jim Veal! Whar Jim Veal? Hyar he is, boss.

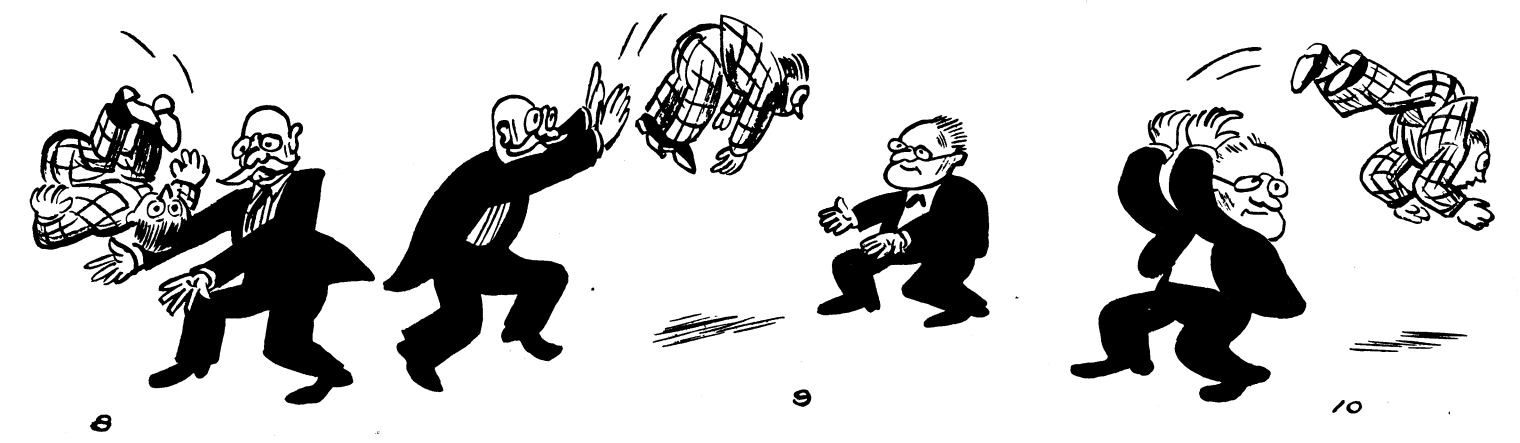
Hyar Jim Veal, cap'n.

Walcott. (*to Jim Veal, pushed out of the crowd*) What's the trouble, Jim? A hell of a fine gang captain you are.

Jim Veal. Dey aint no trouble, boss.
(*bellowing, like Walcott*) Get yo' trucks dar, you niggers. Come on, shake it up, shake it up!

Walcott. You big lazy black baboons. That whistle blew ten minutes ago.

Men. Yassuh, cap'n. Yassuh, boss. Whar my truck? Get yo' hands off, dar. Dat's my truck. What you stepping all over me fo', nigger?
(*many in chorus, as the gangway is blocked*) Let's get moving! Let's get moving! Let's get moving!
(*The trucks roll away. Freight is dumped down and carted*)



off. Winches grind. Men shout. The wharf is all bustle. Yallah finally joins the others)

(Walcott watches the men at work. Then with his head he summons the two officers.)

Walcott. *(pointing with his head)* That's him there.

Lew. Coming this way?

Walcott. Yes.

Eddie. Looks like a fresh nigger, don't he?

Lew. *(as Yallah goes by)* Come here, you!

Yallah. Me?

Eddie. Yes, you.

(Yallah drops his truck and follows them to one side. The Negroes watch them curiously)

Lew. We're from the police department. You the man they call Yallah Simpson?

Yallah. Yassuh.

Lew. *(after a long staring pause, suddenly: the old trick)* Where was you last night, Yallah?

Yallah. Last night?

Eddie. You heard him.

Yallah. I was home.

Eddie. Say, nigger, you can't lie to us.

Yallah. I aint ly—

Eddie. You're lying. I can see you're lying.

Lew. Down on Magazine Street, wasn't you?

Yallah. Magazine Street?

Eddie. Just listen to that slick nigger, will you? "Me? Last night? Magazine Street?" Never heard of the place, huh?

Lew. I reckon we can get more out of this coon at the station, Eddie.

Eddie. Yeh, we'll take that slickness out of him down there, all right.

Yallah. Wait a minute. You can't arrest me dat way. What you arresting me fo'?

Eddie. *(laughing)* Well, I'll be goddamned! The colored gentleman would like to see a warrant maybe?

Lew. You'll find out what for soon enough.

Eddie. Believe me, it takes a pretty slick coon to beat up a white woman—and then act like he don't know what we're arresting him for!

Yallah. Beat up a white woman! You mean— Oh, dar must be some mistake hyar, cap'n.

(he smiles)

Eddie. *(laughing again)* By God! Now that's what you call cute.

Lew. Cut out the gab, Eddie. Put your hands out, you.

(He takes out a pair of handcuffs. The Negroes have stopped trucking and are crowding around them)

Walcott. *(bawling)* Here! This aint none of your affair. Keep your trucks rolling there!

Yallah. *(suddenly seeing everything clear: with fury at Walcott)* But it is yo' affair, huh? You're back of dis!

(He springs at Walcott and knocks him down with a vicious blow. A cry from everybody. Lew helps Walcott up and restrains him. Eddie handcuffs Yallah)

Lew. Now, Mr. Walcott—please!—we'll take care of him.

Eddie. *(punching Yallah's head)* Hit a white man, will you? Well, I guess that settles you, black boy!

Sam. What you do dat fo', son? Dey let you go when you show 'em you innocent.

Yallah. *(bitter)* Innocent? Did you ever hyear of an innocent nigger in a white man's court?

(As they drag him off the lights fade)

Big Time for the Kale of It

*manufactured dyes their wool
with a maximum of profit
and if it starves the navahoes,
pity the rich,
albeit the rugs are woven:
if some were to say
white men in new england
are starving the hopsis,
or apaches spread a white disease,
anyway, the germs
and the capitalists
make a good time of it.*

.....NORMAN MACLEOD.



Drawn by Jan Matulka.

A LETTER FROM A CLAM-DIGGER

Staten Island, October 4th.

I have been down with my old Tampico malaria. I am convalescing now; am swimming, sunbathing, walking, eating, fishing, etc., getting back to shape. One can not expect thoughts on politics or literature from a man living this way. He is a sort of happy bonehead to whom nothing matters—not even that Ramsay and Herbert are cooking up, a la Woodrow, the next pious, liberalistic and pacifistic, World War.

Nothing is important here on Staten Island but the way the bluefish and whiting are nibbling, and the nightly pot of clam chowder. There is an old beachcomber here who lives all year in a shack on the beach. The shack is about as big as a cell in the Tombs. It contains a cot, a chair, an oil stove, and a box of worms, some oars, nets, and fishing poles. The walls are pasted with pictures of semi-nude chorus girls out of the rotogravures. Old Gus digs worms for bait and sells them to fishermen. He makes this effort about two days a week. The rest of the time he is full of bootleg and sits comfortably reminiscing about his youth as a sailor, bartender, circus-man, and cook.

How in hell do you expect me to think of literature when all this is going on around me?

Most radical magazines have a political group behind them, or a wealthy angel. We have neither. But the magazine goes on

NEW MASSES



Drawn by Jan Matulka.

NEW MASSES



Drawn by Jan Matulka.

and even grows. How? Ten and twelve hours a day and more, and no salary for five or six months. No one is paid a nickel for work—editors, artists, writers, etc. They are a united and enthusiastic group. It is just a miracle of hard work and sincere conviction.

Nothing like this is happening in fat America today. There is not another literary magazine that is being run for convictions and not for money. The *New Masses* has begun to have as much significance for its time as the old *Masses* in its best days.

I have read some of the recent letters of comment on the magazine. The readers seem to feel the paper is important. It does not matter that our circulation and advertising are not yet up to the *Saturday Evening Post*. Literarily and financially speaking, we must appear like a lot of hoboes to the Brisbanes and G. H. Lorimers of the great world. But to hell with the bass-drums.

The workers are coming up in Europe and Asia. What the workers think and do is something the bourgeoisie there have to worry about—even the bourgeois writers. The literature of the future belongs to the workers. This is nothing to argue about any longer. It is clear to the social student. The old crowd have simply nothing left to write about—nothing—except the stale old bedroom triangular farces and tragedies. They will do this for years, until it all ends in Kraft-Ebbing. Meanwhile there appear hundreds like Panait Istrati, Agnes Smedley, I. Babel, etc. in every land; young graduates of the class struggle. Simply, they tell about the workingclass life. They do not adorn, stylize or pose; they put down the facts. And it is literature; it is art; it is the new and creative thing in the world.

Our labors are worth-while. The *New Masses* happens to be one magazine in this country that is headed for some place. We need no literary manifestoes; we are. We speak for the submerged nation within the nation. We may commit a thousand crudities, puerilities and crimes against so-called good taste; but in ten years these flounderings may look like the dawn of a new kind of American writing.

I know it. And I am sure the other writing counts less in the scheme of things than my present attempts to fool the snappers and tomcods with a hook. It is just a way of passing the time.

I received *The New American Caravan** to review. I can't do it. It is worth reviewing, because it shows so clearly where another group of "avantgarde" American writers are heading.

