

UPTON SINCLAIR  
MICHAEL GOLD  
LOUIS LOZOWICK

W E N

# MASSSES

A Magazine of Workers Art and Literature

PAUL PETERS   A. B. MAGIL   I. KLEIN   ALFRED KREYMBORG  
V. F. CALVERTON   HARRY W. L. DANA   W. M. SIEGEL   KENNETH FEARING

APRIL, 1930   15 Cents



**"To Hell With The Unemployed!"**

*Drawn by Wm. Gropper*

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NEW

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## MICHAEL GOLD

# NOTES OF THE MONTH

Seven million men out of work in America. On March 6th they came out into the streets of most American cities and asked for work and bread.

The cops handed them gas-bombs and blackjacks instead. This is always the way the cop-mind works. This is the way monarchs commit suicide, and republics rot into oblivion.

*Liberals*—To watch a regiment of beefy, armed, powerful, ape-like cops slug, kick and maim every pale, defenseless man, woman and child in their path is a sight that makes the normal person sick with rage and disgust.

Most newspaper editors seem to like the spectacle, however, even the highly liberal ones. Their comments the day after March 6 are worth preserving as gems of modern democratic thought, to be read to school children each Fourth of July.

Even the *New Republic* and the *Nation* stood behind the cops, and against the unemployed workers. (How that pose of refined and impartial intellectualism vanishes in the first social crisis!)

*Martyrs*—And the intellectuals discovered a new taunt to cast in the teeth of millions of bitter workers who protest against unemployment.

These starving workers are accused now of suffering from a "martyr-complex." This strange and new-fangled term was once invented in a ginny moment by that genius of "Kibbitzing," H. L. Mencken.

Curiously enough, it did not become very popular until President Hoover, that great engineer, bore, statesman, and fisherman, etc., used it against some working-class pickets at the White House. (Hoover hates Mencken, but steals many of the author's ideas.)

Well one thing led to another, and now every "liberal" newspaper hack has added the shallow phrase to the rag-bag of handy clichés by means of which he avoids the labors of thought.

Even the top-loftical *New Republic* had a long editorial based on this meaningless phrase.

The American liberal is degenerating. Only 15 years ago he was capable of understanding and admiring such necessary social pioneers as Mrs. Pankhurst, Gene Debs, Emma Goldman and Bill Haywood.

Today the liberals find themselves closer to the Hoovers than to the Debses. Theirs is a state of bewilderment caused by the intensification of the class-war in our time. The social issue has lost its beautiful pre-war vagueness. One must decide now be-

tween two worlds—co-operative or competitive, proletarian or capitalist. Liberalism is the art of straddling. But every day some new event makes this art more difficult to practice.

It's tough to have to straddle between the Pope and Soviet Russia; between the impolite unemployed worker and the American cop.

And history doesn't wait, but moves on—relentlessly. No wonder most liberals become prematurely bald, and wind up in some form or other of Christian Science.

*New Humanists*—While on the subject, let's admit we welcome this college-boy revolution in arts and letters of the so-called New Humanists.

This, too, is a sharpening of certain issues. It may be defined as the effort of a large group of American liberals to overcome the hypocrisy of their own liberalism.

They have searched in their hearts, and have found untarnished there all the ikons they were taught to revere at their mammy's knee: Church, Class Pride, Patriotism, Capitalist Law and Order.

The New Humanists have the courage to assert that they still revere these things, and will help the cops in putting down anyone in literature or life who opposes these Eternal Verities.

As Calverton points out elsewhere, this is more than a new literary school. It is the startling and sly introduction of Fascism into this country.

*The 1920's*—The "humanist" blackshirts in this country, have started, as part of their tactics, a kind of literary lynching bee against Dreiser, Anderson, Sandburg, Sinclair Lewis, and other writers with a social slant.

We have our own quarrel with the futilitarianism and bourgeois confusion that pervades the work of the authors of the 1920's.

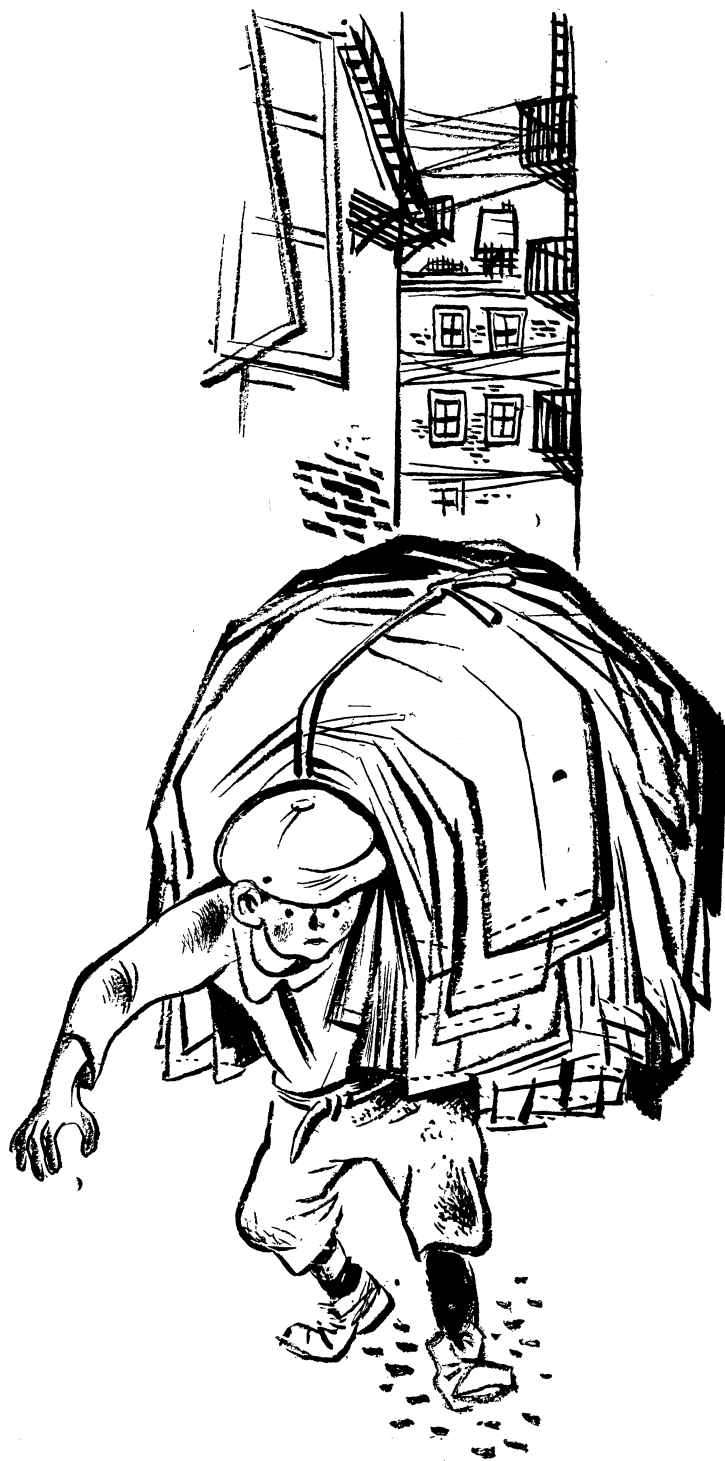
But because it is precisely their virtues that are being attacked, and not their defects, we must line up with them against the new reactionists.

In the history of American literature, the work of the Dreisers and Andersons will take its place *above*, and not below, the work of the only other great literary group in this country; the Transcendentalists.

The men of the 1920's, as they are now labelled, established the first organic contact between American art and American life.

The Transcendentalists were tainted with an Oriental metaphysic. The men of the 1920's have been closer to the American





Homework.

—Drawn by William Gropper.

soil. They were massive pioneers in a new realism. Their tasks were so new and strange that minor artistic crudities are irrelevant. They had a new continent to explore: America of the machine age. They did their work with courage and power. They blazed clear trails for the proletarian writers of tomorrow to follow.

And they created a few masterpieces of literature here and there.

One thing is certain: the New Humanists will never be able to produce anything as valuable. It is difficult to be heroic in retreat, and retreat into the past is the core of their whole static philosophy. No great writing has yet been done by retreatists or necrophiles.

That fairy-like little Anglo-American curate, Thornton Wilder, is about their best specimen of writer so far. His novels have the suavity, discretion and flawless rhetoric the "humanists" so prize. Yes, Wilder writes perfect English. But he has nothing

to say in that perfect English. He is a beautiful, rouged, combed, well-dressed corpse, lying among the sacred candles and lilies of the past, and sure to stink if exposed to sunlight.

Just the same, we welcome the New Humanists, for they will force every liberal to examine his own heart to see whether he still believes in Church, Class Pride, Patriotism, Capitalism, and the other superstitions and tyrannies on which western society is founded.

We suspect that many of the liberals still *do* so believe. We hope the New Humanists can prevent them from straddling any longer.

*Mussolini*—We give Italy's New Humanists about a year more of their castor-oil regime. We base our prediction on an article in the *Saturday Evening Post* this week, by Isaac Marcossou.

This voluble butler wrote a eulogy of the pop-eyed Superman only two years ago in the *Post*. Jesus Christ would have blushed at such praise. Mussolini had saved Italy from chaos, the trains ran on time, the Master Mind was modernizing every branch of life, the class war had been abolished, etc. etc., etc.

Now Marcossou, the Wall Street Plutarch eats his former words very neatly. It seems now that Italy is bankrupt, that there is no freedom, that the workers are starving and rebellious, etc., etc.; that Mussolini may soon follow Primo de Rivera, etc., etc.

For this to appear in the *Post* means only one thing; the American bankers are about ready to desert their protege. Fine work! Good-bye, blackshirt Judas; here's a rope for you to use! You will find a nice tree by yonder river. As for the pieces of silver and glory you earned, retain them; they are yours forever.

*The War on Soviet Russia*—Each year, just as winter passes and spring opens the military routes into Soviet Russia, the capitalist nations of the west start their annual propaganda drive for a war on the Workers' Republic.

There was a grand device used this time, by the George Creels of capitalism. They discovered that church and state had been separated in Russia, and that religion was falling into decay. (Everyone who has read a single line about Russia has known this secret for over ten years.)

But the fact was dressed up, blown to monster proportions. Rabbis, priests and clergymen were drafted as officers into a new crusade against the infidel. A day of universal prayer against Soviet Russia was proclaimed. It was all a great success, even if war did not follow. It was also the most shameless bit of hypocrisy that the world has seen since ten million young soldiers were butchered to make the world safe for you-know-what.

As if anyone like the Tory Bishops of England really cared about the fate of the Russian peasant and his ikons! These wealthy, purse-proud land-owning Bishops, who rackrent their own peasants, and starve their own workers to death.

As if the rich Jews of New York, the labor exploiters who fatten on the lives of their fellow-Jews in sweatshops, the Tammany politicians and publicity-hunting clowns like Rabbi Wise, as if they really cared about the synagogues and pogromist priests of Russia!

As if the Roman Catholic Church, which burned down hundreds of Greek Catholic churches in Poland recently and persecuted the worshippers, had suddenly developed tender regards for this same rival church, which it hates more than it hates heretics!

Yes, this was a war drive, because Soviet Russia is going ahead so rapidly with its five-year plan, and will, in a few short years, really be a land for the workers of the world to envy, admire and follow!

It was a war drive, in the name of a religion that is certainly dying as rapidly and is as little believed in by the western world as it is in Soviet Russia!

One does not need to argue the puerilities of theology any longer. One need only point out that Organized Religion is a political movement, having for its object the safeguarding of its own properties and incomes. It is Big Business. It automatically hates all working-class movements, and when its profits are threatened, it calls for war, like any other capitalist group.

*Jesus Christ!* indeed!

*A Few People*—Edmund Wilson of the *New Republic* is undoubtedly on his way toward being a great American critic. Only a handful of literary men in this country understand the social



*Homework.*

*—Drawn by William Gropper.*



Blast Furnaces—New Jersey Lithograph by Louis Lozowick

forces that go into the making of any art-work. He is one of these rare critics. He has passed beyond the high-school esthetes who see no further than their impressions. His mind is a solid one, and he is a creative artist—but he needs to release his passions before he will be a force. Good criticism should move the emotions as much as a play or poem. And he needs to read Marx.

### Red, White and Blue

*Red face gone white,  
A hole in his head,  
They've left in the gutter  
A small man, dead,*

*Who'd joined a slow mob  
In a hunger parade  
To get a small job  
And his kids some bread:*

*A flurry of blue  
And he got instead  
A quick little blow  
Of our Law's best lead.*

*A muddled old bum,  
With a laugh and a tear,  
Blew in his snot-rag  
And vomited beer,*

*Saluted the cops  
And vomited gin,  
Slipped in the blood-pool  
And fell on his chin:*

*My country 'tis o' thee,  
He tried to sing,  
Sweet land o' liberty,  
God save the King.*

ALFRED KREYMBORG

Dr. William J. Robinson is a kindly, vigorous, and social-minded person. I enjoy reading everything this exuberant and indignant doctor has to say. But his political ideas resemble those of Em Jo Basshe's dear and deaf old grandmother. She too believes that the League of (Capitalist) Nations will save humanity from war, and that in Soviet Russia, as once in Belgium, there are fiends who cut off the hands of little children, just for the fun of it.

#### Wanted—An Author—

Someone ought write the story of the young Negro bootblack who worked in the Communist barbershop on Union Square. He came in, a raw, gangly, clownish kid who went to Sunday School every week. He argued incessantly with the red customers, and began to think. The barbers saw promise in him and chipped in and paid for a course at the Workers' School. The boy studied and grew. He is now one of the leaders in the Young Communist League, a good writer and speaker. All within a year! Even his looks have changed—he has acquired an air of fearless intellect that startled me after not having seen him for some months. This is the kind of transformation the movement makes in young workers.

#### Steinmetz's Assistant—

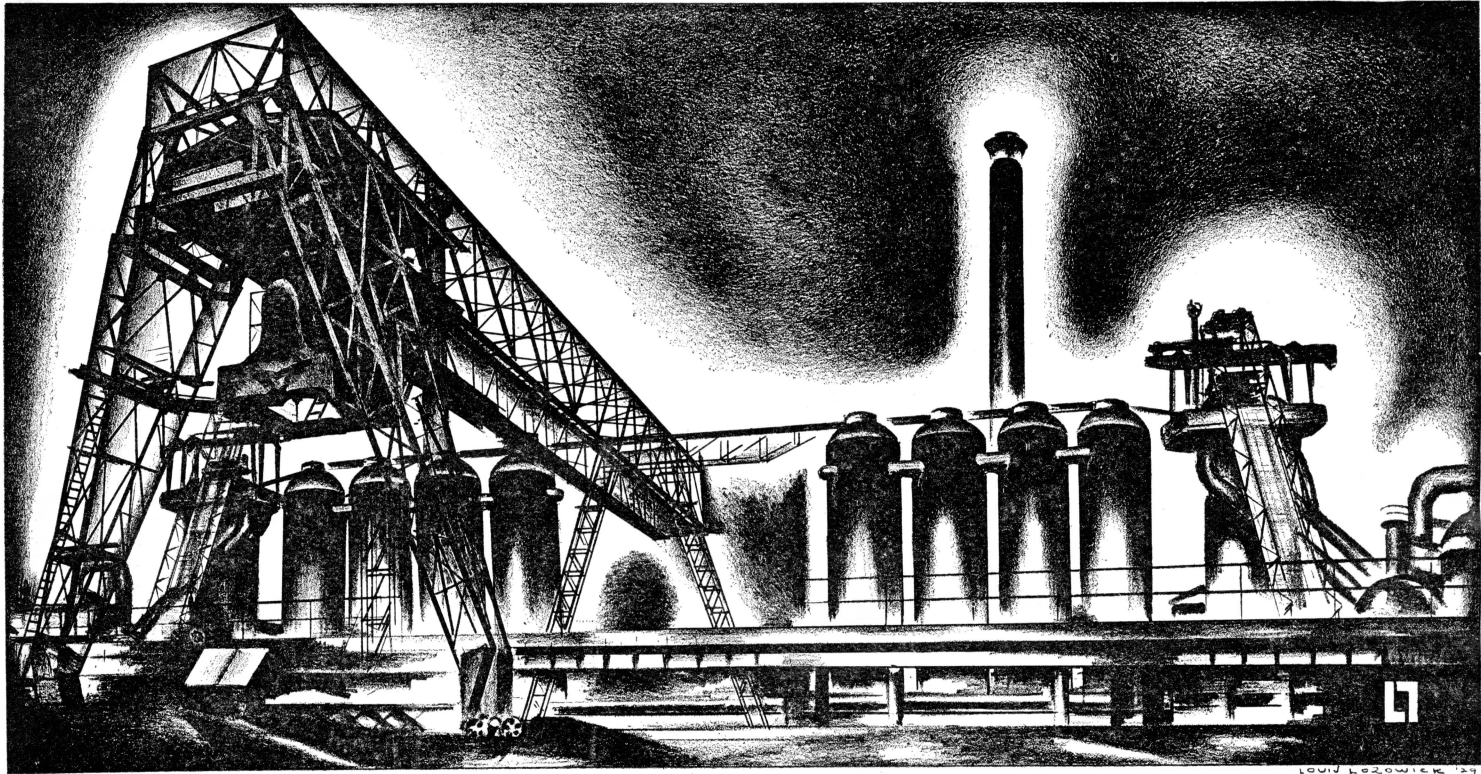
America is a machine-land. Yet no one wrote a novel about a machine shop until last year: *Steel Chips*, by Idwal Jones. It's a first-rate job. Jones was a machinist for many years; the other night, he surprised us by saying that he had also been assistant to Steinmetz for years.