I glanced through the pages and read some of the contributions. It is expert writing. But it gives one the weary blues. It is all as solemn and pompous as Joseph Wood Krutch. If a clam were literary it might write this way. This is not the anthology of any kind of revolt. It is just a mournful yipping in the desert. Nothing challenging, clear-cut. A kind of insipid mysticizing over obscure and petty sorrows. Lots of splendid words, phrases, sentences. But no point. This is not America or life. It smells to me like the old, familiar, academic, literary introversion. Maybe I'm wrong. The book should be tried on someone else. I simply can't understand this sort of thing and more. I am getting older. I want only plain food and the plain and eternal emotions.

I am through, I guess, with the form-searchers. The movies make these painful, intricate wrenchings for a new literary technique seem small. In two or three flashes the movie can beat every one of the literary stunts of subconscious writing, simultaneity, contrast, etc., etc. To hold its own, literature will have to become simple again, realistic and socially valuable. Writers will have to find universal themes like the great historians or movie directors.

Individual tremors, lyricisms, emotions, eccentricities, will have to be merged into a large objective pattern. No, this does not mean a dead level of writing. It means a new kind of genius in writing.

New forms without a new content seem as worthless to me as walnut shells whose meat the little bugs have gnawed away.

In biology it is need that creates form, function that creates form. These "moderns" seem to have no function. I repeat, I

can't get them. I suspect they are merely passing the time. I prefer fishing.

I think this letter will make you impatient. Like other comrades in the labor movement, you love literature, but dislike all kinds of shop-talk about technique. I think some of it necessary in the *New Masses*, however. Proletarian writers have no tradition to work by, as have the others. We must thrash out our problems as we go along. The *New Masses* is the one magazine in English where it can be done. This is part of its function, I think.

Now I will close this wandering letter. I feel I am on the sidelines down here. I feel guilty about loafing when so many of our people are in hell in Gastonia and other places. But a man with malaria has to loaf; he's good for nothing else. I found a few gray hairs today, Walt. My God, I thought, past 30 and still broke. Then I remembered Upton Sinclair and felt better. Though I disagree with him on almost everything, I admire him more each year. He is 50, and has remained a Socialist writer for 30 years in capitalist America.

No one who hasn't put his sweat, gall, blood and fury into a piece of unpopular writing, while wondering at the same time how the room rent would be paid, can understand the drama of a proletarian writer's role.

But thousands of Jimmy Higginses endure as much in this prosperous country, and it will all mean something in the long run. It is certainly preferable to being a white slave for the editor of "big" magazines, or a cocoo "artist."

So long. I will send you in a mess of clams and whiting if the tide is right. Regards to the gang.

MIKE GOLD.

P. S.—I read some more into the *Caravan* last night. William Rollins has a good character study of an American college freshman—a little precious, however. Joseph Vogel has a picture of a Jewish wedding that could have been a glorious farce, but got lost among the instellar spaces of "Art." A good try. Then I read Yvor Winters' long critical article on poetry. This was too much, and I quit for the night. What pomposity! The kid writes on poetry like a sixty-five year old professor with prostate troubles. As my friend Bill Sheehan would say, he needs a dose of salts. And such are the revoltees, college professors out of regular jobs.

CAPITAL JOKE

Up—he goes—

Balancing gracefully, with agile knees

Pressed tight against the inside of the web,

Scaling a column:

Clinging with his toes

To gusset plates or stud bolts as he throws

A careless arm

Over a horizontal beam and draws

Himself erect, to walk with cat-like ease

Across a narrow member or to pause,

Bracing himself against a stinging breeze,

To contemplate the pavement down below

A matter of five hundred feet or so.

Five hundred feet,

Or so, above the street,

With back against a column, he may read

And eat

In solid comfort, having, at his need,

The newspaper in which his lunch was wrapped.

There he may read

That capital is better paid, indeed,

Than labor, for a certain risk

Attends investment, and the sturdy breed

Of financiers must always stand the gaff,

The chance of falling, on a certain street.

It is to laugh!

FREDERIC COVER.

**The New American Caravan*—Edited by Alfred Kreyborg, Lewis Mumford, Paul Rosenfeld, Macaulay Co. \$3.50.

THE SOVIET UNION FORGES AHEAD

By SCOTT NEARING

The great capitalist empires have gone the limit since 1917 in their efforts to discredit and destroy the Soviet Union. Despite their military invasions, blockades, denials of credit, and bar-rages of lies the Soviet economic system has been able to survive and to grow. Today it stands out as the most important single experiment that is being made anywhere on the planet.

These facts have been evident, for some time, to the friends and supporters of the Soviet Union. Now they are recognized by its enemies.

Soviet trade with the United States, in 1928-1929, reached the unprecedented total of \$149 million. This trade includes an extensive sale of Russian goods in the United States, and an even more extensive sale of United States goods in Russia. General Electric, Standard Oil, International Harvester, Ford Motor, Chase National Bank, and others among the most powerful business organizations have been making long term contracts with the Soviets. One of the latest and most important of these contracts, made with an American engineering firm, calls for the construction, by this firm, of an entire industrial city in the Soviet Union.

A New York publisher in good standing, recognizing the growing importance of Soviet economy, has issued a book* in which he presents important parts of the *Five Year Plan for Economic Reconstruction* about which the whole economic world is talking.

When the Soviets took over the broken fragments of the Tsarist economic system they faced the necessity of economic reconstruction on some line that would provide a satisfactory livelihood for the Russian masses. As they did not intend to permit Russian economy to become capitalist, they were forced to adopt some alternative system.

Already the resources, public utilities, and some of the more important industries had been taken from their former owners and placed under social control and direction. But, in a vast country like Russia, direction and control are impossible unless there is some plan. One of the first moves of the Soviet Union was therefore the establishment of planning commissions, whose business it was to co-ordinate the whole Soviet economic structure. It is the central planning commission, with offices in Moscow, that has drawn up the *Five Year Plan*.

The *Five Year Plan* covers the economic development of the whole Soviet Union from 1928-29 to 1932-33. It covers manufacturing, trade, transport, finance, electrification, agriculture, foreign trade, new capital construction. It is a picture of the next five years in the history of Soviet economy.

The plan for capital investments gives a good idea of the picture.

Between 1923-24 and 1927-28 (the last five year period before the development of the present plan) the total of investments in new capital forms was 26.5 billion roubles. During the five year period contemplated by the present *Five Year Plan*, the total of capital investments will be 64.6 billion roubles, or two and a half times the capital investments of the previous five year period.

These 64.6 billion roubles of new capital investments will be divided up as follows: for industry, including industrial housing construction, 16.4 billion, or a quarter of the total; for electrification, not including industrial power plants, 3.1 billion roubles; for transportation, 10 billion roubles; for agriculture 23.2 billion roubles, or forty percent of the total; for other items, 11.9 billion roubles. Thus every important branch of Soviet economy will share in the proposed construction program, with the largest expenditure for agriculture and the next largest for industrial capital equipment.

The problems of the last five year period were comparatively simple. They were concerned with getting Russian economic life back to the pre-war level. "The five year period which is now being planned will mark the initial phase, which means the most difficult one, of new construction. The entire period will bear the impress of the new development program . . . By the end of the period about 35 per cent of the total industrial output is expected to come from new enterprises, not including old plants reconstructed during the period."

What are the chances of success in the working out of this five year program? Perhaps the best answer comes from the experience of the last five year period. When that period began the economic system of the Soviet Union was staggering under the blows of foreign war, civil war and famine. The capitalists had gone. The workers were not yet acquainted with the tasks of economic organization in a socialist society. "Industrial production had fallen to 20 per cent of pre-war and agricultural production to 54 per cent. The output of mineral fuels and of metal ores had stopped almost completely . . . The transportation system was serving almost exclusively military requirements, and economic relations between the various regions were completely wiped out. The market had disappeared and the monetary system had been destroyed." Despite these terrible handicaps "by 1927-8 the country had surpassed the pre-war economic level and had started on the road to basic reconstruction."

During the two last years of the previous five-year period, the increase in production each year exceeded the percentage allowed in the plan. There is therefore every reason to expect that the present plan can likewise be followed out.

The plan has been drawn with exceptional care. Special conferences were called, attended by scientists and practical experts, who discussed various aspects of economic reorganization,—metallurgy, machine construction, transport, the chemical industry, the textile industry. Regional conferences were also held to consider the particular needs of some of the more important economic regions of the Soviet Union. Besides mobilizing the technical experience of the Soviet Union, experts were brought to Russia from various capitalist countries, including the United States, and their advice was secured on various technical problems of economic reconstruction.

The directors of Soviet economy are under no illusions regarding their task. Their purpose is "to secure a rate of economic development higher than that yet attained by modern capitalist countries." It is by this means that the Soviet economy can assure "the triumph of the socialist economic system."

United States engineers have had an opportunity to plan and carry out the work involving the building up of a Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, or of a General Motors Corporation. Occasionally some great enterprise like the Panama Canal has presented itself. But for the most part, the economic development of the United States (and of every other capitalist country) has proceeded planlessly. The laws of chance and not the principles of science have dominated its development.

The situation in the Soviet Union is far otherwise. There, for the first time in history, the whole of an industrial economy is placed under the control of one general staff, and the plans for its development are being made according to the demands of science.

No one who is interested in the future economic structure of society can afford to overlook the *Five Year Plan*, or any other part of the Soviet economic program. They are the stuff out of which the economic foundations of the new world order are being built.

**The Soviet Union Looks Ahead—The Five Year Plan for Economic Construction.* Horace Liveright. \$2.50.



Drawn by William Gropper.

THUS HE DIED

By A. B. MAGIL

"I saw Jonas brought in and taken upstairs in an elevator. I saw him placed on the operating table with the handcuffs on his hands. Thus he died. Later a deputy sheriff came and removed the handcuffs."—Douglas Eller, Marion, N. C., reporter, as quoted in the New York Times, October 3, 1929, after the Marion Massacre.

Thus he died.
Life is cheap. Hang that up where the world can see it.
And death—death comes on panther feet.
An animal dies,
Say an ox in a Chicago stockyard, bellowing, making a fierce
hullabaloo.

Plants die and grass and the autumn
Sick with winter.
A man dies—a human being is shot down in cold blood,
And is a stone.
Shovel him into the earth.
Life is cheap.

Lying in the hospital flat on the operating table—John Jonas, 65,
textile worker, bullets in chest and abdomen,
John Jonas, blackjacked, beaten with the butt of a gun,
John Jonas, iron handcuffs around the wrists—
Wrists of a corpse.

It's all over now:

the pickets, the mill, the scabs, the sheriff, the
sheriff's men, standing in the frightened dawn.

It's all over now:

the hot words, the curses, the guns tearing the air,
the shouts, the feet running in terror, the black pain
burning through chest and abdomen, burning, burning.

It's all over now:

hours in the mills, endless, plodding like slow cattle,
misery, despair, strike, memories of childhood, days lost,
forgotten, smell of rain, mud on roads, wife, children,
sweet words of little children in the darkness.

It's all over now.

Write:

Thus he died.

Thus.

With the iron handcuffs grinning on his wrists.

Were you afraid, little heroes with the big guns,
Afraid of the mill worker, John Jonas, lying flat on his back with
the bullets you shot into him eating his life out,
That you put handcuffs round his wrists,
That you manacled a corpse?

Suckle well your fear,

Little heroes with the big guns,

And you, exalted millowners, governors, congressmen, stoolpigeons,
preachers, patriots, journalists, labor fakers, redbaiters,
kissers big and little of the backsides of the great,

Suckle well your fear:

You can put the handcuffs round the wrists of death,

Death that comes on strong panther feet,

But can you chain life?

And if you build a million million factories and pour into them all
the monster machines of the earth,

Do you think you will chain it?

And if you make a thousand treacherous laws and your schools
and your church and your press trumpet your command
to the ends of the earth,

Do you think you will chain it?

And if you gather together all the prisons of the world, from
Italy, from Rumania, from Hungary, China, India, Vene-
zuela, from everywhere where men's bodies rot and their
minds burn, bring the choicest dungeons and fill them with
all the tortures that god's noblest creature, man, has
devised,

Do you think that then you will chain it,

That then the cancerous fear will be loosed from your hearts

And you will be masters secure in your slaves?

And the hands of the mill worker, John Jonas, that lie still now
in the embrace of the iron grinning handcuffs—

Do you think that these dead hands that will never spin cotton
again nor touch the arm of a comrade nor do any human
thing will not rise up like battering rams to beat down
the walls of your world, to break all your chains and
build out of suffering and heartache and tired dreams
new life, new hope, peace and a new slaveless world?

Suckle well your fear, masters.

Look North and South and East and West—see:

Dead manacled hands are digging a grave!

NOVEMBER, 1929



Gropper

Drawn by William Gropper.

NOVEMBER, 1929



Gropper

Drawn by William Gropper.



Breakfast—

Lithograph by Louis Lozowick.

THREE FILMS: FRENCH, GERMAN, RUSSIAN

By EM JO BASSHE

THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC. Produced by the Societe Generale des Films at the Studio Clamait in France. Directed by Carl Th. Dreyer. Scenario by Dreyer and Joseph Delteil. Joan of Arc: Falconetti. I'veque Cauchon: Silvain. Coysleur: M. Schutz. Jean Besupere: Ravel. Jean D'Estivet: Andre Berly. Massieu: Antonin Artaud. Little Carnegie Playhouse.

The "passion" of Saint Joan or of Saint Ludmilla or of Saint Mrs. Murphy's Cow never did play havoc with my emotions in spite of the fact that I hate to see any human being suffer—even historical human beings. Somehow these saintly martyrs for whom high, medium and low masses are always sung to the accompaniment of clinking coins taken from poor and frightened humanity lose their saintliness when you remember that their lives were short (they always die young you know) and since the "hereafter" is a long stretch without an end they must be having a grand time up there plucking the strings on the golden harps and guzzling milk and honey while the angels waff them with real honest to goodness wings or with what have yous.

But duty is duty. The poster in front of the theatre reads: *The Passion of Joan of Arc* and inside a girl is on trial for her life. You think of Broadway and its new-season crop of Thrillers, Murders, Trials, Shadowy Figures hiding under your seat and of poor butlers being accused by the District Attorney . . . and you shudder. And Broadway they say is crowding 'em in. But this little theatre is empty. Somebody is making a mistake. Where is the crowd? A murder trial and no crowd? In New York?

"P . . . of . . . J . . . of . . . A . . . r . . . c". Bony fingers tapering towards closely written script: the records of the trial. Without

commanding it to do so my mind brings forth fragmentary memories of this play and that sketch connected with this same Joan and this same "passion" . . . you think of Shaw's contraption written with dirty water . . . you think of lachrymose tears, turrets, medieval castles and white stallions . . . long winded speeches and the usual chauvinistic lingo about saving France and sending the English back to their foggy haven and beefsteak. But . . .

Imagery of faces, immobile faces, faces of wax, of cast iron, of fungus, of clay; unhuman odors of the catacombs, of communion, of incense, of "holy" sacrament wafers. Waiting. Joan is brought in. That is, her head suddenly swims on the screen. A single face. The face of a child close to the earth. A human face. Waiting. The eyes of the images begin to move. Death sees life and is envious. Opening its lips it utters the words one expects from bishops, priests, deacons, monks. The holy Inquisition sent down by Jehovah and his only begotten Jewish son to try Joan and anybody else who dares. Poison and saccharine ooze from the mouths of "our" Fathers and Brothers. Joan is being persuaded that she is sent by Satan and not by God to do harm to the English. "Please admit that you are a heretic and let us burn you as quickly as possible so that we can go back to our rosaries and plum pudding so help us the Allmighty." But Joan refuses to be persuaded. Saint Michael sent her to save France and they cannot tear out a negative answer from her. The prong like tongues speak again. What did St. Mike look like? Did he have wings? (How many angels can *really* dance on the point of a needle?) How do you know he was a man? One of the gargoyles leers indecently. Was he clothed or was he naked? Another one of the papas smiles ditto. They are having a grand time. One after another their faces come on the screen . . . close-ups filling the whole screen against flat gray and white backgrounds. Monotony. But the same monotony one finds in Bach's music. Precise. Cruel. Relentless. First round over and Joan the winner.

The pace quickens. The plot here is of no moment. The bewildered Maid is beset by the holy brethren. Shut up in her cell surrounded by her tormentors the proverbial cross appears to appease her mind. The Department of Intrigue and Fabrications (the most important department of any church) gets to work and Joan is again before her judges. A forged letter from the French King, more questions and the eleventh commandment. "Thou shalt torture and maim all those who do not believe as the church believeth. Amen" is put to work. The child is taunted and torn and tortured. The machines of the Inquisition show as much mercy as the followers of the Jewish carpenter. On the verge of death Joan is still adamant in her belief. Defeat of the church. The English commander is peeved. She must not die a natural death. That would be cheating law, order, statesmanship and his sense of revenge—revenge for the defeat he has suffered at the hands of the French—and the Passion of Joan. She is leechd. Saved. The judges remind her of the stake. She makes her confession prompted by one of her inquisitors all the while—and is condemned to life imprisonment. In her cell. She repudiates her confession. Fear of the flames forced her to confess. She is burned at the stake. The burning. The mob. The charge of the British soldiers.

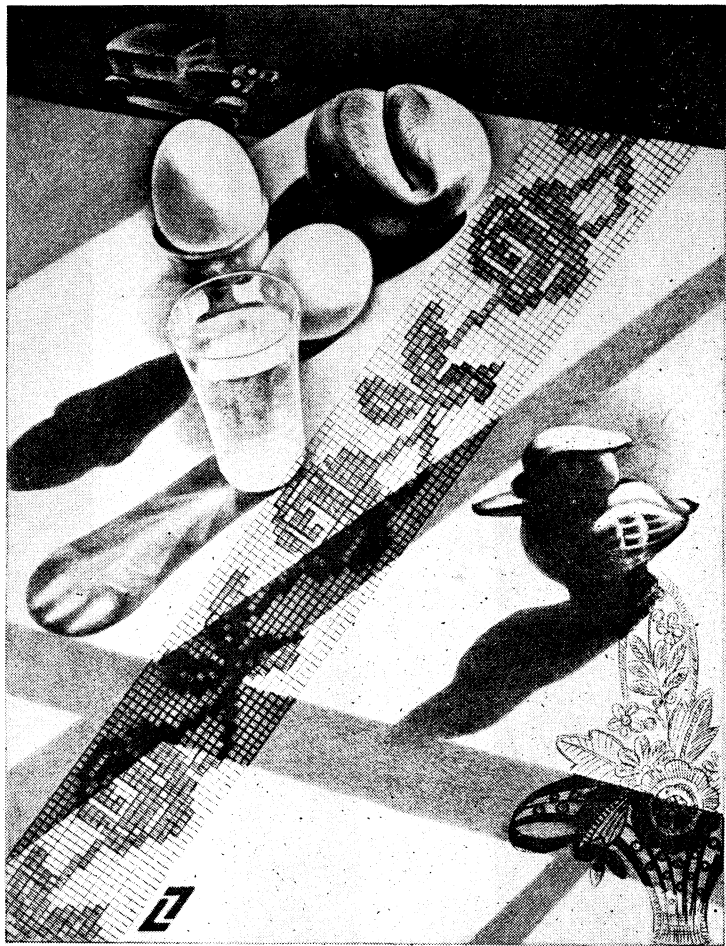
It is almost impossible to describe the remarkable direction, settings and photography of this great film. It is magnificent from start to finish. The acting by Falconetti, as Joan, is the finest piece of pantomime I have ever seen done by a woman on the screen. Not one of the Hollywood high-salaried actors now showing themselves before the American public could have come anywhere near this performance.