#### Dress-Shirt Snitchers—

The Theatre Guild must have made some money out of the Russian play it garbled last month for the New York bourgeoisie. It is now going to imitate Meyerhold's production of *Roar, China*. There is no copyright law between Soviet Russia and America, so that the Guild can snatch anything it pleases. The *New Masses* is a perpetual bankrupt, but if *Roar, China* is turned into such bourgeois propaganda against Soviet Russia as was *Red Rust* we shall refuse any ads from the Theatre Guild, and we hope other working class journals will follow us.



*Blast Furnaces—New Jersey Lithograph by Louis Lozowick*



LOUIS LOZOWICK 1929

*Blast Furnaces—New Jersey Lithograph by Louis Lozowick*

**H. W. L. DANA**

# YELLOW RUST

## The History of a Crime

In 1925 a murder was committed.

A Russian Communist by the name of Korenkov, who had fought bravely during the Russian Revolution, and was then a student at the Geological Institute, had gradually degenerated in character from one crime to another and had finally even committed murder for the sake of getting money. The trial of this Korenkov was the storm center of a hot discussion which divided the young Communists into two camps. Some argued that because of his past services to the Revolution and for the sake of his possible future usefulness to the cause, Korenkov should be pardoned. Yet, in spite of this special pleading on his behalf, he was finally condemned by the Soviet authorities. To describe this dangerous tendency towards corruption as it was represented in this famous case of Korenkov there was coined the word "Korenkovshchina."

During the following year, a play based on the case was written by two young Communists in Russia, Victor Kirshon and A. Uspensky. It was first published in the *Young Guard* for October, 1926, under the title of *Korenkovshchina*. The authors changed the name of the central character from the real name, Korenkov, to the fictitious name of Constantine Teryokin. They represented him as having been a brave fighter in the Red Army, who in the comparatively passive period of the New Economic Policy, tended to degenerate. The author represented this degeneracy as coming at least in part from his contact with the bourgeois elements, the Nepmen. He is glad to let Nepmen pay for his drinks and they are glad to get this hold on a prominent communist. Instead of the final crime for which he is tried being, like that of Korenkov, a murder for the sake of robbery, the authors changed this into having Constantine kill his own wife, Nina, in a fit of anger.

When the play was published in book form, the authors changed the title from *Korenkovshchina* to *Rzhavchina* or *Rust*. The authors made it clear that this rust did not come from the revolution itself or from the "Reds," but from contact with the bourgeois elements, from the "Yellows." In other words that it was not "Red Rust," but "Yellow Rust."

Finally, on April 15th, 1926, when the play was at last produced at the Moscow Trade Union Theatre, the title was changed again from *Rust* to *Constantine Teryokin*, the name of the hero, or rather villain. From now on, "Teryokin" became the name popularly applied to this type of corruption. There was a certain amount of discussion about the play, but it could not be said to have been a great success in the theatre. It was acted only 20 times during that year. The total attendance was only 5,175, or an average attendance at each performance of less than 260. It has since been dropped from the repertory.

The Russian critics criticized the play on aesthetic grounds. The murder of Nina by Constantine, they said, was insufficiently motivated. They objected to the artificial machinery by which Constantine was trapped: the finding of Nina's old diary and Many's pretending to have heard Constantine talking in his sleep. The critics felt that the play should have ended with a hostile decision of the Control Commission and objected to the crudely melodramatic nature of the last scene.

None of the Soviet critics made any objection to the content of the play or to the fact that the villain was a Communist. On the contrary, on account of its very severity of self-criticism, the Government selected *Rust* to be put on a list of Recommended Plays.

The self-criticism, in *Rust* is no isolated instance. It is but one of many plays dealing with this tendency to degeneracy among the Communists themselves at the time of the N. E. P. Like *Rust* the very titles of some of these other plays indicate the idea:—*Growth, Stagnation, The Pernicious Element, Cement, Slag, The Smelting Days, etc.* Many of these were better and more successful plays than *Rust* was.

Such significance as *Rust* had in Russia was that it was one of a number of plays which four or five years ago represented

the tendency of a temporary crisis—the transition from War Communism to the N. E. P.—a crisis which has since then ceased to exist. The play of *Rust*, then, in Russia died with the crisis that gave it birth.

Long after it was dead and buried, it was resurrected in France. Fernand Noziere and J. W. Bienstock made a French version called *Rouille*. Like most French versions of everything from Shakespeare to Dostoevski they took those liberties for which the French are famous. Just as they frenchified Teryokin into Terekine, so they sexified the play, leaving out all uncomplimentary references to the bourgeoisie and laying all stress on poor Nina's abortions.

It was evidently from some form of this French version that Virginia and Frank Vernon had made their English version which had been acted at special Sunday Performances in London: for in England when a play is considered too indecent for other days it is done on Sundays. The Vernons made no pretence that theirs was a literal translation from the Russian original. They honestly described *Red Rust* as a play by Virginia and Frank Vernon adapted from a Russian Play by Kirshon and Ouspensky (keeping, by the way, the French spellings of these names).

But some of the passages in this double migration have suffered a sea change into something rich and strange.

To take a single example, at the end of Constantine's speech in which he describes his adventures in the siege of the town of Orel, he said in the original Russian that when he was through "there was not a single enemy left in the town of Orel." The French version makes him boast that after his exploits, "there was not a single virgin left in the town of Orel." The British translators, a little squeamish about mentioning virgins, say "there was not a single maiden left in the town of Orel."

It is this version by the Vernons that seems in the main to have been followed in the production of *Red Rust* given by the Theatre



Drawn by Paul Love

"The Church has always shown a deep interest in literature"





*Drawn by Paul Love*

*"The Church has always shown a deep interest in literature"*



*Drawn by Paul Love*

*"The Church has always shown a deep interest in literature"*

Guild in New York. Instead of frankly calling it a play by the Vernons adapted from a Russian play, the Theatre Guild, to carry out its boast of never doing adaptations, called it on their official programs a play by V. Kirchon and A. Ouspensky translated from the Russian by Virginia and Frank Vernon.

Herbert Biberman who directed the play for the Theatre Guild Studio and acted the leading role has ingeniously added an imposing Prologue—a singing of the “Internationale,” the silhouettes of the singers standing out against the background of Lenin’s Mausoleum and the Walls of the Kremlin which loom up behind. This background continues through the whole play. At the end of the play there is added, impressively if somewhat anachronistically, a Tenth Anniversary Celebration of the Russian Revolution. The play is thus given a pretension and significance which the unpretending original did not claim.

The scenes in which Constantine associates with the Nepmen are entirely omitted. The implication that the rust instead of coming from contamination with these dishonest profiteers comes from Communism itself, is a complete distortion of the meaning of the play.

Indeed the very change in the title makes this clear. For just as the English translators have re-christened Babel’s novel *Cavalry*, *Red Cavalry* and have changed Mme. Kolontai’s *Way of Love* into *Red Love*, so they have naturally turned *Rust* into *Red Rust*.

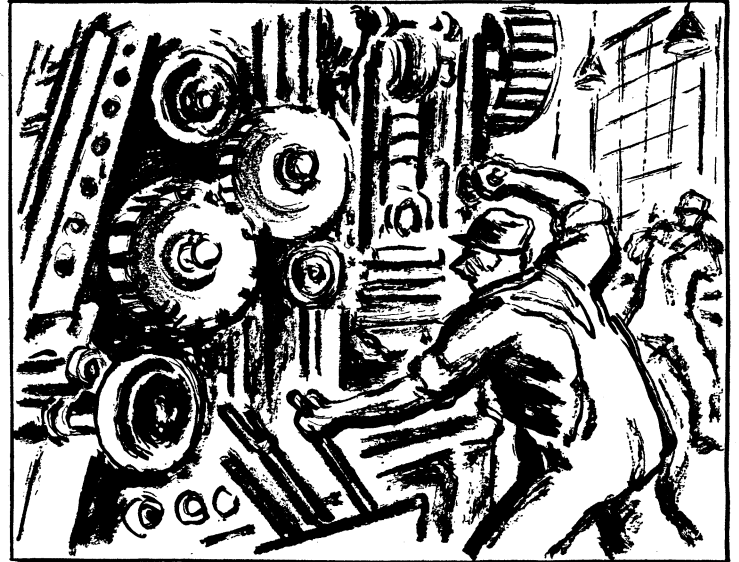
In the Russian original, the poet Lenov is represented to be a follower of the great Russian poet, Esenin, with all of Esenin’s faults and none of his excellences. He is made to be a despondent drunkard making use of the Nepmen to pay for his wines. The song that he sings is one in praise of vodka. In the English version, however, out of all keeping with his character, his song is changed into the sort which apparently the English and Americans think all Bolshevik songs must be, one ending with the absurd refrain: “Kill, kill, kill, let them all be killed.”

In the original performance at the Moscow Trade Union Theatre there was an atmosphere of life and health pervading the “nucleus” of Communist students. In the English version, “nucleus” is translated “cell” and the room in which they are huddled together is made to look as much as possible like a prison cell. In the Moscow performance, the banquet scene was represented with spic-and-span white tablecloths, and the characters dressed in their best clothes. The occasion of the celebration was the marriage of two Communists of a fine type. Apparently in the New York version it would not do to introduce Communists of this type or to represent them as being legitimately married. Accordingly this scene is replaced by a sordid beer drinking party to celebrate the fact that Constantine received an increase in wages. A charming Anglo-Saxon touch, that!

Such was the distortion of the play which the American critics seem to have all agreed in describing as “a genuine Russian document.” The play which in the original was merely a dramatization of one small corner of one city during a temporary period of mal-adjustment at the beginning of the N. E. P., or 5 years ago, is taken in its perverted version to represent the Soviet Union of today in 1930, with the Five Year Plan and the elimination of the N. E. P. and the Nepmen altogether.

Finally there has come the culminating crystallization of this misrepresentation. This distorted version of *Red Rust* has been given the added finality of being printed in book form.\* It was one thing for the Theatre Guild to have made its own acting version. It is another thing for the Theatre Guild to have printed this version as an authentic text. The notice on the jacket tells us that this play was apparently “written by a couple of authors who are entirely satisfied with Russia’s experiment.” On the contrary, Kirshon and Uspensky are staunch, unflinching members of the Communist party. Uspensky is better known as an essayist, but Victor Kirshon has written a number of plays by himself, some of them, *The Rails Are Humming* and *The City of Winds*, better plays than this. He is the trusted editor of the important Soviet Magazine, *On The Literary Outpost*. As one sees him he is young, intense, serious; handsome, clean-shaven, red-cheeked. Beneath his black eye-brows, his terrific dark eyes seem full of implacable scorn for all degeneracy or hypocrisy in the movement. It is precisely this severely critical spirit which makes him so unsparing in *Rust* in his talk on the corruptions that have crept

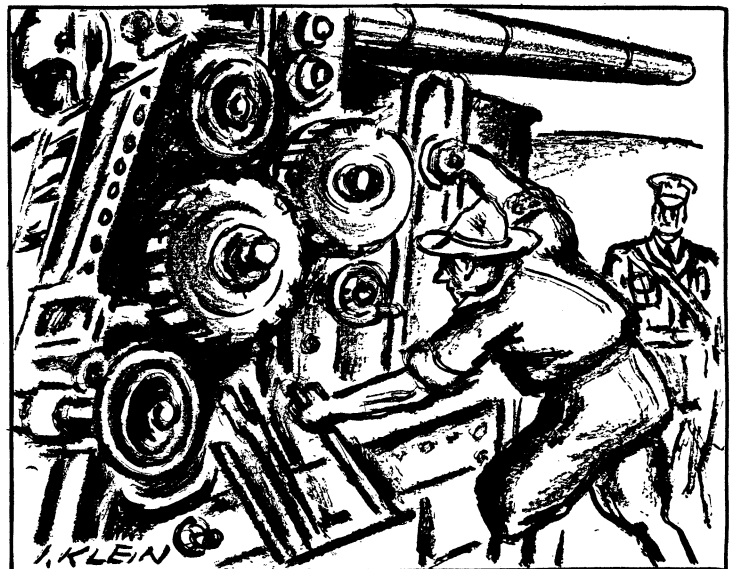
—AND SEE THE WORLD



The Factory Worker—



Who Joined the Army—



To get away from Machinery—

—by I. KLEIN

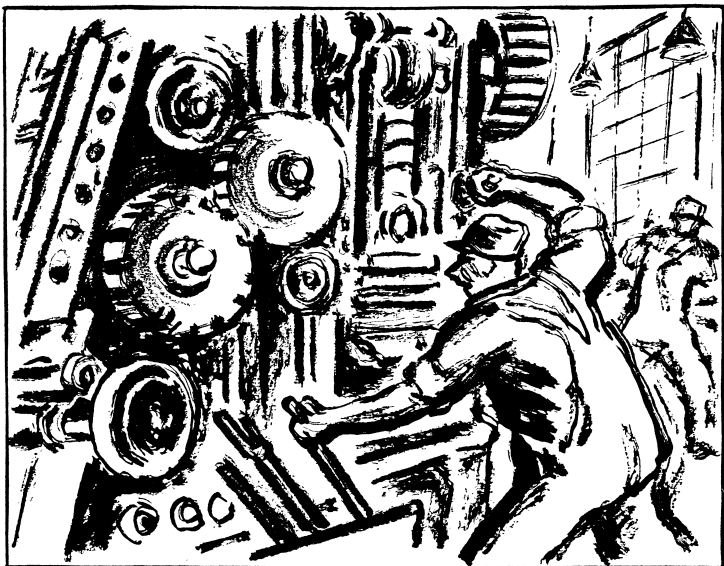
into the party from the outside and in his attempt to rub away those spots of rust.

As a final ironic touch we have a notice in the book printed by the Theatre Guild telling us that this play may not be acted or read in public without payment of a royalty to the Theatre Guild. This sentence is added:—“Anyone disregarding the author’s rights renders himself liable to prosecution.” But in this case, what are the “author’s rights,” and who is going to bring “prosecution” to protect them? His rights, like the meaning and the significance of his play, seem at least to have been completely annihilated.

In 1930 a murder was committed.

\**Red Rust*—by V. Kirchon & A. Ouspensky—Brentano’s. \$2.50.