And: there was nothing to tell.

THE WEAVERS by Gerhart Hauptmann. Produced in Germany by Frederick Selznick. 55th Street Playhouse.

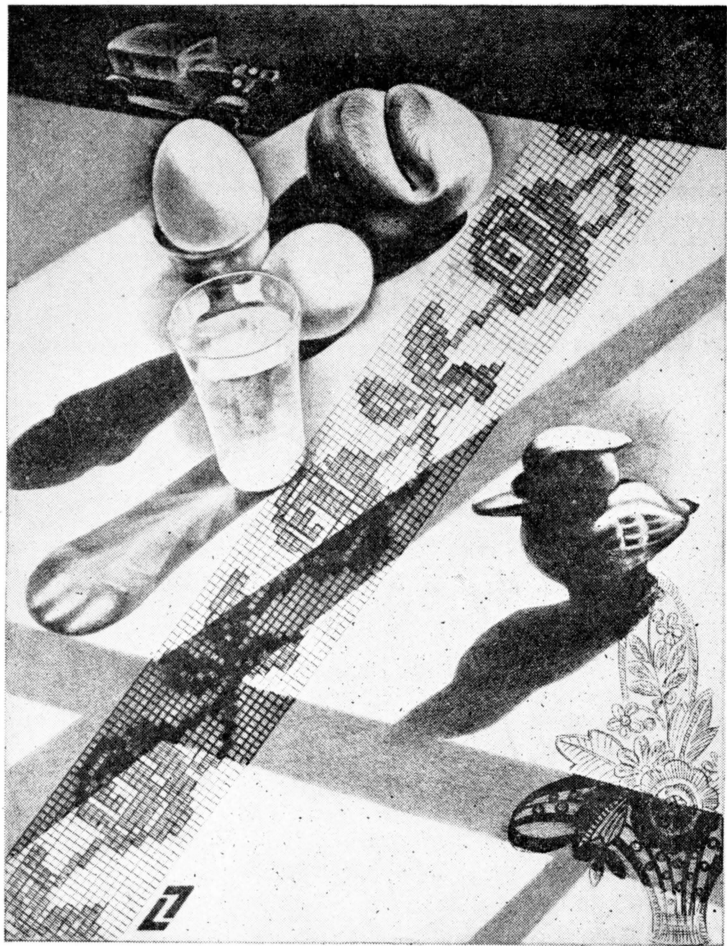
Hauptman's great play needs no introduction. This play certainly had something to say for its theme was true when it was written many years ago as it is today. Change the theme and the names of the characters and you have Passaic, Lawrence and Gastonia. The struggle of the weavers against their exploiters . . . their terrible misery . . . the heartlessness of their oppressors . . . the cruelty of the police, and you have a play of our own day and hour and struggle.

But Hauptmann's play is one thing and this film another. If Hollywood had produced this affair . . . well . . . most of us agree that they do not know what they are doing but they don't care.



Breakfast—

Lithograph by Louis Lozowick.



Breakfast—

Lithograph by Louis Lozowick.

But something better is expected from Germany especially when you consider the fine things they have done up to now. Perhaps the fact that American movie trusts bought up their best directors and actors has something to do with the poor showing of this film. Whatever it is this film is nothing to sing about. It is neither proletarian faithful nor good. It is produced and directed like *Scaramouche* or *The Waltz Dream*,

There was something to tell here but they just didn't.

SEEDS OF FREEDOM. Produced by Begokino, U.S.S.R. Cameo Theatre.

Rumor whispered in my ear that this was a bad, very bad film. Way below the standards set by Russian producers and directors. True, so far as the technique of films go this is not a great movie. It has no great "shots". No big names, no grand names . . . photography and settings are passable.

But the content: against this simple story place all your romantic, heroic, "epic" affairs and be sure that before an audience of plain workers this picture will win out and do so without benefit of arguments about "montage," art, acting and what not. And all because of the story. The story of a race held in bondage by the terrible forces of Czardom trying to free itself from the yoke. The old sit in their little huts and pray; the young are out stirring up the people. The Governor holds the threat of a pogrom over their heads. Whichever way they move there is danger. How to breathe? How to live? To the rich Jews: graft paid to the powers who hold their lives in their hands. Well covered roofs . . . comforts . . . servants . . . security. To the workers: poverty, hunger, leaky roofs and the lash. But the will to fight, to carry on regardless of the pain, the almost insurmountable task is the moving force . . . The governor is shot. The young worker is hung.

There is nothing fancy about the class struggle . . . no perfume, no jade, no frills, no romance (as we know Romance). Whether its tale is told in verse, the theatre, film, painting, music it is always real and uncompromising. In the production of *The Weavers* it is diluted, scented, made up. In *Seeds of Freedom* it is cold, brutal, painful. It forces you to remember the past of the class struggle and reminds you of the present and the future. A fragment of revolutionary history written with memories still fresh in our minds: 1905 is not so long ago. Sacco-Vanzetti is not so long ago. Frank Little is not so long ago. Gastonia is today.

We are living history. We began living when the first slave raised his fist and his voice against the master. Our story is told as we go along and make history.

This film is dedicated to the memory of the heroic young worker who removed the minion of the czar from this long suffering earth.

Movie for Sweatshop Girls

*A gallant sheik upon his potent steed
Went lightly over dunes at darling speed.
Against his hairy breast he bore along
A western virgin supple like a song—
Beautiful as an houri,
Redolent as a rose
When by a brown sadistic hand
'Tis c-c-crushed beneath the nose!
A willing captive yet an artful one,
She feigned to fight the bold bad desert son,
The sleek and handsome, hot, Sahara hon;
For she was tired of humdrum city days,
Of western lovers—all the western ways.
But the sheik!
The wealthy, titled sheik!
Hot dog!
Smack! . . .
Then came the dawn.*

H. H. LEWIS.



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BOOKS

Joseph Kalar

Katherine Anne Porter

REVIEWED BY:

Dr. B. Liber

Valentine V. Konin

Bennett Stevens

Chas. Yale Harrison

The Bunkhouse Man (A Study of Work and Pay in the Camps of Canada 1903-1914), by Edmund W. Bradwin. Columbia University Press. \$5.00.

After years spent in shacks and camps, far from the subways and streetcars and fifteen-cent flops and "main stems" of cities, the bunkhouse man acquires certain peculiarities that differentiate him from a migratory worker of any other class. Not in clothes alone is he different, but in his reaction to "civilized" life. Due to the enforced isolation, with a concomitant lack of women, liquor, and, in general, normal living conditions, he becomes, very often, an animal with perverted and magnified sexual impulses, naive, credulous, an easy mark for unscrupulous "madames" and "piggers." The camps are usually isolated, with no facilities for recreation and no place to go but into the bunkhouse, with its rafters heavy with steaming socks and vermin-infested underwear and sweatstained shirts. The monotony, combined with abominable living quarters and food, results in an accumulation of lust and mental irritability that but waits the opportunity to explode. It is true that the wave of I.W.W. strikes throughout the northwest materially improved conditions, but with the labor-saving machinery and other demoralizing agents, the conditions are rapidly falling back to the pre-war level.

The bunkhouse man is, above all, a migratory and seasonally occupied laborer. He may be seen in any large city in the northwest with his packsack and mackinaw pants and high boots studying the sharkboards for the latest bulletins. He "ships" from point to point. In Duluth and Minneapolis his numbers are legion. He is a restless and bewildered floater. Border towns in northern Minnesota have hundreds of respectable businessmen who have made their starts from the bunkhouse men on one of their periodic sprees. It is no uncommon sight, even under prohibition, to see a "shacker" enter a blindpig noisily, slapping the soused in explosive amiability, and calling on all "wallflowers" to belly to the bar. After a few "shots" of rotgut thrown into a stomach unused to alcohol, he becomes more childlike than ever. His three or four month's stake is thrown on the bar with the injunction to the bartender to let him know when it is "all drunk up." When the bunkhouse man's eyes grow dim and his mouth sets in a foolish grin, the bartender slips a few "knockout" drops in the rotgut, and the "shacker" stretches out on the floor. The bartender pockets the bulk of the stake and when the bunkhouse man awakes, kicks him into the street, to be picked up by the gendarmes or some unscrupulous employment agent.

The bunkhouse man is at the mercy of society, which has outlawed him. His visit to the city after three to six months of forced abstinence is hailed with glee by pimps and blindpiggers. They know that two or three hundred dollars will last a bunkhouse man less than a week. The employment agent catches him on the street and sends him once more far off into isolation before he has had the opportunity to sober up and get a square meal. He is hoodwinked and gyped by contractors and subcontractors, all down the line. And his wages are abominably low.

Professor Bradwin is no pink-cheeked professorial maiden entering timidly the bunkhouse in search of material. He is not a windy academician tracing the lives of bunkhouse men on paper to the music of an abstract theory. He is a bunkhouse man. As far back as 1904 he was imbued with the fever of the uplift—entering a camp on the North Shore as a bushman. His idea was education for the neglected and often illiterate bushmen. For his work as a teacher he received no pay: he worked side by side with

the men in the bush, and when the workday was over, held his "school".

He made the most of his opportunities to study the bunkhouse man and the contractor, especially in railway construction, and presents his conclusions in a fine work prepared as a thesis for a Master's degree.

Bradwin gives us a detailed survey of the bunkhouse man in the years 1903-1904 (in his relation to society, his wages, his work his food, his bunk). Under his hands even figures take on the glamor of romance. He shows us that a bunkhouse man may work, and work hard, for two months and a half and get, when he quits, a check for less than \$16.00. As an illustration he recites the case of an English speaking foreigner who arrived from the bush at a labor-distributing center after six weeks out on the grade, with sixty-five cents in his pocket. The contractor not only pays low wages—he charges excessively for supplies as well, and a bunkhouse man quitting before the "cut" is completed, and forced to depend on the company's camps on his long trek back to the cities for food and shelter, is mercilessly over-charged.

His ointments to ameliorate the condition of these men are not potent. He believes in respectable organizations. The splendid preliminary work of the I.W.W. he dismisses with impatience. On page 272 he has this to say of the O.B.U.: "While the I.W.W. was little in evidence in work-groups along the National Transcontinental, yet its counterpart, the One Big Union, which a few years later reared its head in the mines and logging camps of western Canada, and hissed its venom in the streets of Winnipeg, in June, 1919, was a direct product in part of the neglect of the navy and other workers in the camps of Canada."

His repeated reiteration that his intention is not to paint a black picture of contractors and managers of railway systems (largely responsible for the conditions that prevailed during the time of his survey) is irritating. After a particularly revealing description of a case, which unavoidably paints the "big boy" in a very bad color, he hastens to add, time and time again, that he has nothing against the men directly responsible for the conditions he describes. Through the chaff, however, the value of his book is apparent. There is no better book, so far as I know, on the bunkhouse man, with particular emphasis on railway construction gangs, than the present book.

JOSEPH KALAR.

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Bohemian Futility

Money For Love, by Josephine Herbst. Coward McCann. \$2.50.

In her second novel, Josephine Herbst strips her vocabulary to fighting trim and goes for poor lost middle western human nature with a kind of cold detached ferocity that makes my hair rise. When she has finished, I am inclined to cry, "Better never to have been born if this were all!" yet while I would like to argue with her on the grounds that I never met any people quite like this, I have to admit they do exist, for she has created them. Without apologies or explanations, without pity, Miss Herbst states the case of a set of young, half-endowed, once-hopeful men and women who came to New York to do great things, and for one reason or another, died, one by one, on their feet. The thing is done so simply, so perfectly, in such an even tempo, and with such disconcerting calmness on the part of the author, you will be tempted almost to believe that nothing much is happening. At the end, and this is not a happy ending, you realize that a miniature drama of crime, with blackmail, adultery, and a half dozen cross plots of betrayal, has been played to its logical end of frustration for each of the confused, self-engrossed plotters. You see, they are all really such nice young people—or would have been if only they had not all needed money so badly. All of them are presumably in good health, they have youth and good looks, they come from sound decent God-fearing middle western families, and each one is intelligent enough to have made a start in such specialized professions as chemistry, medicine, and the theatre, but none of them know how to go about getting the money they need to finish with.

They meet up in New York and form one of those aimless, accidental group associations, and get involved gradually in each others affairs, which they confide in monosyllabic phrases in blind pigs over beer and synthetic whisky. Each one wishes he were somewhere else, or with some one else, or could get along a little more smoothly with the others, but this is impossible, because they are all scared, and distrust one another, with rather good reason, as it turns out. They are not really criminals, they are young people determined to live according to the code they half-believe in: Love is so much tripe and honor is a romantic word, and what it takes to get on in this world is money . . . My God, where to get it? For they know nothing of finance, economics, they have no inheritance to look forward to, and when they work they do not earn enough. So in their weakness they are cruel, and commit unpardonable petty crimes against each other continually, and they blunder around until you want to shake them.

Harriet, the most living creature of them all, is an actress on the road to Broadway success, but her real vocation is love, and her true ambition—a perfectly womanly one, not to be despised—is to be successful with men. Alas in her race for sophistication she attempts to take a married man away from his wife. This man, made up of "obscene timidity," a yearning for extra-marital adventure during his wife's recurring seasons of gestation, and a grand faith in conventional bourgeois morals, is the only one who plays double and wins. He betrays his wife to his mistress and his mistress to his wife, profiting by the emotional vanity of both, and comes out even. He is the only one who does.

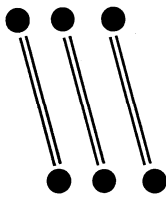
Harriet, having failed with him, and failed in the theatre because of the unhappiness she suffered through him, blackmails him for \$5000 in order to help her present lover, who wants to study medicine in Vienna. He sends her forty dollars. There follows a dreadful little struggle between them, and she succeeds, after a humiliating episode, in wringing \$1000 from him. There remains only to bind her present lover, who is half in love with another girl. I have the feeling that the only true satisfaction Harriet got out of the whole affair was her pretty new hat, the first buy with her blood-money. No one could call her a victor.

The others are not in much better case, but we won't go into that.

The story, is nothing much, and these people are less than nothing, but they are terrible in their nothingness, and you observe them finally with the most acute sensations of pity and horror because they are like fishes trapped in an aquarium, swimming round and round . . . What good would it do them to have money? Suppose they did work at their professions, where would they end? What if they do so-to-speak fall in love? Even their few sexual

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EXHIBITION OF WOOD CARVINGS

adventures are half-hearted, bleak, joyless. The maternal Elsie, wife of Harriet's former lover, is only a Harriet who married young. It is a poor, faithless, worthless marriage, but it is hers, and so she accepts all indignities and has her complacent little moments of triumph, forgiving her husband his tasteless escapades.

No. These people are more interesting in this book than they were before, or could be again. They are fascinating in a fearful way, because a good artist, perfectly in command of her method, has for her own mysterious reasons chosen to assemble them: her lack of human pity is her own business. She has made a fine job of destruction. What, precisely, is she trying to kill?

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER.

Improving Humanity

Sterilization for Human Betterment, A Summary of Results of 6,000 Operations in California, 1909-1929, by E. S. Gosney and Paul Popenoe. The Macmillan Co. \$2.00.

The authors advocate legal and compulsory sterilization in the male by vasectomy, (a small, easy, convenient operation) and in the female by tying and cutting the tubes, (a deeper, more dangerous surgical intervention) in abnormal individuals, criminals, insane, unbalanced, mentally deficient persons. The purpose is to avoid propagation of inferior characters.

Their facts and figures are interesting, but their conclusions are not always convincing.

Who can have an objection to doing away with the dregs of humanity, the offspring of those whose brains have remained very much behind the average? Certainly not I, an old sinner in birth control propaganda everywhere, in the normal and even in the supernormal. Not I who am cleaning out my garden of all poison ivy and weeding diligently between my flowers and vegetable rows.

But can we trust enough our human—seldom humane—fellow-beings to give to anyone such a tremendous weapon as the right to regulate mental normality?

Speaking of the sterilization of criminals, the authors say:

"California's sterilization law now contains provisions for sterilizing the following classes of criminals:

"1. Any person who has been committed to a state prison in this or some other state or country at least two times for rape, seduction, or at least three times for any other crime or crimes, and shall have given evidence while an inmate of a state prison in this state that he is a moral or sexual degenerate or pervert.

"2. Any person sentenced to a state prison for life, whether a recidivist or not, who exhibits continued evidence of moral and sexual depravity.

"3. Any person adjudged guilty of carnal abuse of a female person under the age of ten years.

"In the case last mentioned, the court may, in addition to such other punishment or confinement as may be imposed, direct that the operation be performed. In the first two cases, the operation is to be recommended by the prison physician, and approved by the director of the State Department of Institutions and the director of the State Department of Public Health; sterilization is compulsory if, in the opinion of these three, or any two of them, it will be beneficial to the prisoner."

Is it certain that all those committed to prison for *any* crime are really guilty? Have not Sacco and Vanzetti been innocently murdered by the State? Is not Mooney in jail for a crime of which he has never been guilty? And who will decide whether a prisoner, while in jail, is a moral degenerate? The warden?

As seen in the last quoted paragraph, sterilization, according to Californian laws, really depends upon the judgment of two persons, who may themselves be mentally unbalanced or deficient, or prejudiced, or honestly mistaken, or may simply hate the prisoner. Or they may decide about the fate of a person through outside sinister influences or for a monetary consideration.