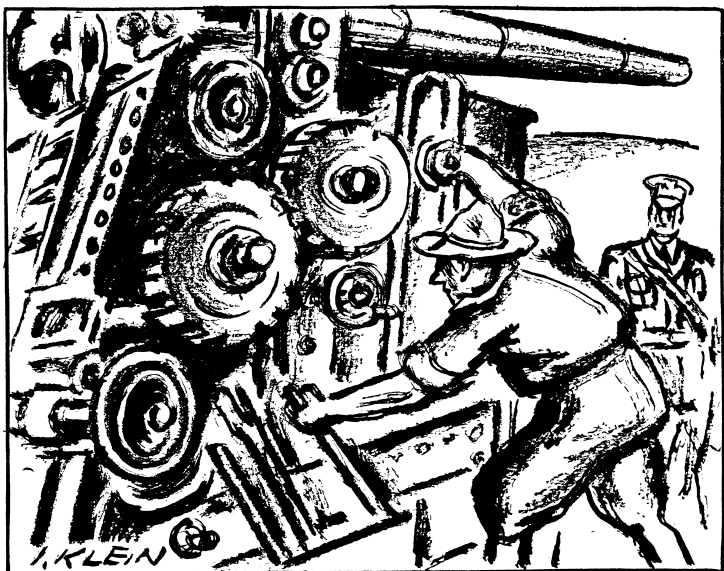
**—AND SEE THE WORLD**



*The Factory Worker—*



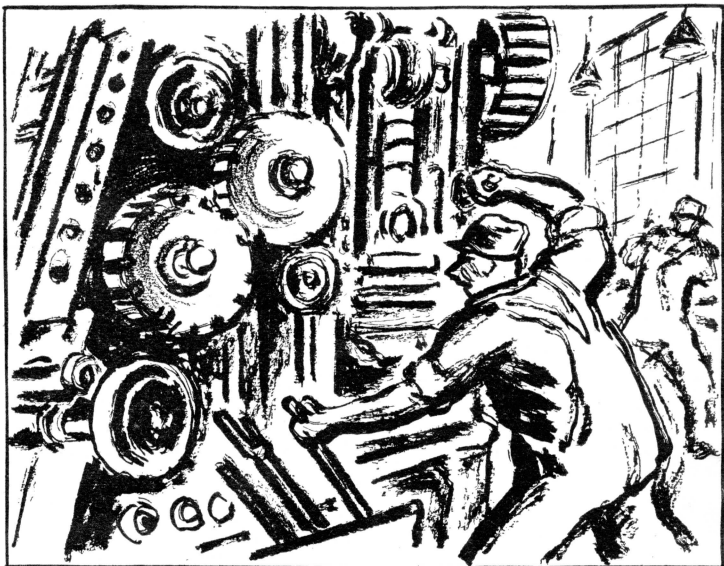
*Who Joined the Army—*



*To get away from Machinery—*

**—by I. KLEIN**

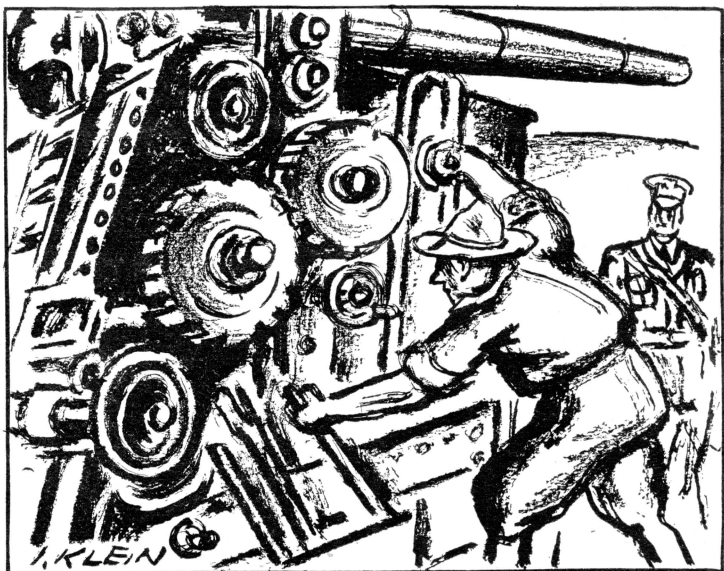
**-AND SEE THE WORLD**



*The Factory Worker—*

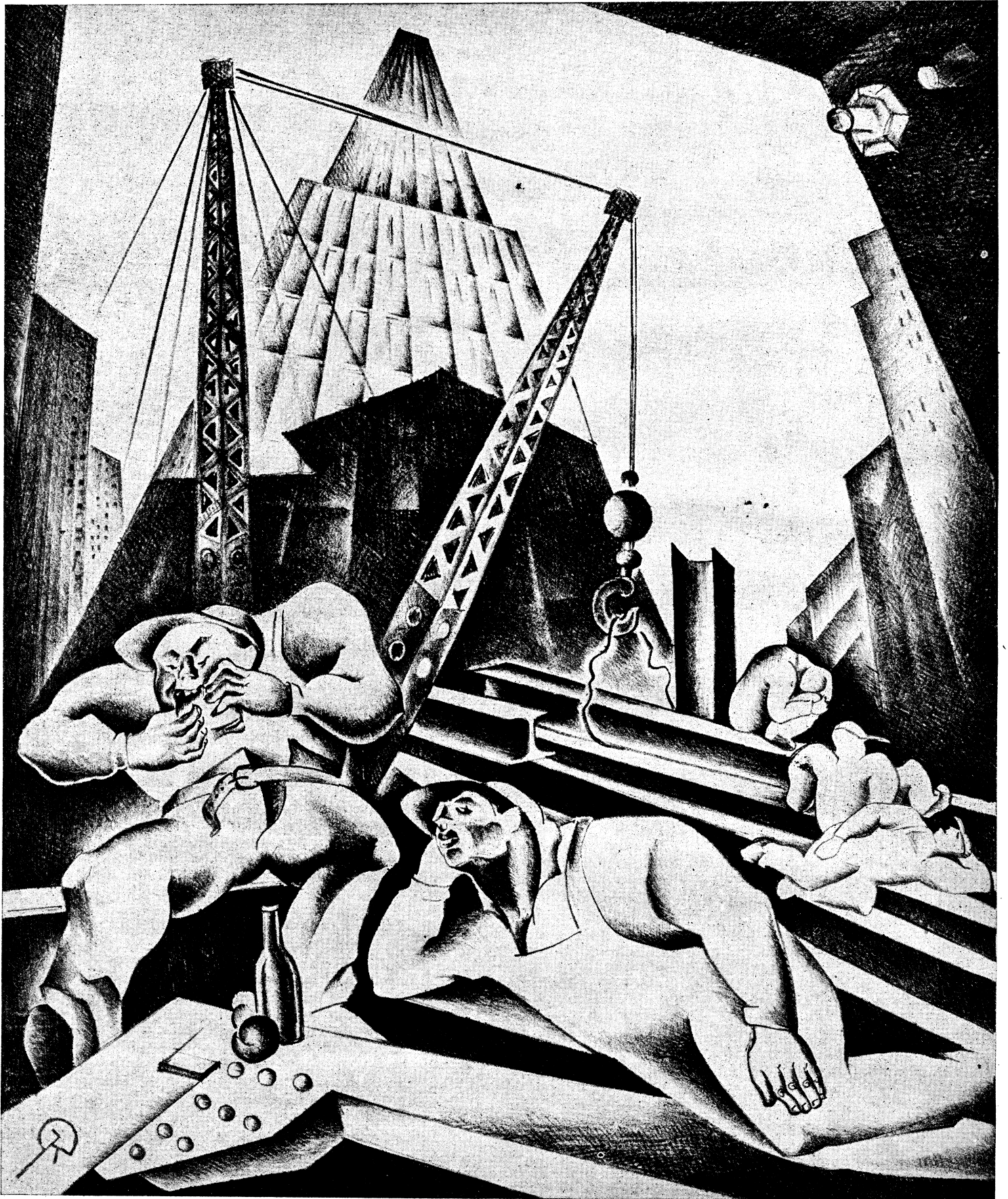


*Who Joined the Army—*



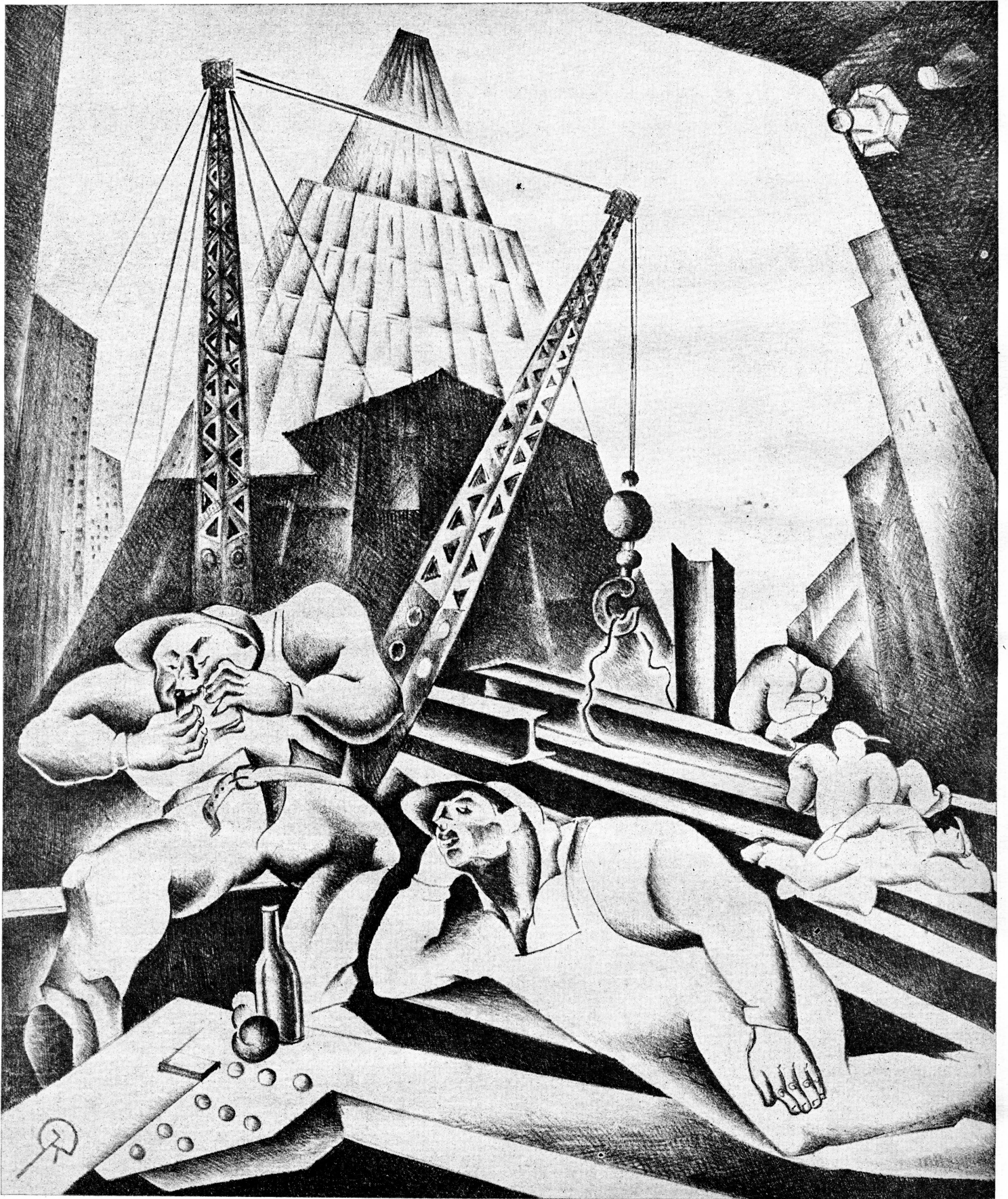
*To get away from Machinery—*

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*Man and Steel—Lithograph by Gan Kolski*





*Man and Steel—Lithograph by Gan Kolski*

**V. F. CALVERTON****HUMANISM: Literary Fascism**

The sudden interest in humanism that has sprung up in the last few years, and in particular in the last year, carries with it the burden of a vast prophecy. It is more than a fad, this humanism of our moderns. It is a new declaration of faith—nothing more and nothing less. In America it marks the end of the period of flippancy and cynicism, the passing of the decade of the sneer. It spells the passing of Mr. Mencken, who was the infatuation of our college-boys since the War, and the rise of Mr. Babbitt and Mr. Eliot, who have become the mixed inspirations of our college-boys of today. Anyone who has been near or within our American colleges in recent months knows how complete this change has been. Five years ago the name of Mencken was on the lips of every sophomore. Today it is *humanism* which has become the new inspiration. While business men, clergymen, and lawyers, still read the *American Mercury*, our youth has already begun to speak of the late Mr. Mencken.

Now there is something very significant in this change, something that serves as an excellent index to what is happening in our social world today. In the ten years that have just passed, youth accepted and defended the Menckonian boast of believing in nothing. Today it must believe in something. Religion has already begun to return in numerous forms. In both England and France many of the leading intellectuals have accepted the old faiths. T. S. Eliot and Jean Cocteau are familiar examples of that reversion. C. E. M. Joad tells us that we must create a new religion to satisfy modern man's quest for faith. Herbert Read would have us believe in a sense of glory as a means of escape. Romain Rolland would have us turn to Asia for our new inspiration. And in America, the professors, who after having been trampled on for a decade are once more in the saddle, would have us believe in *humanism* as the best way out.

Now the question we must immediately ask is: best way out of what? The answer is simple. The best way out of the bankruptcy of the old values. If there is anything that all this cry for new faiths represents, it is the disintegration of the middle-class logic of life. Middle-class values are no longer believed in today. The morality of the middle-class has completely decayed. The old faith in religion that the middle-class once had, which even exploited hell as a source of moral efficiency, has waned. The belief in democracy, which rose as part of the middle-class challenge of the feudal order, has lost its force. And modern humanism—or the new humanism—is nothing more than a philosophy to make the intellectuals comfortable in an altogether uncomfortable intellectual world. Its whole inspiration is one of intellectual escape.

The new humanism represents two significant tendencies: first, the tendency to exalt individualism in the philosophic sense of the word, and secondly, the tendency to attack science as the final source of authority in the intellectual world. In the instance of the first tendency, one can find many contradictions—verbal contradictions at basis, however—among the leading humanists of today; in the case of the second, there are no contradictions at all. In its attempt to reduce everything to law, science has tended to minimize the importance of the individual and to magnify the importance of forces—forces outside of man rather than within him. Modern machinery has standardized production to such a point, that the part that the individual plays in it has become increasingly microscopical.

To give up that individualism is to move in the direction of collectivism, which, because of its association with communism and all that the middle-class intellectuals fought and loathed, is the thing above all to be avoided. Mr. Mencken, like most of our contemporary liberals, has been extolling individualism and at the same time advocating our modern methods of production and our modern methods of science. Such logic is shallow and anachronistic. The humanists, in their philosophy at least, whatever we may think of them as individual philosophers, have been too clever to fall into that contradiction. They not only exalt individualism as a philosophy, but they also oppose the methods of science and

the nature of a social order which tend to destroy individualism as a factor. It is easy to attack their absurd opposition to science—we shall waste no space on that aspect of their argument—but it must not be denied that they have hit upon the only reliable weapon a modernist can employ to combat the growing collectivistic logic of our age. In advocating philosophy, or religion, as do T. S. Eliot and others, instead of science, the humanists have saved themselves from the naive contradiction of the liberal. Philosophy or religion as the new humanists conceive of it has more in it of solace for the exaltation of the freedom of the individual than has science. And what is more, it offers a new battlecry against the whole spirit of the modern age. (It can very easily be made to fall in accord with all the anti-Soviet propaganda that is rife today in reference to the attitude of the Soviet Union toward religion.)