The authors would also sterilize "young women, unmarried though often illegitimate mothers, sexually delinquent . . ." "because it is felt that they will otherwise be likely to produce undesirable, probably illegitimate children" and . . . "that reproduction is by no means the only anti-social contribution such a girl can make." (As they say further: "The illegitimate mother may need segregation; certainly she needs supervision.") Can you imagine "progressive" lawmakers for whom illegitimate mothers and children are undesirable (to whom?) and their reproduction is an anti-social contribution? And can you further imagine what ravage they would make if allowed to bring "order" in society and "morality" into our midst?

I would not even trust the real scientists. Do we not see in

books on psychiatry radicalism, eccentricity, originality, lawbreaking—that is superior qualities—classified among the anti-social defects denoting deteriorated minds? Why should it be otherwise? Is it not a well-known fact that a morality or ethics that is higher than the prevailing or average one is always treated as if it were an inferior one?

If it is true, as the authors contend, that six million Americans have a low intellectuality, it might be a good thing to lower our standard, to change our tests by which we reach the Intelligence Quotient and henceforth regard the subnormal as normal. Let us agree then that humanity is largely mentally defective and stop worrying about it!

Let us assume that the normal men and women of the past, perfectly sane were wise enough to sterilize themselves so as to be childless and comfortable and that therefore we are the descendants of subnormal individuals and the world is composed of morons and lunatics. It looks that way, does it not?

Of course, reformers are nice and sincere people, and devoted to their causes, and they always want us to be perfect. They would accomplish perfection through laws and then through more laws for the enforcement of the laws and so on. But the trouble is we do not stay put and real improvements are not possible through reforms. What must be done is always something deeper and more radical than a mere law.

Even birth control, although, openly and freely spread through all classes of society, would be better and safer than the sterilization of the subnormal, is too superficial a measure. Birth limitation would do away with much human trash and rubbish, as it is mainly in the large families that the mentally abnormal abound.

But a redistribution of society and elimination of extreme wealth and extreme poverty would do more. It would bring about a fundamental change of social and economic conditions and so automatically remove the troubles against which reformers do their inefficient fighting. It would soon eradicate a good deal of insanity, a large part of which is caused by overwork and economic difficulties, a claim that is corroborated by Dr. Toulouse, the great French mental hygienist and psychiatrist, and others. And that would undoubtedly be better than a superficial remedy. It would be prevention.

DR. B. LIBER.

A Significant Novel

How Like a God, by Rex Stout. Vanguard Press. \$2.50.

In the form of a novel, Mr. Stout has given a symbolic presentation of individual conflicts and bewilderment.

The book might be called allegoric. Its characters are not people. They are ideas, significant or impressionless, all according to how deeply they have imprinted their influence upon American society. Millicent is terrifyingly significant. She is the basis for the whole structure of bourgeois life, and is characteristically introduced in the book in connection with soiled underwear and abnormal gratification of pederastic tendencies. Sister Jane is no more a character than the whole radical movement. Paul is a relic of the business man's illegitimate impulse towards freeing himself from the stench of commercial and sexual degeneration into which he has become so closely drawn.

The book is well written. It has dramatic intensity and discrimination. Characteristic of American bewilderment, the style is restless, nervous, and puzzled. This almost delirious pulsation continues throughout the book, growing gradually more intense until it breaks into the terrible crash of figurative suicide.

VALENTINE V. KONIN.

Peccadilloes, by Faraday Keene. The John Day Co. \$2.00.

A collection of short stories many of which have appeared in *Vanity Fair* and the *Century Magazine*. Mr. Keene's style is brilliant and effective but his subjects are trivial and banal; for the most part they deal with the adventures of the idle rich. A peccadillo is a minor offense; *Peccadilloes* (because its fine writing is wasted on such trite, sure-fire themes) is a major offense.

CHARLES YALE HARRISON

The Non-Believers

The Story of Religious Controversy, by Joseph McCabe. The Stradford Company. \$5.00.

Infidels and Heretics: An Agnostic's Anthology, by Clarence Darrow and Wallace Rice. The Stradford Company. \$3.00.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, religion lost its significance for intellectually critical, informed people, except as an object of investigation as a cultural survival and as an aspect of psychopathic behavior. For astronomy had dispensed with heaven and shown the insignificance of the earth which is, in religions, the central feature of creation. Chemistry had made organic products from inorganic materials eliminating the supernatural origin of life. Physiology had advanced far enough to show that life processes are chemical and to be able to change the sex of lower animals by mechanical means. Geology had extended the age of the earth and of man into the remote past which showed that there was sufficient time for the differentiation of the species. Comparative anatomy and embryology had revealed the kinship of all animal life and its progressive development into more complex forms from the lowly amoeba to the whale (in some respects more highly developed than man) which evolutionary doctrine dispelled the religious fallacy of the special creation of man. Psychology dismissed the soul as completely untenable in the light of experimental evidence and with the soul went immortality. Psychiatry threw light on the religious behavior of adolescents and of adults during crises, and showed the psychopathic origins of the visions upon which most religions are founded. Revolutionary sociologists and historians showed how religious institutions functioned exposing the wide-spread corrupt use of their power and revealing the debasing effect they have had upon the masses. The claims and pretenses of religion collapsed before the glaring light of irrefutable proof.

But a social institution like religion does not surrender without a struggle. Its vested interests are great and its alignment with ruling capitalism too intimate to be forced to retreat before scientific shrapnel. By intrigue and propaganda, the church has condemned science and denounced the critics of the church as charlatans; by pressure on political and educational institutions, they prevent the diffusion of scientific knowledge. There are laws against blasphemy in sixteen of the United States and most of the State Universities, not to mention the grade and high-schools, are dominated by church-going regents to whom loud-speaking ministers of the gospel dictate policies. The ignorant obscurantists of the pulpit are abetted by weak sisters among the scientists like Osborn and Millikan who prate about there being no conflict between religion and science. Recently Whitehead and Eddington have contributed their mite to reaction by insinuating that religion is now vindicated because certain older scientific approaches must be abandoned in the light of new developments, but their arguments fail miserably. The majority of scientists and learned laymen, satisfied with their own personal emancipation from the thrall of religion, lack the courage to combat the church lest they be discredited by the unscrupulous abuse of "men of God."

The book under review has serious defects and deficiencies. The author's anthropology is shallow; his psychology not up to modern standards. In the chapters on biblical criticism, he shows no knowledge of the literature of the last twenty years; one searches in vain throughout the volume for a reference to a book less than five years old, although the more recent data forcefully corroborates his contentions. The fact is that McCabe seems to be oblivious to contemporary developments. This is most glaringly brought out in his failure to show the importance of the struggle against religion in the Soviet Union, where government policy is actively anti-religious and a sincere attempt is being made to regulate human behavior by rational scientific principles rather than by the taboos and superstitious sanctions of religion. The author writes more in the spirit of Voltaire than of Lenin.

Infidels and Heretics which purports to be the reading of a life-time of the two collaborators is no great shakes. The collection of prose and poetry is peculiarly heterogeneous and is oddly chosen and arranged. From the selections, one gathers that the heresies of the authors of the anthology are highly respectable.

BENNETT STEVENS.

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UPTON SINCLAIR ON WORKERS' ART

Editor *New Masses*:—

I have your very interesting letter about your plans for Workers' Art. I am especially interested in the problem of the drama and moving pictures having the working class point of view. I have a mass of material of this sort which is completely barred from both stage and screen, and for no reason at all except its Socialist content. This is something which has been explicitly stated to me, over and over again in the course of the past twenty-five years, by the recognized leaders and masters of capitalist drama and screen. Not less than a hundred times in my life I have been approached by these great ones with a proposition to do some work for them—always on condition that I would "leave out the Socialism". Not less than two score times they have gone so far as to sign contracts with me, and either they have broken the contracts when they got the Socialism, or they have set to work to undo my efforts, thus forcing me to break with them. *There will never be in America radical drama or moving pictures, until the workers have become sufficiently intelligent and sufficiently organized to have their own machinery of production and distribution.*

I want to help them all I can, and I don't want to stop with just saying a blessing. I have printed most of my plays at my own expense, in an effort to have them available for the very purpose which your new movement envisages. Let me say, therefore, that I have a group of plays available, which I will send free of charge to any workers' organizations which care to produce them free of charge. The titles of the plays are, *Singing Jailbirds, Hell, Bill Porter, The Pot-Boiler, The Second-Story Man, The Nature Woman, Prince Hagen, The Machine.* In addition to the above, I have just made a dramatization of my novel *Oil*. Despite the fact that this novel has been a best seller in the United States, Great Britain, and Germany, and has been translated and published in a dozen countries, I am finding it impossible to interest any capitalist producer in this play. If I cannot do anything else with it, I will have it printed uniform with the other plays, and await my time.

The same statement applies to moving pictures based upon my novels and plays. The Russians have made a moving picture out of *Jimmie Higgins*, and a print of it is now in New York in the hands of the Russian Amkino; but if they have been able to do anything with it I have not yet heard the news, and I doubt if it will ever be shown to any American audience until the workers take the job of getting the audience together.

As for the three cases in which works of mine were made into moving pictures in America, my experiences were as follows: (1) *The Jungle* was very well done, but the firm went into bankruptcy and I got no money, and very few people saw the film. (2) An unpublished play having a Socialist theme was purchased for a small cash price, and turned into a story about a lost will. (3) *The Moneychangers*, which tells how the elder J. P. Morgan caused the panic of 1907, was purchased for a small price, and turned into a story of the drug traffic in Chinatown.