Now what is most interesting about the new humanism from a radical point of view is that it will eventually force the intellectuals into choosing between two crossroads in their logic. To defend individualism one can no longer use the method of science or the touchstone of external reality. One must develop a philosophy of escape, a metaphysics or religion that depends upon an inner, mystic reality, such as Babbitt's idea of "intuition" or "inner force," if one is to invent any consecutive consistency of logic. If humanism as a philosophic doctrine spreads, as I think it will among those reactionaries who seek this form of escape, it will be because it offers a *Weltanschauung* that is complete instead of fragmentary in its conception. It will not be long, with this new development, before the intellectuals will have to be either consistent individualists or consistent collectivists—which will ultimately mean consistent communists.

The new humanism has an historical connection with the old humanism that has not been perceived by most of our contemporary critics. On the whole, the anti-humanists, who have raised such a cry over the rise of humanism, have done little to clarify the logic. They have attacked the humanists on those points which are the least significant in the humanist credo. And they have done this with such dismaying consistency because their attack is the attack of the liberal. They have assailed the humanist criticism of science, but have said nothing of the humanist exaltation of individualism as a philosophic doctrine. They have said nothing in condemnation of this because they are believers in individualism themselves.

Humanism in its original form arose as an outgrowth of the doctrine of individualism in the early days of the Renaissance. It represented then a defense of the *human* point of view in opposition to the supernatural. The church stressed supernatural values; the humanists stressed human ones. It is significant to remember that this early humanism grew out of the *commercial revolution*, when the material factors in a swiftly-changing world prepared the way for individualistic advance. It had a genuine part to play then in support of the new philosophy of life that was later to emerge from the Renaissance. The new humanism today, however, is still defending individualism in a world that is totally out of accord with it.

Since it is impossible in an essay of this brief nature to take up all the numerous arguments of the various humanists,\* it is best that we focus our attention upon the logic of their leader, Irving Babbitt. Mr. Babbitt has been advocating humanism for several decades now. It was no doubt as a direct result of Babbitt's teaching that T. S. Eliot became a humanist. Mr. Babbitt, representing a Boston Back Bay outlook upon the universe, can well afford to preserve an inner calm and a self-imposed discipline in his interpretations of human life and individual behavior. In Mr. Babbitt's own arguments we can immediately discover the reactionary character of the new humanist logic!

"The humanitarian is not, I pointed out, primarily concerned,

\*See: Norman Foerster: *Humanism and America (a Symposium)*. Farrar & Rinehart. \$3.50.



like the humanist, with the individual and his inner life, but with the welfare and progress of mankind in the lump."—(Democracy and Leadership).

He is interested not in social reform but in self-reform. As a consequence, he is interested in religion (in the way he defines it) and not in social revolution:

"According to Mr. Lloyd George, the future will be even more exclusively taken up than is the present with the economic problem, especially with the relations between capital and labor. In that case, one is tempted to reply, the future will be very superficial. When studied with any degree of thoroughness, the economic problem will be found to run into the political problem, the political problem in turn into the philosophical problem, and the philosophical problem itself to be almost indissolubly bound up at last with the religious problem."—(Democracy and Leadership)

While Mr. Babbitt will not agree with Mr. T. S. Eliot that "humanism without religion . . . is sterile," he admits that, in the last analysis, he ranges himself "unhesitatingly on the side of the supernaturalists."—(Humanism in America).

Beneath all this argument, however, there lives the venomous spirit of social reaction. Quoting Burke as an example, Babbitt claims that whatever has been excellent in our civilization has depended upon two principles: "the spirit of a gentleman and the spirit of religion."—(The Forum). This emphasis upon "the spirit of a gentleman" is linked up hand in hand with the rest of the humanist philosophy. Like golf, this humanism is a "gentleman's" game—fit game for the would-be gentlemen's sons who crowd into our universities each year. In Babbitt's Democracy and Leadership which was the book that started so much of the present humanist-controversy, the reactionary social doctrine that lies behind the whole humanist philosophy is viciously conspicuous. The laborer he contends "is not using his relief from drudgery to enjoy leisure in the Aristotelian sense." Mr. Babbitt can well afford to say that—living the life of a gentleman in a leading American university of our day. It is equally easy for him to suggest, in good humanist style, that it is more important to start "with loyalty to one's self" than with "an expansive eagerness to do something for humanity." And equally consistent for him to observe that "if the laborer wishes to add to these comforts or even to keep them, he should not listen to the agitator who seeks to stir up his envy of every form of superiority."

While humanism may dodge many verbal issues, it does not evade the social one. It is reactionary to the core, and makes no effort to deny it. Mr. Babbitt announces it without equivocation. "The choice to which the modern man will finally be reduced," he writes in Democracy and Leadership, "is that of being a Bolshevik or a Jesuit. In that case (assuming that by Jesuit is meant the ultra-mundane Catholic) there does not seem to be much room for hesitation. Ultra-mundane Catholicism does not, like Bolshevism, strike at the very root of civilization. In fact, under certain conditions that are already partly in sight, the Catholic Church may perhaps be the only institution left in the occident that can be counted on to uphold civilized standards."

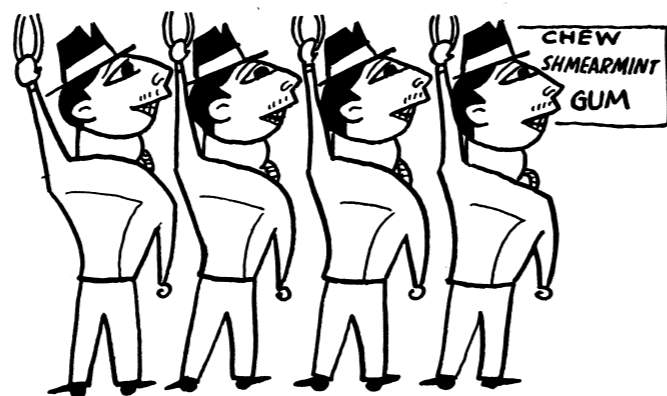
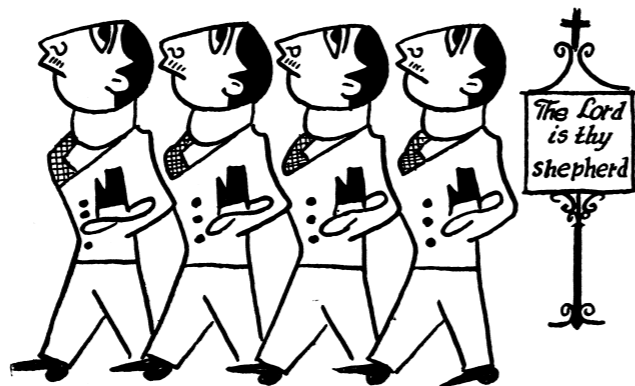
In the final analysis, therefore, the new humanists are the intellectual fascists of the present (and the forthcoming) generation. Babbitt at least faces the issues with an honesty that is not characteristic of most of his followers, or, for that matter, of most of his critics, and since Norman Foerster says, in the introduction to his symposium on Humanism in America, that "Irving Babbitt has done more than anyone else to formulate the concept of humanism, . . . and is at the centre of the humanistic movement," it is in no sense unfair to Humanism to criticise its doctrines through the medium of Babbitt himself. Babbitt is, in every way, the fit leader for the intellectual fascism that humanism represents. Here are his words to his followers:

"Circumstances may arise when we may esteem ourselves fortunate if we get the American equivalent of a Mussolini; he may be needed to save us from the American equivalent of a Lenin."

What do the anti-humanists have to say about this? Why are they so silent about this aspect of humanist doctrine? Because most of them at heart are but intellectual fascists of another stripe. Humanism is not to be fought as a literary disease; it must be fought as a philosophy of social reaction.

# THE GREAT AMERICAN INDIVIDUALIST

By WILLIAM GROPPER



## Notes for a Poem About Winter

First snow of the year falling  
Builds outside my window a smooth white cornice.  
Carefully there rise  
The white frail memorials of a new winter  
In the city where the snow dies a whimpering death.

Hands will be drunk with something to do today.  
Red hands, cracked and swollen, hungry for work, will feed  
on the white manna from heaven.

They'll come out the farm boys, wobblies, flophouse  
jacksinthebox, men with kids crying at home,  
X, Y and Z, the million Nobodies,

Maybe a student chap or two  
(Learn life first hand, that's the ticket),  
Ragged kids saying: Clean your pavement mister?  
A vision of white snow will pull them all out.  
Shovels will play a tune, red hands will dance.

Esthetic. Very. You can make a title out of it, say: Dance  
Of The Red Hands Against The White Snow—  
And think how many small slim fashionablyshod feet will walk  
firm and unhesitant over the grave of the dance of the  
red hands against the white snow.

Esthetic. Very.

Pile high, first snow of the year, white cornices for my window,  
White bread for the hungry—shovelfuls of it.

A. B. MAGIL.

## Sales Resistance

This is some job.  
This is a hell of a job.

You carry an order book and a vacuum cleaner,  
And you walk up one street and down another,  
You knock at this door and then at that door,  
And say: "Lady I represent the. . ." And  
Dogs bark, doors slamb, curtains are drawn. . .  
And you sneak away feeling like a false alarm,  
Wondering if you've lost your personality,  
Your thousandaire front, you sex appeal . . .  
You mope around awhile cursing your luck;  
But you try again . . . again . . . again . . .  
Until a kind lady lets you vacuum her living room,  
Dining room, hallway, while she gabs about  
Christian Science and Mary Baker Eddy. When the  
Demonstration's complete you listen for awhile,  
Lose patience, and press the kind lady for a down payment  
Only to feel the draft of an open door  
Cooling your tired dogs. . . .

This is some job.  
This is a hell of a job.

JIM WATERS.

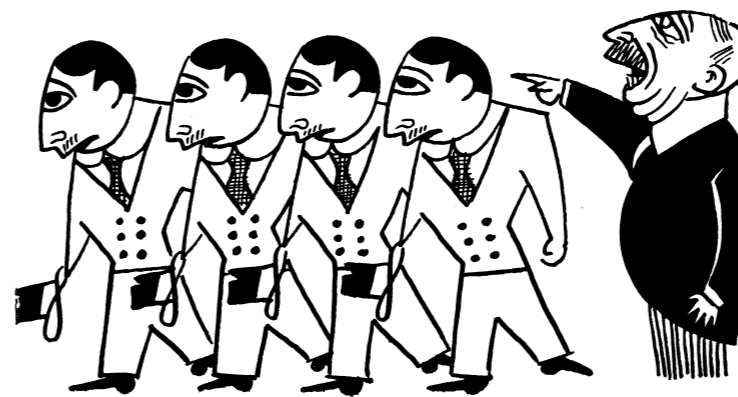
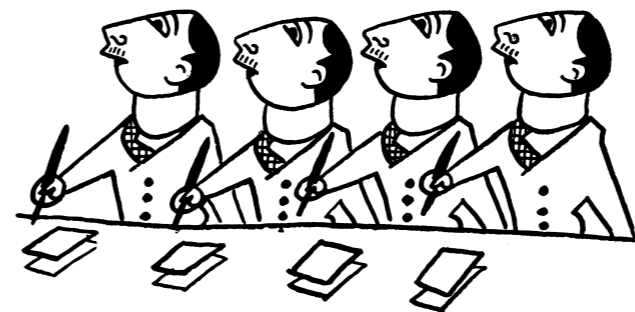
## Insanity

Mr. Jacob Bond, age 40, a book-keeper,  
suffered a moment of insanity  
as he was dressing this morning  
before the mirror in the bedroom  
shared by him and his wife—

Bond in his white underwear,  
Bond of the parafine body  
with his flat arms and legs  
and crowned by a shining scalp,  
was visited by a moment of insanity:

Ridiculous to gaze through a pair of glasses  
At a shirt handed one by one's wife  
And to feel in its starched erectness  
A fear of its coming to life  
And taking up the rote of the office  
Unconcerned by the absence of Bond.

HOWARD BAKER.



## PAUL PETERS

## ON THE WHARF: A Scene from a Proletarian Play

## SCENE IV.

*(This is the wharf at twilight. It grows rapidly darker till the moon lies full on the wharf-apron and the river. A porthole lights up in the freighter.)*

.....*(Blacksnake and Sam Oxley are hoisting sacks from a hand-truck to a freight pile. Blacksnake chants in rhythm as they swing the heavy sacks.)*

Blacksnake: On you.

*(grunt: up goes a sack)*

On me.

*(grunt: up goes a sack)*

In de wing.

*(grunt: up goes a sack)*

*(The Old Watchman enters and peers sharply at them)*

Watchman: Oh, it's you, huh? All alone?

Blacksnake: All alone, chief.

*(The Watchman pokes his cane here and there and ambles off. Blacksnake watches him)*

Blacksnake: Humph! Dar sho' funny carryings-on around hyar dis evening. What you suppose dat watchman sticking his nose around hyar fo'?

*(Sam makes no answer. Blacksnake stares at him, then stoops for a sack)*

In de hole.

*(Sam muffs it)*

In — de hole!

*(this time the sack goes right)*

Top off.

*(another sack goes wrong, drops. Blacksnake straightens)*

Yo' mind sho' aint on yo' work, Sam Oxley. You a million

miles away and gwine in de wrong direction. *(chuckling to himself)*

He don't even hear me. *(bawling)*

Hey! Sam Oxley! Wake up dar, Big Boy! First thing you know, one of dese hyar sacks gwine drop right in yo mouf, you go asleep like dat.

Sam: *(sullen)* I hears you.

Blacksnake: What you thinking about, Sam?

Sam: I aint thinking about nothing.

Blacksnake: It sho' costing you a mighty lot of effort.

*(they roll the truck toward the right)*

He gwine come out all right, Sam. You mind my word: he be back pushing a truck tomorrow.

*(Enter Fag Williams and Bobo Valentine. Bobo is all dressed up)*

Fag Williams: Hello, Sam.

Bobo Valentine: *(with a flourish)* Hi dar, Brother Blacksnake.

Fag Williams: Did you hear de news, Sam?

Sam Oxley: What news you talking about, Fag?

Fag Williams: It's Yallah. He run away.

Bobo Valentine: Yallah's dead.

Fag Williams: He aint dead. Dey hunting fo' him everywhar. De whole town's hunting fo' Yallah.

Bobo Valentine: I tell you Yallah's dead. Dey shoot him.

Fag Williams: Dey didn't shoot him. I guess I know. Dey shoot at him. Yallah jump in de water and dey miss him. Aint I seen de Darcy Colts hunting fo' him all up and down de docks? Dey got a price on his head, I tells you: \$1000, dead or alive. Man, if dat po' nigger get away, it sho' gwine be a miracle.

Sam: O Lawd!

Blacksnake: So dat's what de watchman was hunting fo'!

Fag Williams: It sho' getting hard fo' de black man in dis town. You ought to see de way dem Darcy Colts looks at me when I crosses de viaduct—hm—mn! *mean*, I tells you.

Sam Oxley: Watch yo' self. Dar Walcott coming yonder.

Blacksnake: Get back dar somewhar. I don't trust dat man.

Fag Williams: *(leaping behind some boxes, ducking)* Hyar, Bobo!

*(Bobo disappears beside him. Sam and Blacksnake run the truck aside and set it up against a post. Walcott enters.)*

Walcott: All through, boys?

Blacksnake: Yassuh, cap'n.

Walcott: That's all for you, Blacksnake. Let's see— *(looking at his watch)* you been working overtime—an hour and a half. Well, I'll put you down for two.

Blacksnake: Thank you, cap'n. Thank you.

Walcott: Sam, I want those six barrels rolled back in section B. I need all that space in A for the *Munamar* when she docks tomorrow.

Sam Oxley: All right, boss.

Walcott: *(hesitating, looking around, clearing his throat)* Well, it's been a hectic day. *(suddenly)* Aint seen nobody around tonight?

Blacksnake: You mean de watchman?

Walcott: Yeh, you niggers stick together all right, don't you? *(no answer; he turns, waves his hand)*

Sugar tomorrow, boys. Be on time for a change.

Both Men: Yassuh, boss.

*(they watch him disappear down the apron)*

Blacksnake: Dat man always make me feel he crawling up behind me, like a snake.

Sam Oxley: *(mostly to himself)* "Thank you, cap'n. All right, cap'n. Yassuh, boss." I reckon I been saying dat ever since I was born.

Fag Williams: *(poking his head up out of the boxes)* Simon Legree gone?

Blacksnake: Come on out of dar. *(picking up his coat)*

See you at Binnie Green's, Sam.

*(The three of them vanish down the wharf. The Watchman passes again, stops, peers at Sam)*

Watchman: Oh. Still at it, huh? *(he trudges away)*

*(With a sigh, Sam starts rolling the barrels back. A hand, then a head appears over the edge of the wharf. A mud-plastered, half-naked figure pulls himself up painfully. He lies a moment on the apron; struggles up; looks around furtively; starts forward. Sam, in the shadow, watches him. As he comes by, Sam seizes his arm. He cringes back, then springs as if to fight.)*

Sam: Yallah!

Yallah: *(collapsing in his arms)* Sam! O God, Sam! Sam!

Sam: *(drawing him to a side, before some sacks)* You all right now, boy. Hyar, sit down hyar. *(he is trembling with excitement, doesn't know what to do)* Boy! Boy! Why, you wet all over. You shivering, Yallah.

Yallah: *(trembling so that he can hardly talk)* C—cold!

Sam: *(runs, returns with a sweater)* Put dis on.

Yallah: I— feel like I's gwine asleep.

Sam: *(shaking him)* You can't sleep hyar, boy.

Yallah: Dey looking fo' me?

Sam: Everybody. Turning de town upside down.

Yallah: I tell you one thing. Dey never catches me alive.

Sam: Did dey shoot you, Yallah? *(feeling him to see if he's wounded)*

Yallah: *(laughing bitterly)* Shoot me! Dey don't do nothing as sweet as dat. Dey was gwine lynch me.

Sam: Sh! Dey hear you, Yallah.

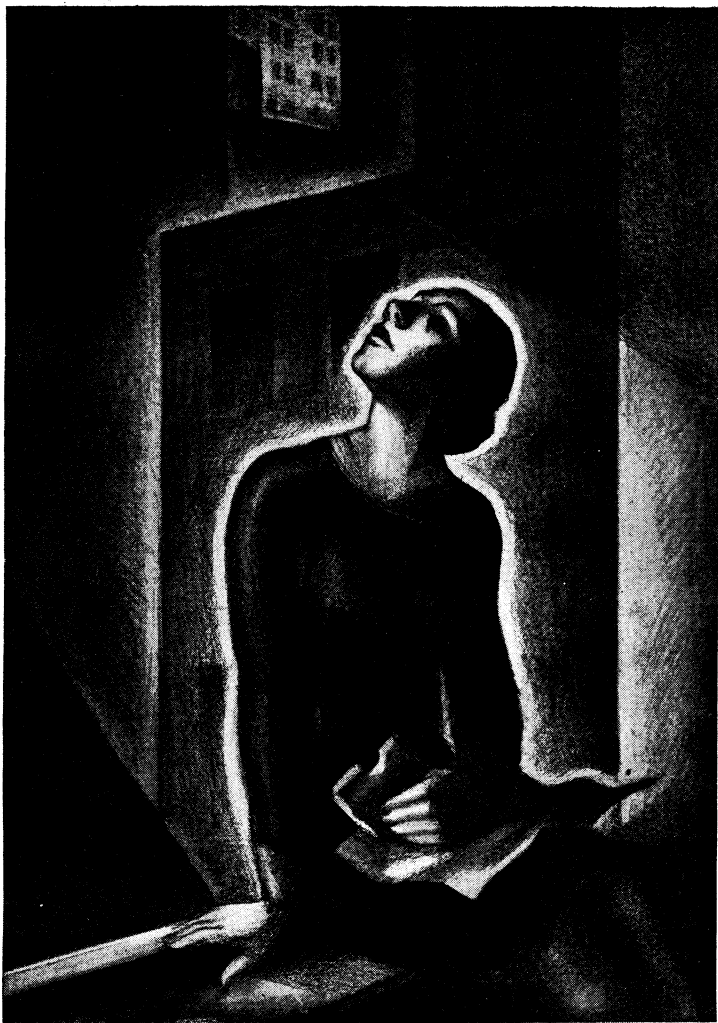
Yallah: Don't you know you can't kill no nigger by shooting him? De nigger he don't feel nothing like a bullet. You got to burn him, burn him alive.

Sam: *(looking back)* If only dat watchman don't come!

Yallah: *(leaping up, pacing a step)* Dey beat me wid rubber hose all over de back. Dey knock me down and kick me in de belly. "Confess, nigger! Confess, you black son-of-a-bitch."

Sam: But you didn't!

Yallah: Huh, confess! And outside dar was a mob yelling: "We want dat nigger! We want dat nigger!" Dat's de law fo' de black man, Sam.



Office Workers Lunch Hour

Drawn by William Siegel

*Sam Oxley:* But how you get away, Yallah?

*Yallah:* Ho, I get away, all right. Dey start taking me in an auto to de Jefferson Parish jail. "Dat nigger be safer in Jefferson Parish," dey say—and dey laughs. De detectives demselves winks and laughs. And when we come out de door, de mob yells: "We make hamburger out of you tonight, black boy. We know whar you gwine. We fry you in yo' own fat tonight, nigger."

*Sam:* And den?

*Yallah:* I see we's on de bridge, so I takes a big breath—and I jumps out de car—and I runs—and I dives in de water.

*Sam:* And you come up under de wharf?

*Yallah:* (*nodding*) Went crawling in de dark through de mud, Sam.

*Sam:* (*feeling his arms and legs*) You sho' plastered wid mud, boy.

*Yallah:* All afternoon, wriggling, and swimming, and crawling, up to my belly in mud. I could hhear everything on de wharf: de trucks rolling and de winches grinding and de blocks squealing. And all dem sounds kept drumming to me: "Dar's whar you belong, nigger, down in de mud. De white man, he belong on top. You a nigger, Yallah. Get down, get down in de mud."

(*he sings, a little unhinged*)

*Sam:* (*looking up and down the wharf in terror*) Sh! You gwine crazy mad, boy?

*Yallah:* (*laughing unhinged*) How a black man gwine keep sane in a world like this? Sam, Sam, if you knowed what was gwine on inside of me dis afternoon. Every nigger dat was ever whipped, every nigger dat was ever hanged and burned—I knows what he felt. I knows now what he felt. (*raging*) If I'd had de strength, I'd torn de wharves down, I'd busted de levee, flooded de whole goddam city. Dey aint human. Dey's animals. And dey calls de black man a savage!

*Sam:* You burning up wid fever, boy.

*Yallah:* What I gwine do now, Sam?

*Sam:* You got to come away from hyar.

*Yallah:* I don't know whar to go.

*Sam:* Binnie Green, she hide you. We loan Preacher Mose's car, and early in de morning we drive you up to Baton Rouge. From dar you can take a train up nawth.

*Yallah:* I aint got no money.

*Sam:* I can pawn my watch wid de Jew, can't I? I give you some new clothes too, Yallah. Dey be kind of loose on you, but Binnie, she sew you up. Dis hyar low country aint no place fo' you, boy. I don't see what you ever come back hyar fo' nohow.

*Yallah:* I couldn't find no job up nawth.

*Sam:* I though de nawth was paradise fo' de nigger.

*Yallah:* (*bitter*) Dey aint no paradise fo' de nigger. God's a white man.

(*From the left comes the sound of singing... Both Negroes start*)

*Sam:* Quick, in dar, Yallah. Behind dem cotton bales.

(*Yallah hides. Sam returns to rolling his barrels. Two young fellows reel in, the kind that hang around corner pool-rooms in tough neighborhoods. Red is shanty Irish, sinewy and hard. Pons is New Orleans French, very young, ugly and treacherous. He speaks with the Louisiana French sing-song. Both are tipsy.*)

*Red:* (*singing, maudlin*)

*And what if I should have a child,  
Said the fair young maiden;  
There's a pail for that,  
We'll drown the brat,  
Said Ballicky Bill, the Sailor.*

*Pons:* (*peevish, lagging behind*) Aw, Jesus Christ, where you going, Red?

*Red:* Now, listen. Listen, you ask me that again, you goddam little Frog, and you're going to depart from hence like there was a can of fire-crackers tied to you. You get me?

*Pons:* (*whining*) Aw, but my God, Red! Aint I hooped it up and down this river front ever since three o'clock. What more you want?

*Red:* I'm sorry I ever got you in the club. You got to be a fast-stepper to belong to this gang, see. We aint got no room for sissies. (*he moves forward, singing*)

(*he catches sight of Sam*)

What's that?

*Pons:* That's a man.

*Red:* (*swaying toward Sam, eying him*) Go on! Aint you got no eyes? That aint no man.

(*he falls over some freight and kicks at it savagely*)

Goddam those niggers!

(*to Sam, who has come forward*)

Don't you know no better than to leave that stuff around so's a white man would break his neck on it?

(*Sam makes no answer*)

Pick me up.

*Sam:* (*the old defense*) What you say, white folks?

*Red:* You heard me. Pick me up, nigger.

(*Sam obeys*)

Say, you seen a little yellow nigger from the north anywhere around here tonight?

*Sam:* Yallah nigger? Naw suh! I aint seen no yallah nigger.

*Red:* (*spitting, tough*) Yeh, you'd tell, wouldn't you? You niggers is all in cahoots. I know.—What's the name of that ship?

*Sam:* Dat ship yonder?

*Red:* (*ugly*) Yeh, dat ship right yonder.

*Sam:* Dat de *Queen Maud*.

*Red:* (*with a grandiose gesture*) The *Queen Maud*—right! Good boy; go to the head of the class.

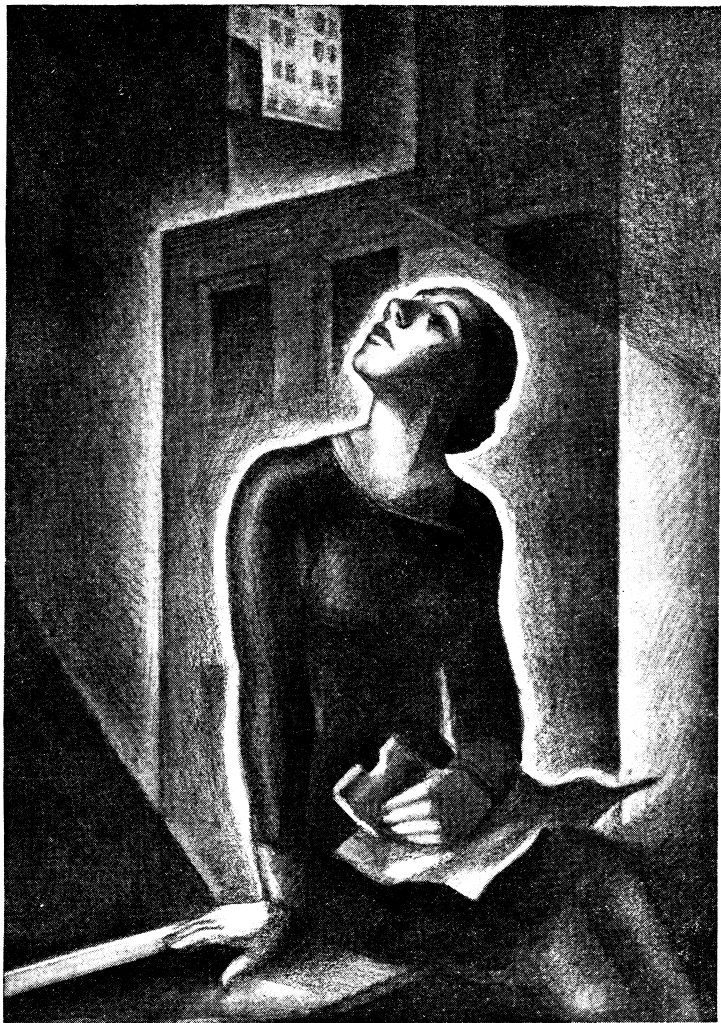
Hey, Pons, you breathing yet?

*Pons:* Sure.

*Red:* I thought maybe you got tired and quit. Give 'em the whistle, Pons.

(*Canuck comes off the ship. He is a fat, flabby, mean-look-*

**APRIL, 1930**

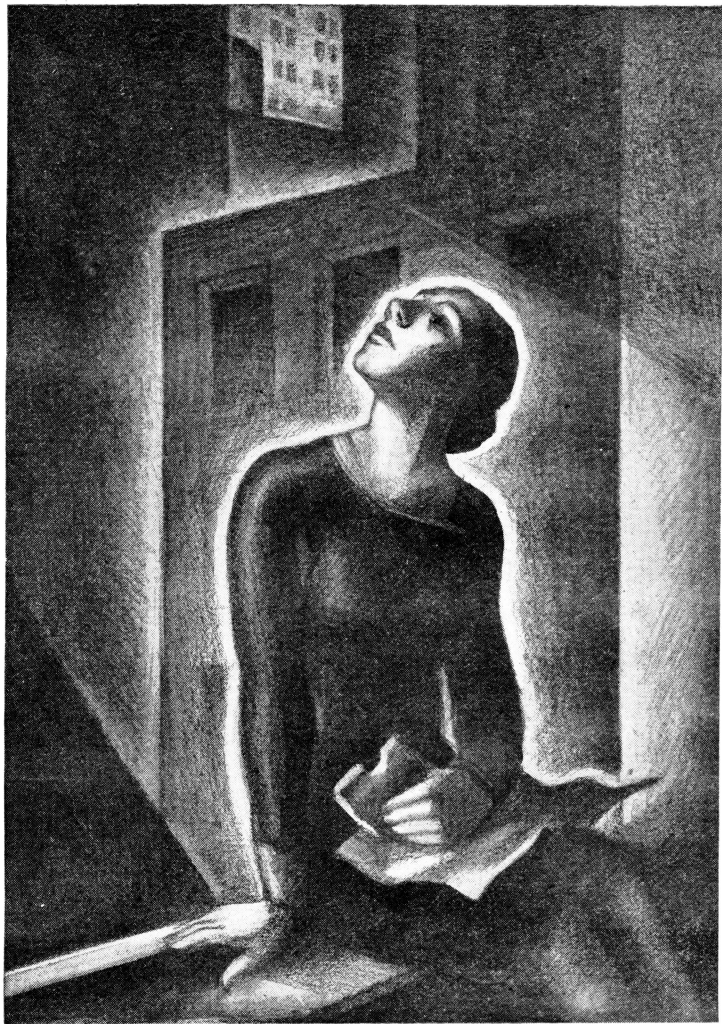


*Office Workers Lunch Hour*

*Drawn by William Siegel*



**APRIL, 1930**



*Office Workers Lunch Hour*

*Drawn by William Siegel*

ing Canadian. A continuous stream of tobacco juice squirts out of his mouth.)

Canuck: Red?

Red: You got it?

Canuck: (taking a bottle out of his coat) The real stuff.

Red: (after pulling out the cork and drinking) Like hell!

Canuck: (at Pons) This one of the new Colts?

Red: New's right. Still sucking off a nipple.

(he laughs at his wit)

Pons, shake with the Canuck. Old-timer.

Canuck: (after shaking hands) Aint you caught him yet?

Red: Don't you worry. We'll get 'im. We'll get 'im if we have to burn all niggertown down. There's going to be a hot time in the old town tonight, kiddo! You better come along and see the fun.

Canuck: Maybe I will.

Red: Maybe, hell. You'll be laying up in that stinking fo'c'stle hugging your butt. Don't I know you? I aint sailed the seven seas with you for nothing.

Canuck: You aint shipping out no more, Red?

Red: Who? Me? Say, I done chipped enough paint and shined enough brass and lugged enough rope to fill up the Gulf of Mexico.

(he snorts in disgust)

Remember the way we had to slave when the old scow run aground below Zanzibar?

Canuck: Sure, I do. What was that old buck's name?

Red: King Spit-in-your-eye, we called him. Christ, I can see him yet, coming down the beach to meet us.

Canuck: (roaring with laughter) With a calico Mother Hubbard on.

Red: (slapping his sides) Can you picture that, Pons? A calico Mother Hubbard on a big buck nigger!