I am living in the hope that the next twenty-five years of my dealings with the drama and movies may be better than the last twenty-five.

Yours for Socialism,

UPTON SINCLAIR.

Pasadena, Calif.

Dear Friends:

The Spartacus Film League has been organized about a month ago. Its present membership is fifteen. J. C. Grimm, long connected with the movie industry, has been chosen director. Other members have had practical motion picture experience.

The League has immediately started work on a Negro film and encouraging progress has already been made. All members are at work on this and other more modest ventures.

The Spartacus Film League is anxious to cooperate with other workers cultural groups. Membership is invited. Those interested can communicate with J. C. Grimm, 33 Park Ave., New York, N. Y.



Elevated Tracks—From a movie of New York by Oscar Fischer—Spartacus Film League.

Dear Comrades:

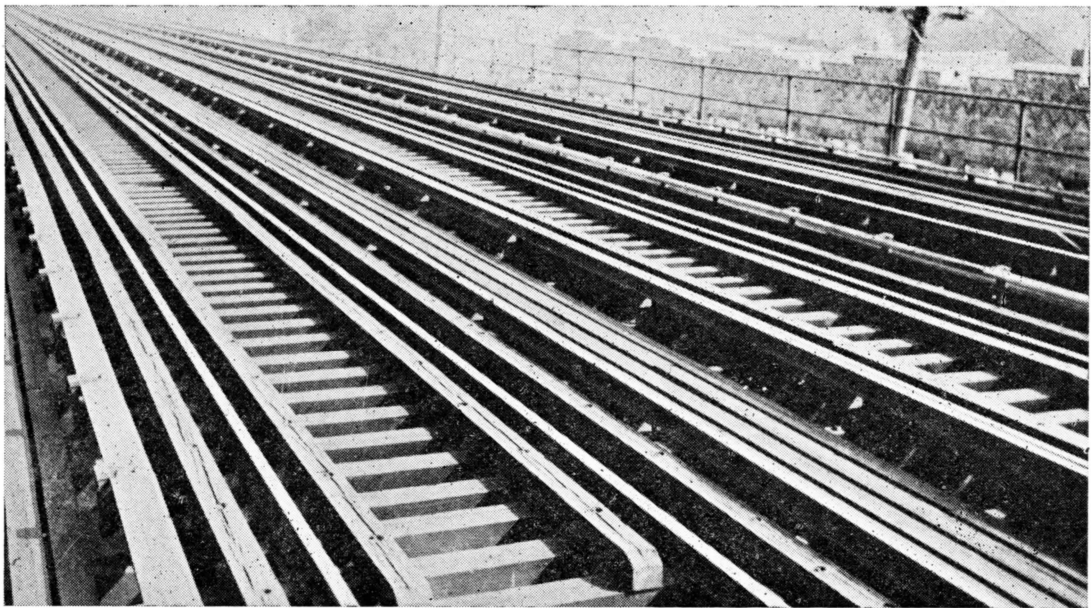
Thanks very much for dealing so promptly with my letter. Paul Peters has sent me the MS of *Hallelujah I'm A Bum* which is certainly very fine indeed. I'm having it copied with a view to doing it later this season.

I was very interested to see that things are moving in New York in the workers' drama line. *New Masses* will no doubt be a very powerful weapon in building the organization.

You have had (and published, thanks!) our report on last season's work. So I won't discuss past history. Except to say two things. That our experience has shown that too much emphasis *cannot* be placed on the propaganda side of performances. This is the principle which will keep workers groups on the right road, away from the morass of dilettanteism which is the biggest danger they have to face. Second; while we have steadily concentrated on propaganda plays, we have the feeling that we may have been a bit too "highbrow" in the past. We face the fact that our programme of 4 one-act plays has definitely not been the success with the workers clubs that *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* is.

Consequently we are endeavoring to get out a programme which will be the propaganda equivalent of the familiar music-hall or vaudeville show. Parodies on popular songs, knock-about, dramatic monologues, choruses, quick-change artist, etc., etc., all with the proletarian "twist" to make them bite. The advantages of a programme such as this from a purely practical point of view are that a larger number of comrades can be usefully employed, and that individual turns can be detached for presentation at minor events such as socials and dances. We are aiming at producing a show which will interest the least class-conscious worker, and at the same time bombard him with our ideas in such a way that he'll find himself laughing with us at his boss and his pet politician.

Certainly we have found that the best way to interest a work-



Elevated Tracks—From a movie of New York by Oscar Fischer—Spartacus Film League.

WORKERS' ART

ing-class audience is to depict on the stage their own lives, experiences, and language. A point that is often overlooked by working-class dramatists is the question of the psychological effect of the concluding passages of any play. Too often the "peroration", so to speak, of a play is depressing and sends the audience home on the lowest note of the evening.

This comes of too rigid realism. Death, defeat and destruction of homes are not the right notes to end a proletarian play upon. We know that the working-class is doomed to defeat in many struggles, until the final victory is accomplished. But we must show that out of struggle and apparent defeat new weapons are being forged and minds made clear, and on this strong confident note must the curtain fall.

I am trying to get together a few subscribers for the *New Masses*.

All the best, yours fraternally,

London, England

H. THOMAS,

(Hackney Group-Workers' Theatre Movement)

Dear Friends:

In addition to relief in economic struggles and natural catastrophes the W.I.R. is concerned with the welfare of workers' children. It has established its own camps wherever possible and has given vacations to workingclass children at a minimum cost taking care as well of the children of the unemployed, locked out and those on strike—without cost and without the odor of charity.

But its function does not stop there. It realizes that war is fought with many and varied weapons. Capitalism leaves nothing unsaid, untold or unsung if it can use it to its advantage.

Theatres, films, magazines, clubs for this and that, camps, choruses, gymnasiums,—any activity which will help it maintain itself in power is exploited. The W.I.R. aims to win away those workers who have had to depend upon the above functions thru capitalist institutions for their recreational and cultural needs. It has organized a Department of Cultural Activities under the direction of Em Jo Basshe, director and playwright. This department will attempt to provide for the worker and his children a field of activity which will encompass the sorely needed educational, dramatic, artistic and physical culture of a proletarian nature.

And here is where we begin:

Organized and functioning: W.I.R. Scout Camps. Thirteen such camps were running last summer. We plan to increase this number next year and add to the facilities now existing.

Brass band now rehearsing and studying under a leader. A special class for beginners. Rehearsals every Tuesday evening at 8.

In process of formations:

A chorus (men and women) in English.

Physical culture training groups.

A camera and film club and school.

A music, art and dancing school.

Children's theatre. (A part of this theatre will be a marionette and puppet studio).

A workers' theatre. (Including a studio to teach acting, production of plays, direction, stage management and playwriting).

A library where music, plays, reproductions of work of art, etc., springing from the revolutionary struggle will always be on file and on exhibition.

A bureau to collect and exchange films and photographs from all over the world. (A department to distribute these films).

The production of films depicting the life of the workers and their struggle to free themselves from the yoke of capitalism.

A magazine to deal with these varied functions.

These activities are not limited to New York City or its environs. The W.I.R. will gladly help form branches of the above for any organization under the auspices of the Department of Cultural Activities.

For information address: Room 512, 848 Broadway, New York City. Phone: Algonquin 8048.

Comrade Gold:

The members of our group read your call in the September *New Masses*, and felt that you were undertaking a most important task.

Our dramatic group, called the "Vanguard" was organized last winter by the Communist Youth League of Philadelphia. We functioned as a separate organization for the purpose of drawing young workers and students to the Communist movement; and also in order to raise funds for militant workers' organizations, such as the International Labor Defense.

Our membership list approximated fifty persons. About half or even less attended rehearsals.

We were a dues paying organization. Thirty-five cents per month was our tax. Business meetings were held very rarely—once in every four weeks and those who had not been chosen to participate in the play then in preparation did not attend as a rule. Most of the work was done by a Production Committee, which consisted of stage manager, wardrobe manager, secretary, publicity agent, and two or three members of the group. One social evening was held during the season. One play was presented—we organized late in the season.

We were fortunate enough to have Jasper Deeter as our director. He liked our "material," but lamented the fact that we were unable to give undivided attention to the work of building a proletarian dramatic group.

This year we are faced with two principal difficulties:

- (1) the procuring of a director who sympathizes with our aims.
- (2) we must find plays, simple (but inspired) militant and still suitable for an embryonic but promising group. The American movement should be producing lots of material. But it is not. Surely some of the Russian and German plays could be translated! That is our first suggestion to you.

Last year, after much search, two of our members wrote a three scene one-act play, which we produced. Our need provided the stimulus for the writing of this play. That was perhaps our most important function last year.

But for this season we have not yet found a play. We are not well enough organized for a play such as *Gods of the Lightning*. The excellent scene from *Hallelujah, I'm A Bum* by Paul Peters, which you printed some months ago, is not sufficient in itself. Give us simple plays (preferably one-act) and we are sure to build up a fine movement. We were poorly organized and yet response was forthcoming from all quarters. Everyone wants to act; and selling tickets for amateur dramatics is the easiest job I know.

An immediate reply, containing suggestions, plays, or addresses for procuring plays, will be greatly appreciated.

If you like, I will send the play which we presented last year.

Comradely yours,

Philadelphia, Pa.

SOPHIA, FUMAN, Sec'y.