Canuck: And thirteen blooming nigger wenches for wives.

(They all go off in an orgy of laughter)

Red: And God! Didn't he give us the swell reception, though. Say, Lindbergh didn't have nothing on it. Bananas and cocoanuts by the carload.

(he rocks with laughter; then, as Canuck pounds the barrel and Pons claps his hands, Red, with a wild yelp, springs into a lecherous drunken dance, screaming as a chant:)

Tom-tom-tom-tom-tom-tom,  
Boula, boula, boula, boula,  
Tom-tom-tom-tom-tom-tom,  
Ee-ii, ee-ii, ee-ii, ee-ii—

(he spins around dizzily and falls in a heap. The others shout and laugh)

Canuck: Man overboard! Throw out the lifeline. Man overboard!

Red: (to Sam) Lift me up, nigger.

(Sam, poker-faced, obeys. Red takes another drink and wipes his mouth with a grunt)

Brrr! As sweet as a Ford radiator.

Red: And listen! Listen, Cannuck. Remember the way some of the crew went on a spree the night the ship pulled off?



Drawn by Jan Matulka

Canuck: That's right. They burned the whole nigger village to the ground. Blimy! that was a perty fire.

Red: (in glee) You could hear 'em squealing for miles at sea.

Canuck: I bet you was the one that started it, wasn't you, Red?

Red: What you think? I going to be warming my bunk when there's hell breaking loose outside?

Pons: (young and not yet hardened) You mean—you burned the people up too?

Red: People? They wasn't no people! Niggers, cannibals, that's what they was. Why, say, they'd smash your skull in for a brass button on a boatswain's coat.

(as they vanish in the dark, he sings)

For forty days and forty nights

They sailed the great Atlantic,

There were no women aboard the ship,

The men were getting frantic.

(the voices trail away)

(Yallah creeps out. A moment he stands uncertain. Then, picking up an axehandle, he takes a stride after the three men. Sam blocks him.)

Sam: Put it down, Yallah. Put it down.

(gently, he takes the axehandle away)

Yallah: De supreme white man!

Sam: We aint got no time to lose, Yallah. Hyear, put dis cap over yo' eyes. Now follow me—and watch yo' self.

(Sam leads the way, holding the axehandle. In the dark, at the inner edge of the wharf-apron, they run into Walcott. The two Negroes stop, frozen. Walcott peers at them)

Walcott: Sam? Who's that—?

(he recognizes Yallah)

Oh-h-h!

Yallah: Stand back, or I'll kill you.

Walcott: (whipping out a flashlight, playing it on him) You aint got a gun.

(jeering)

Well, well. Now aint this a pleasure. So unexpected, too.

(he moves forward slowly, flashlight steady. Yallah stands crouched to spring)

Sam: Mr. Walcott—

Walcott: (snarling) You keep out of this, Sam.

Yallah: Stay whar you are, white man. Don't you move!

(with a desperate gesture)

Sam! De axhandle!

(As he turns, Walcott tosses aside the flashlight and springs at him. They wrestle in the dark. Yallah, exhausted, succumbs. Walcott pins his arms behind him and yanks him toward the apron. Sam now hounds his every step)

Yallah: Sam! Sam!

Sam: Let him go, Mr. Walcott.

Walcott: (kicking at Sam) Goddam you, nigger! Get out the way.

Sam: You know dat boy aint done no wrong. Aint he punished enough fo' being a black man? Shot at like a dog; hunted in de slime and mud all day? What good it do you if dey catches him? Dey just kill 'im, kill 'im because he's a black man.

Walcott: (near the edge of the water now) Watchman! Hey, watchman!

(Sam hits Walcott over the head with the axehandle. Walcott drops Yallah, staggers back, and with a little moan tumbles over the wharf into the river. You hear the splash. You hear a faint strangled cry.

(Sam moves as if to plunge after him. Yallah holds him back)

Yallah: No. No. Let 'im drown!

(in a frenzy, leaning over the edge)

Look at him—look—dar he goes down! You burned de whole village to de ground, did you? Cannibals—huh?—dat smash yo' skull in fo' a brass button on a boatswain's coat!

Sam: (covering his face with his hands, sobbing) O Lawd!

Watchman: (calling from down the wharf) Hello! Hello! Who's calling the watchman?

Yallah: (pulling himself up with pain) We got to come away from hyar, Sam.

(He starts pulling the stupefied Sam away. The scene fades out.)



*Drawn by Jan Matulka*

# MOVIES



Camera Eye

Drawn by Theodor Scheel

## PARIS HEARS EISENSTEIN

Nine o'clock in the evening. In a small lecture hall at the Sorbonne University in Paris, two thousand people are crowded to witness a private filming of *The General Line* and to hear S. M. Eisenstein lecture on the "Principles of the New Russian Film." The occasion is given under the auspices of a group of austere academicians ponderously named, "Group d'Etudes Philosophiques et Scientifiques pour l'Examen des Tendances Nouvelles."

The atmosphere is severe. Many learned men of France have been heard in this same room. The problems of Intuition and Kantian Transcendentalism and other burning questions of the day have time and again been discussed here by bewhiskered professors before bored young students. In a few minutes Eisenstein will be sitting on this same platform.

He appears. His warm smile announces a friend, a comrade. Applause. He does not seem to like that and motions the audience to stop.

Then: Something has happened. Whispers. The chairman announces that the Parisian police has forbidden the showing of *The General Line*. Faintly he utters a few words about "... hindering the spread of knowledge . . . shameful . . . liberty." No one is satisfied. The audience starts a demonstration that lasts fifteen minutes. Eisenstein seems to be pleased with all this.

The commotion subsides and the speaker is introduced. He does not "lecture" nor read from a prepared paper. His French is tight, but his accent flawless and delivery fluent. The words he cannot remember he describes with characteristic gestures that everybody understands.

"I am sorry you cannot see my film . . . This makes my task harder, as I will have to make up for what you cannot see with my limited French. . . . When I am through speaking you may throw questions at me and I will try to answer. . . . A sort of friendly ping-pong game. . . . But I beg you not to ask me the

whereabouts of General Koutepov or what salary I earn in the USSR, for I am certain that my replies will not satisfy you. . . ."

He proceeds to a broad outline of his subject. He begins by differentiating between the conception of the film in the Soviet Union and in the capitalist countries. The destruction of the banal sex triangle and the raising of the film to an educational and cultural level, he says, was the first task of the Russian directors after the Revolution. He tells of the concrete problems which confront the Soviet movie in regard to the education and political enlightenment of the formerly oppressed national minorities; the establishment in Moscow and Leningrad of the first cinema universities in the world for the purpose of training permanent scientific and artistic film-workers.

"We are constantly drawing the masses into the production of our films. Criticism of our work by the workers and peasants is most valuable to us. Indeed, only their needs and opinions are important, as we are working with and for them. They discuss the value of scenarios in their factory committees and are quite frequently very critical of our work. In the Soviet Union the director and his cameramen play a comparatively secondary role. They are only called in when the ideological importance of a certain theme for a film has been decided upon by those for whom the film is produced."

Eisenstein then gives a brief resume of the Russian directors' achievements in the technical sphere of the movies.

"The importance of our method lies in the fact that we have discovered *how to force the spectator to think in a certain direction*. By mounting our films in a way scientifically calculated to create a given impression on an audience, we have developed a powerful weapon for the propagation of the ideas upon which our new social system is based.

"We have discarded the professional actor for 'the man in the street.' We are convinced that this brought us a step nearer to life. When we require an old man in a film, the actor who rehearses three days before he can play the part can never do it so well as a real old man who has been rehearsing for say—sixty years. This method has its difficulties, of course, but so far it has proven its advantages over the old way."

This does not all sound like music to highly paid movie actors in the audience, but in Eisenstein's case, "first came the deed," and those who have seen his films acted by real sailors, real workers and on authentic locales, are well convinced that the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

"Our new conception of the film is based on the idea that art is not opposed to science. Both unite on the basis of *cinedialectic*, a process that only the cinema can achieve. A spectator can be made to *feel-and-think* what he sees on the screen. The scientific formula can be given the optional quality of a poem. And whether my ideas on this matter are right or wrong, I am at present working in this direction. I plan to film Marx's *Capital* so that the humble worker or peasant can understand it."

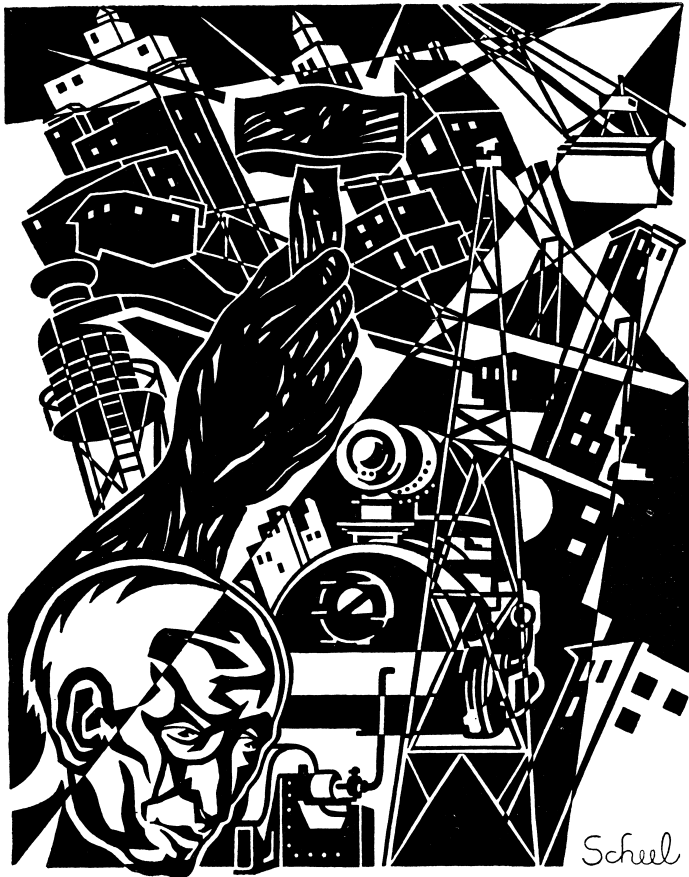
Skepticism may intrude but we are before a man who has succeeded in making people weep at the sight of a milk-separator in the *The General Line*. Moreover, the organization of human feeling on the basis of a correct *understanding* of reality is nothing new to the Marxian. Incidentally, the famous French physiologist, Claude Bernard, had the same problem in mind when he said more than sixty years ago, "Can we speak of a contradiction between science and art, between sentiment and reason? I do not believe in the possibility of this contradiction."

Eisenstein is making a concrete approach to this problem which is obviously not an academic one. As he tells us, it was born out of the necessity to teach economics to workers and peasants.

"If we succeed, it shall have been Russia's great contribution to the general history of the arts."

And in conclusion: "Our cinema has developed in the midst of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The birth and development cannot be dissociated from the great aim of our country, the building of Socialism!"

The lecture is over and Eisenstein calls for questions. Sound? Stereoscropy? Color? The speaker is bombarded with questions from



*Camera Eye*

*Drawn by Theodor Scheel*



*Camera Eye*

*Drawn by Theodor Scheel*



all sides. Some are bitter and unfriendly, but Eisenstein never weakens.

An actor shouts: "Will the speaker please tell me whether it is possible for an actor who is an individualist in his art and in his philosophy, to exist in the Soviet Union?"

Eisenstein: "Stay here young man: you will find Parisian soil much more fertile for egotism than ours!"

In answering questions on sound, the speaker again expounds what he and his co-workers had to say a few months ago in an official statement:

"Every fact optically perceived has its corresponding value in sound. As far as I know, only the Japanese Kabouki Theatre has employed sound-sight in this way. For example, while an actor is *seen* committing hari-kari on the stage, the tearing of silk is *heard* offstage. The Mickey Mouse sound cartoons have also come very close to this method. It is the only justification for sound in the movies. The present usage which establishes a naturalistic coincidence of image and sound is nonsense."

Eisenstein believes that in the near future the black-and-white film will disappear to be replaced by the color film of which he says he has seen some fine examples.

The greatest movie director in the Soviet Union is at present working in the Tobis Sound Studios at Epinay, near Paris, where he is experimenting with a German sound system. This in the midst of a conspiracy of silence on the part of the French movie press and an active boycott by the official cinema circles of Paris.

Out of over two hundred people present at a dinner tendered in honor of Eisenstein and his assistants by the Friends of the Soviet Union, not a single representative of the French movie world was present.

One must agree with Leon Moussinac in this matter: "Jealousy and envy are one of the forms of the petty-bourgeois mind. Cowardice is a form of decadence."

Paris, France.

SAMUEL BRODY

*China Express: An Episode Of The Revolution In Asia. A Sovkino Production at the Cameo Theatre, New York.*

Imagine that you are in a stuffy ill-smelling room, and that, suddenly, through some forgotten opening a fresh breeze blows in. And all at once you become aware that outside there are open fields, and sunlight, and a windswept sky. This is the kind of a feeling I had while looking at the Sovkino picture—*China Express*.

A simple and impersonal narrative of a few coolies, who rebelled against their white masters and a chinese general with his bodyguards, it is charged with so much action, with such a throbbing of class struggle, that it is easily placed in the front rank among other Russian productions.

The sequences in the beginning, deliberately made slow, have a tragic starkness about them. A semi-dark platform of the station, with the peasants huddled on the floor, waiting patiently; the tired rickshaw coolies outside; the children that are sold by their parents; the old story of flood and famine. No glycerine tears or heaving bosoms here, but black and hopeless misery. Once things get started, however, the tempo increases perceptibly. You can see the black smoke pouring from the smoke-stack, the endless tracks that are being swallowed up by the locomotive. The buffers clang, the wheels revolve faster. The action mounts in a relentless way. The coolies seize rifles. They are attacking the masters. Faster fly the wheels. The puffing machinery and the rifle shots inside of the cars unite in one overwhelming cry of revolt.

I have yet to see any non-Russian director depict scenes of rebellion, struggle and destruction with such gusto. The camera eye moves in a sort of a frenzy, catching distorted faces, clenched fists, guns, broken glass and upset furniture. The telegraph poles whizz by madly, the train rocks and sways, and the whole thing acquires suddenly a symbolic and universal aspect. Whither China?

The American titles by Michael Gold are excellent. At times a biting satire, and then again all the speed and noise of the train itself.

What a relief after endless hoofers with breaking hearts, after maudlin, self-sacrificing lovers, after night-club scenes, after Broadway reviews with hundreds of stars talking, singing, dancing and taken in "natural colors." Gosh, what a relief!

WILLIAM SIEGEL.



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# BOOKS

Kenneth Fearing  
Katherine Tate Fletcher

REVIEWED BY:  
Upton Sinclair

Stanley Burnshaw  
E. Merrill Root

*Introduction To Sociology*, by Carl A. Dawson and Warner E. Gettys. The Ronald Press. \$4.50.

Textbooks in the social sciences are written for three reasons: one is that the people who are not educators but control the educational system want to know what the students are being taught; another is that relatively few teachers of the social sciences have enough initiative, ingenuity, and interest in their subject to work out their own plans of study; the third is that promotions depend upon prolific publication rather than upon good teaching, and textbooks take less time and energy to produce than research monographs, are more readily accepted by publishing companies, and are financially more profitable to the writers. But if we must have textbooks on sociology, they should be at least as good as this *Introduction to Sociology*, by Carl A. Dawson of McGill University and Warner E. Gettys of the University of Texas.

This textbook is good because it sets out to apply to the teaching of sociology some of the principles of progressive education, introducing the student to sociological facts in terms of his own experience. Much less than similar books does it resort to the customs of primitive tribes to explain modern institutions, though the authors still seek refuge among the Eskimos and in Africa and Thibet to illustrate the institution of marriage. The sections dealing with assimilation come much closer to the experience of twentieth century American students, since the illustrative material is drawn from the immigrant group in the United States. Parenthetically, it must be said that this material is presented intelligently, and if it is heeded by the students it might counteract some of the 100% Americanism of those whose ancestors came over before Ellis Island was established.

The most serious criticism that can be made of the authors of this book is one that they deserve in common with their fellow liberals,—that they do not grasp the full implications of their own social philosophy. They are aware of the fact that society is not static, but dynamic, and the best portions of the *Introduction* are those that deal with the processes of social change. They even quote at length an excellent description of Soviet Russia to illustrate the relation between culture and institutions. Yet their treatment of the class struggle is decidedly inadequate and in discussing social disorganization they content themselves with analyzing the indices rather than pointing out the causes of the present disorganization of American society. But perhaps it is too much to expect the authors or a textbook to be revolutionary—if they were, they wouldn't have written a textbook!

KATHERINE TATE FLETCHER.

## Witter Bynner—Poet

*The Jade Mountain*, by Witter Bynner. A. A. Knopf. \$3.50.  
*Indian Earth*, by Witter Bynner. A. A. Knopf. \$2.00.

*The Jade Mountain* not only constitutes the first successful effort of a writer in English to make available for English readers the basic flavor and attitude of Chinese poetry, but is, as well, the only English translation to which Chinese scholars are willing to grant intelligence and authenticity. Besides, the *Jade Mountain* is no slapped-together anthology of half-finished transcriptions, which most ambitious books of translated poetry fundamentally are. It is the fruit of ten years of patient collaboration between two persons permeated with the

spirit and wisdom of Chinese culture. The reader therefore need hardly be surprised to come upon a complete tome well documented and full of suggestions of further inquiry.

*Indian Earth* is important for different reasons. It is one long poem composed of about forty distinct divisions, each of which is an entity. It might be forty separate poems but for the fact that the unity is so amazing as to give one the effect of being shown one object as viewed from forty different angles. As poetry it represents the finest achievement of Witter Bynner as original poet. Here he is no longer seduced by graces of technical competence; here he is direct, simple, honest, achieving quality of profundity, depth of feeling, and solid poetry. He is writing of American earth, but with the masterly restraint almost of the Chinese poets he has revived in the *Jade Mountain*. The result is a curious flavor—a kind of entente of Indian, Chinese, English, and American charms, but for all that an enriched idiom which registers itself in many passages of unmistakable poetry. . . .

STANLEY BURNSHAW

## A Soviet Novel

*The 19*, By A. Fadeyev. Translated from the Russian by R. D. Charques. International Publishers. \$2.50.

*The 19* is a novel almost wholly of action, whose background is the Siberian forests, and the Revolution. The particular places and events are highly fictionalized, so that the story of this company of Russian partisans, embattled on every side, becomes a clear symbol for the Russian revolutionary struggle as a whole. Here, the Red platoons are shown in the tightening net drawn by Japanese and Whites, combating insurmountable obstacles, being hunted relentlessly from one refuge to another across the Siberian wastes, until at last by desperate, heroic measures nineteen of the original large company cut through the surrounding cordon and win their escape. Most of the episodes contained in the novel no doubt had their places in the irregular fighting that followed the revolution. The author, a foreword explains, took part in numbers of such actions himself.

Action is the substance of the novel, and Fadeyev renders the flavor of it powerfully. By the end of the story, a feeling for the company as a whole is the outstanding achievement. Individual characters are not probed deeply, and in the one or two instances where an attempt is made to explain them more fully, the author is not highly successful.

A quotation from the close of *The 19* will suggest the vividness that Fadeyev has given the action. This follows the account of the company's struggle out of a tight situation: "A minute or two later the men came to their senses and saw that it was morning. The taiga lay before them covered in a sparkling pinkish frost . . . They looked at their red, distorted hands, at the wet, exhausted horses and at the steam which rose lightly from them into the air of the taiga, and they were dumbfounded at what they had done that night."

And this suggests also the manner in which the author has developed the company as a symbol, affirming faith in the revolution's integrity, and its eventual triumph.

KENNETH FEARING.

**UPTON SINCLAIR****JOHN DOS PASSOS: American Writer**

*The 42nd Parallel*, by John Dos Passos. Harper & Bros. \$2.50.

Two or three years ago I stood on a street corner in New York for half an hour, arguing with John Dos Passos about the form of the novel. It was the right sort of place, the sort he likes, with plenty of rattle of machinery, honk of automobile horns, and other evidences of mass activity. I was trying to make an impression on him. What I said was, in brief this:

"I have just been reading *Manhattan Transfer*. You have put into it the material for several great novels, and also the talent, insight, and knowledge of our times. But for me you spoiled it by that kaleidoscope form you put it into; giving me little glimpses of one character after another—and so many characters, and switching them back and forth, so fast, that I lost track of the stories, and half the time couldn't be sure which was which. It is my belief that if you would put into a plain, straightaway narrative the passion and humor that is lost in *Manhattan Transfer*, you would have a great novel."

I didn't know if I produced any impression; so I looked into *The 42nd Parallel* with no little curiosity. What I found this time is a sort of compromise between the two forms. The jazz effects are still here, but we get larger chunks of story, and so we don't lose track of them. What we have really is five novel-ettes, tied together with frail and slender threads. In between the chapters is a lot of vaudeville material, some of it funny, and some of it interesting, and some of it just plain puzzling to my old-fashioned mentality. Let us dispose of this vaudeville material first.

Some of the sections are called "Newsreel," and consist of a jumble of newspaper headlines. All newspaper headlines are absurd, as soon as they become a year or two old. They are like our fashions: revealing a stupid and vicious people trying to appear magnificent and important to themselves. We are willing to see them ridiculed, just so soon as they are out of date—that is, when they no longer touch our present delusions. Anyone may laugh at "Teddy" Roosevelt and at Harding; but of course he mustn't laugh at the great engineer who is curing unemployment by blowing blasts of false statistics.

Another set of interpolations tells us about some of the leaders of that time: Debs, Bryan, Burbank, Lafollette, Bill Haywood, etc. These are interesting enough, and as they are short, we don't mind them especially. But I cannot say the same about the third variety called "The Camera Eye." These are queer glimpses of almost anything, having nothing to do with the story or stories, and told as if they were fragments from an author's notebook, or perhaps from his dreams. Maybe they are what happened to Dos Passos himself as he grew up through this period of his novel. Maybe he will tell me some day. He hasn't told in this book.

Now for the five main stories. First, Mac, a working-boy who turns Wobbly, and gets into the Mexican revolution. Second, Janey, a girl whose home life is unhappy, and who becomes a stenographer. Third, J. Ward Moorehouse, a lad who is bound to rise in the world, and becomes a "public relations counsel," one of these magnificent, "Poison Ivy" Lee creatures who for a hundred thousand dollars or two will cause the American public to believe that glycerine mixed with toilet perfume will cure pyorrhea, or that high wages are bad for public morality. Fourth, Eleanor Stoddard, a young lady seeking culture, who learns to decorate homes for the rich. And fifth, Charley, another working-boy, who goes to the war.

The ties which bind these five into the narrative are of the very thinnest. Mac sees and hears about Moorehouse while the latter is doing his stuff on behalf of the American oil crowd in Mexico. Janey is there as Moorehouse's stenographer. Eleanor does some decorating for Moorehouse, and becomes his high-minded friend. As for Charley, who comes in at the very end, all he does is to hear about Moorehouse. One can imagine Dos Passos saying to himself: "Go to, I am sick of these closely knit novels, which are full of coincidences and improbabilities, and with everything ob-

viously contrived. I am going to write a novel that is like life itself, in which most of the boys whom Moorehouse helped send to war don't ever do any more than just hear him mentioned."

All right, Dos, that is according to reality. But then, I point out to you that it is also according to reality that the great J. Ward Moorehouse knows a whole lot of people, and why couldn't we have had these in the novel, just as well as those who didn't know him? The point of my kick is not any delusion about the ancient "unities" of a work of art, but merely the fundamental fact of human psychology, that when we have got interested in a person we want to know more about him; and if, after you have got our interest all worked up, you just shunt us off to some other character, we are not clear in our minds why you should have introduced us to either one. J. Ward Moorehouse is, I venture to assert, one of the most convincing characters in modern fiction, a real creation, simply gorgeous; and I am grumbling because, instead of telling me all I want to know about him, you switch me off to Charley, who is all right too, only less so, and who comes in at the very end, when there isn't room to tell me much about him.

If Dos Passos won't take my word, maybe he will take the example of Theodore Dreiser. When it comes to writing, Dos can make circles around Dreiser—who is, I firmly believe, the very worst great writer in the world. Also Dos has a clearer mind, he knows the revolutionary movement, which puts him a whole generation ahead of Dreiser's old-fashioned muddlement and despair. Furthermore, Dos has an impish humor, a quite heavenly impishness, if you know what I mean. All these gifts ought to make him our greatest novelist, and the one reason they don't is that he is so afraid of being naive that he can't bring himself to sit down and tell us a plain straight story, that we can follow without having to stand on our heads now and then, or else turn the page upside down. Dreiser is not afraid to be naive; he is willing to take a common ordinary bell-hop, and tell us about him to the extent of some four hundred thousand words—miserably written words, many of them—and yet, at the end he gets hold of us so that he was able to make a best seller out of a story that ends with the electric chair.

While I am registering my kicks, I want to beg Dos Passos to use a dictionary. His book is full of the sort of errors which publishers and printers' readers usually take care of. Molasses gets an extra "l" while Lafollette loses one. Such common names as Bismarck, Folkestone and Dick Whittington each lose a letter. Bill Haywood is Heywood four times and Haywood only twice. Sometimes there are errors which may be jokes, who can say? On page 79 "Mac dosed off to sleep," and on the same page "a dog barked at him and worried his angles." That is the sort of thing with which James Joyce is amusing himself in his new effusion—only you have to know twenty or thirty languages, and all history, ancient and modern, to appreciate the Joyce puns—and I am never going to.

Also, I want to know, just as a matter of curiosity, why the punctuation mark known as the hyphen should be considered counter-revolutionary. I noted one or two in the book, but I think they got in by accident. Dos Passos runs his compound words together, and when first our eye lights on them, we may not sort out the syllables correctly; I didn't, and got some funny effects—such as "riverbed" and "gass-tove" and "teaser-vice" and "co-algas" and "musicle-ssons."

Enough with fault finding. I want Dos Passos to be the great American novelist, as he is entitled to be. I want him to "become as a little child" again, and tell us a good, straight, bedtime story, to keep us awake all night. The reason I take the trouble to write this discourse, is because, in spite of all the handicaps he takes upon himself, he has written the most interesting novel I have read in many a long day. I happened recently to read the last volume of Paul Elmer More, in which that very august academic gentleman, leader of the so-called "Humanist" movement, condescends to refer to *Manhattan Transfer* as "an explosion in a sewer." Well, there is a little of the sewer in this new book also,

but not proportionately as much as there is in America and the lives of its people. I will conclude my review of *The 42nd Parallel* by the prophesy that they will be teaching this book in high schools in future years, when the teacher will have to go to some old encyclopedia to look up Paul Elmer More and the "humanists," in order to find out when they lived and what they taught.

**Prophecy Takes to Melodrama**

*A Roman Holiday, by Don Ryan. The Macaulay Co., \$2.50.*

This book, is a document for Good Little Boys in the Sunday School of Spengler.

*A Roman Holiday*, to be sure, is vivid and exciting with the spectacular but probably accurate details of the froth of the post-war world. It is swift cinematographing of our resemblances to the decadence of Rome. It is a highly colored, glittering, staccato resume of certain of the fantastic shadow-shapes that come and go around with the sun-illuminated lantern; and, as such, it is interesting, instructive, and highly nauseating.

But to Don Ryan, the thesis is the thing: and the thesis is wrong. He tells the story with didactic intent—he wishes to prove that the modern world is a Decline, a la Spengler. Hence he shows us perversions, neuroses, a hollow nihilist who seeks reality in war and the exaggeration of sex and then cuts his veins in a bath-tub and dies to Victrola music, the standardized faces of the crowd, Americans smashing straw-hats after the proper date in September, a good old fashioned Kentucky lynching, etc. But these things are always with us—they prove anything, and nothing. Worse signs of decadence happened in Feudal France, worse mechanical stereotyping pervaded the sad American of Dickens' *Martin Chuzzlewit*, more hideous perversions of wealth and sex accompanied the Renaissance. There is absolutely no analogy between a world full of the fierce brutality of the world-war, and a hollow Rome that could fight only by mercenaries—between a world where workers are full of virility, and a hollow Rome where slaves alone labored and the vicious proletariat howled for *panem et circenses*. If an analogy to Roman times were required, it would be more exact (tho not true) to liken Americans today to the Barbarians who overwhelmed Rome. But the truth is neither in optimistic nor in pessimistic prophecy: the truth is, a world is in the breaking, but a world may be in the making, a culture is ending, but a culture may come. Old Walt Whitman well said,

*"I have heard what the talkers were talking, the talk of the beginning and the end;*

*But I do not talk of the beginning or the end."*

War-shadowed, full of cerebral analysis, incapable of the health of psychosynthesis, divorced from basic earth ("earth of the slumbering and liquid trees; earth of departed sunset"), without goal or will, mere intellectual mechanisms clicking in a vacuum of vitality—such are the contemporary intellectuals. Hence they are always striving to justify their uneasy ways to God; to rationalize their own impotence. So they write a *Decline of Myself*—and call it a *Decline of the West*.

E. MERRILL ROOT.

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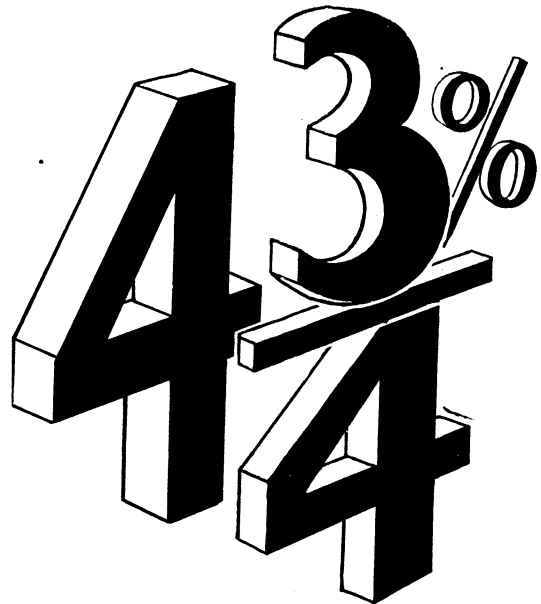
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# WORKERS' ART

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

## A Request from Germany

*New Masses:*

I have spent several weeks in Berlin, which boasts the strongest proletarian movement of any city outside of Russia. Particularly in advancing proletarian culture is Berlin foremost. Movies, lectures, exhibitions, agitprop groups, literature, newspapers, radio, the stage, sports,—in every field the workers have made large advances.

Recent events have emphasized the possibilities of the theatre for propaganda purposes. Plans are afoot to make the stage a real weapon in the hands of the workers.

The central bureau from which the multitude of proletarian activities are directed is called "IFA", (Interessengemeinschaft für Arbeiterkultur). It is a collective enterprise, its memberships consisting of affiliated groups, although individual members can also join. Dues are 60 pfennigs a month, for which the member is entitled to a free ticket to any one of the numerous affairs conducted monthly by the IFA.

The recent exhibition of the IFA has been a wonderful success. Every form of workers-culture was shown. Freethinkers travestied the church in a group of satirical stained-glass windows; the Five-Year Plan had its corner. Wander-groups, Sports, Agitprop groups, phonograph records, movies, Esperanto, anti-alcohol propaganda,—each activity had its special booth where one saw statistical details of growth, developments, etc., as well as numerous photos made by worker-photo clubs.

Large crowds filled the hall each afternoon and night. Lectures, concerts, dances, revolutionary music inspired the visitors. Unemployed were admitted for half-price, or even free.

Of course this red exhibition was paid a friendly visit from the police who had heard that forbidden books were on display. The fact was that only "dummies" of forbidden books were there—so the police contented themselves by ordering the Freethinkers' gorgeous drawings to be either removed, or "toned down." Insulting god is *les Majeste* in Germany, and the offender is apt to know what a "jug" looks like.