The radical artists and writers of New York have organized The John Reed Club. The group includes all creative workers in art, literature, sculpture, music, theatre and the movies.

About fifty members have joined. Temporary officers have been chosen. Committees are functioning. Clubrooms have been secured.

The purpose of the club is to bring closer all creative workers; to maintain contact with the American revolutionary labor movement.

In cooperation with workers' groups and cultural organizations discussions, literary evenings, exhibits will be organized.

The organization will be national in scope. Other sections will be organized throughout the country.

For the first time a group of socially conscious creative workers has been organized in America to compare with existing groups in Europe.

Steps have been taken to make immediate contact with existing proletarian groups of writers, artists and all creative workers in France, Germany, Russia and Japan.

Further details as to program and activities will be announced soon. Sincerely,

New York, N. Y.

SECRETARY.

LETTERS FROM READERS

More Creative Writing!

New Masses:

I have nothing against "potential writers." Recognizing the fact that a good 99% of the world's writers are "potential," it would be fatuous for me to condemn *New Masses* because it was giving voice to the aspirations of "potential writers." I admire *New Masses* so much just because it has been friendly to the obscure and, as yet, semi articulate voices hidden in mines, textile mills, farms, sawmills, and lumbercamps. There are more of these "potential writers" scattered over America: I want *New Masses* to reach them and bring them out into the open. They have really more to offer our purpose than the drawingroom scent of a Floyd Dell (in spite of all of his splendid contributions to *New Masses* and *Liberator* in the past notwithstanding, or a James Rorty) who, suddenly becoming conscious of the blundering, crude, lumberjacks of the pen in his company, attacks *New Masses* in the *Nation* with oh such a damned superior air! The proletarian writers I particularly have in mind at this time are Ed. Falkowski and Martin Russak and Herman Spector: sufficient proof, I think, that a proletarian can write . . . My vague letter (which by the way was not intended for publication) in a previous *New Masses* could easily be misunderstood: what I meant, and still mean, is less manifestoes and more actually creative work! Several months ago *New Masses* was in danger of becoming undistinguishable from *Books*—and that is what I mean when I ask if *New Masses* is to be read by "potential writers"—coming to *New Masses* for the Hows and Whys of the writing game: I don't mean that "potential writers" shouldn't be permitted to "practice" in *New Masses*.

Weiss, in his plea for a more utilitarian poetry, over-estimates the value of poetry in the revolutionary movement. He forgets that the great mass of proletarians were subjected to "poetry study" in their school days, and carry with them a congenital "fear" of poetry. If Joe Hill's work has caught the fancy of working-stiffs, it is not because it is poetry, but because it is sung. I am willing to bet that the songs of Joe Hill were introduced to the workers not in printed form but in song—or to say it another way, I feel certain that the great majority of the workers had sung "Pie in the Sky" before they ever read it. There is room for a magazine such as Mr. Clifford wants, that could publish purely utilitarian poetry. And publish as well, articles on Communist theory written in plain direct English—not in the involved terminology now the bane of the Communist movement. But let us keep *New Masses* open for experiment—there is room in it both for Herman Spector and H. H. Lewis, room, that is, both for the fine experimental work of Spector and the more traditional work of H. H. Lewis.

JOSEPH KALAR
International Falls, Minn.

College Men and Men

Mr. Gold:

If your verbose Joseph North is just another futile squeak in a rather normal business world and if he is simply dropping cautious stones from 14th story apartment windows, we're not interested, but should he really mean something I'd suggest that whoever is in charge of him be advised to quickly secure some sort of a college catalog and find out when this bad boy can first enter. It would do him a lot of good and if he really isn't awfully afraid of physical encounter I am quite sure that the average young college man could teach him a lot about using his hands and about the advisability of keeping one's mouth shut when one is obviously unable to back up one's naughty juvenile taunts. In addition to myself, I can't think of any college friend of mine who couldn't spank this nasty baby with the greatest ease.

Nor has it been our privilege to know or know about, any college men who have been strike breakers in any sense of the word.

New York, N. Y.

R. A. FOSTER.

Advertising Mgr. E. P. Dutton & Co. Inc.

He Likes Our Lines?

Dear, dear Mr. Gold:

I've never met you but I've heard you talk, and of course I've heard about and seen your articulate magazine, and admired—yes, really admired—the arrangement of its strong black lines.

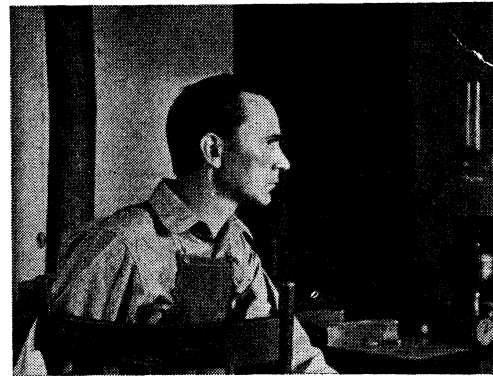
Now, I've heard about—only heard about—a letter which you were kind enough to print for Mr. Joseph Vogel, one-time Contributing Editor to *Blues*—that is the way I know of him; and of course I've read some of his work, and while I know of much, much better modern writing, Mr. Vogel's is of course free from the cheap fertilities of professional literature and shows some genuine talent . . . But really—and I hope you will understand my opinion as expressing a viewpoint which it is only fair for you to acknowledge, since the *New Masses* is not the only magazine on earth—really, he is going a bit out of his way to, as I understand, express his dissatisfaction with certain literary manifestations which he patently cannot understand.

Mr. Vogel may understand a lot about the masses and whatnot (including communism) and a lot about the proper uses of virility: I certainly don't question the right of Vogel, communism, or a certain kind of virility to exist, but I do question his trespassing on artistic grounds, since I happen to be an artist.

Thanks, dear Mr. Gold, for your attention, and may you be just as golden.

Sincerely,

PARKER TYLER—Ass. Editor of *Blues*.
Hotel Marlton, New York City.



(By Himself)

H. H. Lewis (*Oswald* pictured before becoming *the Bald*). 28 years old. Residence: a farm at Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Former mission stiff and jungle buzzard. Town trade, dishwashing; country specialty, milking Missouri cows; hobby, writing poesie for *New Masses*. His creed: to make words rhyme and syllables come in exact order, to poetically exalt the proletariat out of its misery. His burden: about 2800 lines of radical jingles ready for book publication.

IN THIS ISSUE

Margaret Larkin—has contributed to the *Nation*, *Opportunity*, and many other publications. For the past month she has been in the South covering the Gastonia Trial for the press and collecting songs of the Tennessee mill folk.

Paul Peters—is now working in the steel mills of Pittsburg. He writes: "If I'm not stuck with a job that makes me dog-tired I'll write again . . . a little one-act play and a funny little musical-comedy for workers' groups: a burlesque on cops, judges, etc.—not much plot, mostly a series of funny songs."

I. Klein—is contributing editor of *New Masses*. He is a young New York artist whose satirical drawings appear often in all leading publications.

Ed Falkowski—is a Pennsylvania miner. His father and grandfather were miners. He is now at work in the Ruhr. He leaves soon to work in the mines of Russia. His recent stories in *New Masses* are notes for a book on the lives of miners in three countries to be published in the coming year.

Katherine Anne Porter—is author of *The Devil and Cotton Mather* just published.

Scott Nearing—is at work on another book now. He has just written an unusual story "*The Color Line in Art*" to appear in the next issue.

Dr. Liber—a frequent contributor to *New Masses* and labor publications is author of *As A Doctor Sees It* and other books.



(By Himself)

NEW MASSES ABROAD

Stories and articles in recent issues of the *New Masses* are being widely reprinted in Europe. "Generals Die in Bed" by Chas. Yale Harrison appeared in *Workers Life* in England, *Rohle Fahne*, Berlin, and in other German and Austrian publications. Stories by Paul Peters ("The Spanish Joint"), by Michael Gold ("East Side Memoirs") and others, as well as drawings by Gropper, Gellert, Dehn, Lozowick have been reprinted in *Monde*, France and in the Moscow press and many Russian literary publications. The Proletarian Writers League of Germany (including Kurt Klaeber, Ludwig Renn, Piscator and others) are making monthly translations of *New Masses* material for a weekly literary service, issued to the labor and revolutionary press of Germany. *New Masses* material appears in current issues of *Linkscurve*, newly issued magazine of the League.

The Banner, organ of the revolutionary writers and artists league of Japan is reprinting *New Masses* stories.

An exhibition of Paintings, lithographs, drawings by Louis Lozowick will be shown at the Weyhe Gallery, New York, October 28 to November 9.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUG. 24, 1912. Of *New Masses*, published monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1929.

State of New York:
County of New York.

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

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor and business managers are:
Publisher *New Masses*, Inc. 112 East 19th St., New York City; Editor, Michael Gold, 112 East 19th Street, New York City; Managing Editor, Walt Carmon, 112 East 19th Street, New York City.

Business Manager: none.
2. That the owner is: The American Fund for Public Service, 2 West 13th St., New York City. James Weldon Johnson, Pres., 2 West 13th St., New York City; Robt. W. Dunn, Sec'y, 2 West 13th St., New York City; Morris L. Ernst, Treas., 2 West 13th St., New York City.

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

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

WALT CARMON, Managing Editor

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 14th day of October, 1929.

Max Kitzes, Notary Public.
My commission expires March 30, 1930.

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