The IFA aims to be uptodate—to meet capitalist propaganda with proletarian propaganda of large calibre. One of its plans is to internationalize great labor plays. To stage in one country plays forbidden in another. Comrade Dudow, director of the Workers' Theatre in Berlin, said: "We would be greatly interested to stage plays here which have been forbidden in the United States. Germany has reached a sharper revolutionary point than U.S. For this reason our plays here must be more tense and sharp than plays written for an American audience, for instance. Plays forbidden in U.S. would be about right for our purpose."

A case in point is Wittvogel's *The Biggest Boob in the World* which was once produced in U.S. by Jasper Deeter with a Brookwood cast. "I must write it over again," said Wittvogel to me. "The play is too tame for a German audience."

Yet the same play has injured the religious feelings of a great number of railroaders, and other workers who have witnessed the Brookwood production. "It's too radical!" was the general comment.

Comrade Dudow asks what are the possibilities of contact with American worker-groups which would cooperate with the International Tribune. Exchange of plays, of technical ideas, etc. would be one of the main functions of the organization. Probably an International Library of Proletarian Drama could be created.

The German comrades are waiting for a word. Please write to: Heinz Luedecke, Gitschinerstrasse 107, Berlin S. W. 61, Germany.

Sincerely,

ED FALKOWSKI.

Berlin, Germany.



Photo Courtesy N. Y. Evening Telegram

The John Reed Club painting "An American Landscape" in the Independent Exhibit at the Grand Central Galleries in New York City. This huge canvas, picturing police brutality at the City Hall demonstration has attracted the attention of visitors, critics and the press. The writers of the club are conducting a drive against the religious campaign against Soviet Russia. Club statements issued to the press, were made jointly with the endorsement of nationally known writers, artists, scientists, and teachers; Theodore Dreiser, Suzanne LaFollette, Boardman Robinson, Jim Tully, Prof. Dunlap and many others, signing. A meeting sponsored by the club was held with Roger Baldwin as chairman, Waldo Frank and other prominent speakers. Two thousand were present.

## Rebel Poets

Dear *New Masses*:

Our organization, Rebel Poets, an Internationale of Song, has been watching with keen interest the letters from the various Workers' Art Groups in the *New Masses*. Since conservative and reactionary writers and artists have long been gathered into guilds of many varieties it is strange that working class authors, artists and poets—who certainly possess the requisite capability and energy—should not have subscribed to a program similar to that outlined in the recent issues of the magazine. It is invigorating and heartening to find that, to borrow a phrase from Mike Gold, the Revolution is a breaking like a wheat kernel through the stony soil of American art and letters.

Rebel Poets sprang from the group of poets who contributed to *America Arraigned!* edited by Ralph Cheyney and Lucia Trent, an anthology of protest against the murder of Sacco and Vanzetti. Ralph Cheyney was the founder and has been the president since the fellowship's organization. During its two years of existence Rebel Poets has grown from a membership of less than a score to more than 300 members, distributed throughout the world. *Unrest, the Rebel Poets Anthology for 1929*, was the first of a proposed annual series of radical anthologies. It has been accorded an enthusiastic reception by the revolutionary press of the world. The 1930 volume is almost ready for the press, and will include the work of representative revolutionary poets of the world. Almost every *New Masses* poet will be represented.

Aside from the task of compiling this annual anthology, the organization aims to form local chapters in cities where even a few revolutionary poets, writers, or even proletarians who stand offensive and defensive for class propaganda and stressing of the class struggle in poetry and literature, may be found. These local chapters should serve as cultural oases where radicals may congregate for discussion of revolutionary art and other activities. In this way, the otherwise isolated proletarian should be made to feel that he is not fighting alone in his assaults against the citadels of capitalism.

We extend fraternal greetings to the John Reed Club, which has already performed such significant service in attracting and



Photo Courtesy N. Y. Evening Telegram

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## On New Program for Writers

*New Masses:*

I have been thinking about Mike's suggestion that we enter some industry and learn it from A to Z—and thus be able to interpret it articulately from a proletarian viewpoint—but I can't see myself doing it. It would be too hard. It is true that I have worked at the lumber "trade" for years—first punching the clock when I was 12 years old—but I have found that it is almost impossible for me to write of it—everything I have tried proved to be abortive. As a matter of fact—ten hours spent on the job would hardly give one the enthusiasm to write about it—for ten hours irons out even the bitterness and hate—leaving only an arid apathy and a desire for "escape." It seems that a psychical barrier is put up (Floyd Dell says that he always, before beginning work on a new masterpiece of quasi-aphrodisiacal hokum, gets psycho-analyzed to overcome such a psychical barrier. I don't see the necessity of it in his case—unless the psychical barrier is one of *conscience*). It would be very easy, it seems to me, to write of the lumber "trade" if I were to quit and find a more abnoxious job—such as going back to the papermill—which would create a romantic halo and give me the essential perspective. The casual proletarian—the floater, to whom it doesn't matter so much what he works at—and to whom, of necessity, all jobs are in his province, can probably get and report a truer picture of a steel plant than a real steelworker—in two weeks. The brutality of it, the cruelty of it, are undoubtedly more apparent to one "fresh" than to one hardened to the grind, for the years can make even injustice seem commonplace. Paul Peters, roving from coast to coast, doing all manners of jobs, has probably been more successful in capturing the "spirit and essence" of proletarian life than any of us who are "tied down" to one job—and it is significant that Mike's best work is "retrospective"—and that he hasn't attempted anything dealing with the present for a great while. No—all phases of proletarian life are the province of the proletarian writer, and no proletarian can embrace his job as tho it were his mistress or his wife, literary monogamy is more or less an impossibility. Anyway: today I am a lumberworker, tomorrow the boss may discover the sarcastic opinion I have of him, and I'll be something other than a lumberworker. And so on. We work because we have to, not because we love our jobs—today a lumberworker, tomorrow a ditchdigger, an insurance agent, a clerk, papermill worker, or gandydancer—we take what we can get. I agree with Mike that proletarian life offers virgin territory for the "honest" writer—it remains to be seen if the proletarian writers are to exploit this material to the end that capitalism be destroyed—or if the literary vermin, scenting a field hiding new pots of kale, exploit it to bring a new virility to literature—for even the bourgeoisie get tired of sexy stuff—witness its late interest in literature—and its kind reception to Morley Callaghan, who has probably been the first of the bourgeoisie to enter the field—and look what he has done with it—all proletarians are drunkards, rapists, and seducers—confirming the bourgeoisie's own opinion that proletarians are low and vile, but throwing in sex again for good measure—which shows again that this talk of a new technique is the horses—that it is only putting frosting on a cake grown stale—and that it doesn't matter much how you tell the old bull and that, after all, it is the bull—that is important. . . .

Holler, Minn.

JOSEPH KALAR

organizing the proletarian artists of New York, and to all the other groups which are springing to life or which have been operating for some time in various centers in the United States and abroad. We hope and believe that these forces may be amalgamated into a mighty working class cultural union of authors, poets, and artists which will present a United Front to the subversive influences which seek to wean young radical writers away from the class struggle and revolution in art and literature.

R. R. 4, Toledo, Ohio.

Fraternally

JACK CONROY. Secretary.



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# LETTERS FROM READERS

## Sinclair on Booze Fighters

Editor *New Masses*:

I have just read your very interesting March issue, and I note a letter from a correspondent urging you to climb upon the booze-wagon. He quotes me as saying "alcohol destroys the hepatic cells and thus renders proletarians less class-conscious." I do not think I ever said these exact words. I would never use a word like "hepatic"; I would rather say, "the cells of the liver," so that my readers would know what I meant. I know that this happens, because I saw it happen to my father and my two uncles, and a great many friends, including such great writers as Jack London and George Sterling. I would suggest to your correspondent that he should look up the subject of cirrhosis of the liver in the encyclopedia, or some good medical book.

As to the statement that alcohol renders proletarians less class-conscious, I would not say exactly that; I would say that it renders them no good, so that it no longer matters whether they are class-conscious or not. I have seen this happen to a great many proletarians, and I have yet to meet a booze-fighter who is of any use, either to the movement or to himself.

Sincerely,

Pasadena, Calif. UPTON SINCLAIR.

## What Can She Do?

Dear Mr. Gold:

This is a rather indirect commentary on your letter in the November issue of *New Masses*.

About six months ago, I was living in Omaha, Nebraska, and working in an insurance office. In September, having been offered a scholarship to Columbia University, I moved to New York.

I am by birth a bourgeois, by conviction proletarian. Having escaped from a puritan, middle-western home, I now find myself plunged into the environment of a no less bourgeois university and without hope of salvation. I have tried certain neighborhood socialist leagues but for one whose interests are centered in modern literature, the labor problem, the regeneration of the theatre, etc., these socialist clubs are little more than non-religious prototypes of Christian Endeavor. What can I do? Where can I go? Must a bourgeois be born, live and die, pretending to believe in the hypocrisies of his class, measuring his happiness by ownership of a chevrolet and radio set?

Your letter says "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."

My scholarship meant that the rent would be paid, while I could do all the unpopular

writing I pleased; it also meant that I could equip myself with an educational background which would permit me to beat the self-righteous babbits in their own language of academic culture—but now, I find myself isolated from the tragedies and comedies of the corporation stenographer, elevator-boy, or office clerk—and not a proletarian sympathizer to talk with.

Just what can I do?

New York, N. Y.

HELENE MAGARET

## Cops and Talkies

Editor *New Masses*:

As a result of the police brutality of Thursday, March 6, the authorities have placed a ban on all pictures of that moral victory. In the New York demonstration, Cop Whalen had ordered all talking picture apparatus off the scene when the speakers began.

I am employed in a film laboratory. The day after the unemployment demonstrations, special newsreels were shipped to 250 branches throughout the world. About noon, a scene depicting one of New York's "finest" slugging and kicking a prostrated woman, was ordered out. About 4 o'clock the reel was completely censored. However, over half the shipments had already been made and shown in numerous theatres.

How they fear labor propaganda. How they dislike the showing of pictures of ten million workers of the world actively protesting against starvation and poverty.

The day draws near!

New York, N. Y. SANDOR PARLAGI.

## From a Class-war Prisoner

Dear Comrades:

A few days ago I received the January and February issues of *New Masses*.

These two issues have simply whetted my appetite for the magazine. It is as good as ever and I am particularly pleased to see the activities that are developing around it: The John Reed Club, dramatic groups, camera club, etc. It is about time the American movement began to take on a cultural phase. We don't sing enough and if we feel like singing we haven't anything to sing except Wobbly songs, which are alright in a way but don't express the present phase of our movement.

Our movement has been aching for a magazine of the type of the *New Masses*, and at the time of its birth I wanted to write and tell you so. Since then it has improved immensely, and I hope it will continue to do so. I looked forward to it every month. It gives me courage.

HARRY J. CANTOR

Deer Island, Boston, Mass.



Self-portrait

William Seigel—now living in New York, was born in Russia in 1905. Arrived in the U. S. in 1923. Wasted a lot of time in the School of the National Academy. After receiving a prize there, he realized that things were not as they should be. Began drawing for books and magazines always hoping to find time to do something decent. He thinks an artist has a lousy job. He insists he won't change his mind unless conditions (see picture) change a lot. He is a contributing editor to the *New Masses* (see picture).

## In This Issue

Alfred Kreyborg—author of many volumes of verse is editor of the recently published Anthology of American Poetry *Our Singing Strength*.

Paul Love—born 1907, writes of himself: "possibly educated at Princeton University. Now free lance artist in New York City. Contributor to *Theatre Arts Monthly* and other publications." First appearance in *New Masses*.

Harry W. L. Dana—former professor of literature, writer, lecturer on the drama, is at work on a book on the Russian theatre.

A. B. Magil—contributes to many publications. He has been on the staff of the *Daily Worker* and is now editor of *Solidarity*.

V. F. Calverton—is editor of *An Anthology of American Negro Literature* and author of *Three Strange Lovers*—both recently published.

Paul Peters—contributes to this issue from his play *Wharf Nigger*. A scene from the same play appeared in November, 1929 issue of *New Masses*. He is at present working in a steel mill in Pittsburgh.

Samuel Brody—now in Paris (working) has written on movies for *Monde*. He makes his first appearance in *New Masses*.



## Three Letters — And the Problem Of a Cablegram Is Solved

March 4, 1930.

Editor *New Masses*:

Mr Hugo Gellert says: "I communicated with Karolyi and told him the Rand School is a Social Democratic institution." Speaking in the Rand School before a large audience Count Karolyi said: "I was told that the Rand School is a Social Fascist institution. I was deceived and I made a mistake. I am sorry." Readers of Mr. Gellert's letter in the *New Masses* need not be in any doubt as to who was responsible for the deception.

Sincerely yours,

New York, N. Y. WILLIAM E. BOHN, Educational Director.

March 10, 1930.

Editor *New Masses*:

In the cablegram in question for which Roger Baldwin was innocently hounded, the words "Social Fascist" were not mentioned.

In my letter to the *New Masses* however, I clearly pointed to the Social Fascist activities of the leaders of the Socialist Party: the truth of which was not even challenged by Mr. Bohn.

Michael Karolyi is kind enough to answer the charge of "deception."

White Plains, N. Y.

HUGO GELLERT.

March 10, 1930.

Editor *New Masses*:

At a private gathering in the Rand School to which I was invited, I stated that I had no intention of offending that institution. On the other hand I was emphatic in telling about the differences that exist between me and the leaders of the Hungarian Social-Democratic Party.

I explained that the reason why I refused to speak under the auspices of the Rand School was that I believed that the policies of the Socialist Party of America were the same as those of the other Socialist parties allied in the Second International.

I did not use the expression "Social Fascist."

Since my stay here during the past ten weeks I have had occasion to observe and I have become convinced that I was not misled when by cable I was informed that there is no difference between the policies and activities of the American and the European Socialist parties.

New York, N. Y.

MICHAEL KAROLYI.

## For Workers Defense

Editor *New Masses*:

The members of the official delegation of the New York unemployed workers each face sentences of eight years in prison. In every city arrests took place before and after the March 6 demonstrations.

In the last five weeks 1188 cases of arrested workers have come to the International Labor Defense. Since the first of January over 3,000 workers, men women and children have been arrested for working class activities in all sections of the country.

At this moment the question of workers' defense assumes the greatest importance. We appeal to the readers of the *New Masses*. Protest—contribute funds for defense. The need is most urgent.

Funds can be sent through the *New Masses* or directly to the International Labor Defense, 80 East 11 Street, Room 402 New York, N. Y.

Fraternally,

J. LOUIS ENGDahl, Sec'y.

New York, N. Y.

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Michael Gold, Editor of *The New Masses*

—Drawn by Hugo Gellert

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—Drawn by Hugo Gellert



*Michael Gold, Editor of The New Masses*  
—Drawn by Hugo Gellert

## By New Masses Authors

The following list is a selection by the writers and artists of the *New Masses*. Every book is a definite contribution to a growing, new literary-art movement in America. Novels, plays, short stories, drawings, and general titles have been chosen to cover the widest field possible. Every title is of interest.

## New Titles

### THE 42nd PARALLEL

By John Dos Passos

The author of the famous *Three Soldiers* and *Manhattan Transfer* has written his first novel in five years. In this book "a brave experiment in dynamic fiction" John Dos Passos cuts a cross-section of America: small towns, lonely farms, Pittsburgh, Chicago, New York. The evolution of America from the 90's to the World War—including those brilliant passages which appeared in the January, February, March issues of the *New Masses*. .....\$2.50

### The Mountain City

By Upton Sinclair

The latest novel by Upton Sinclair is a literary event of importance. *Mountain City* tells the story of Jed Rusher, who was born in a hut in the cattle-country, and later moved to the sugar-beet fields. How Jed rose in the world, elbowed his way into a rich man's home, married a child of privilege, and made fifty millions before he was thirty. .....\$2.50

### Voices of October

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The October Revolution released a flood of energy and genius in literature, painting, plastic arts, music, drama and motion pictures. In a beautiful volume, three noted contributors to the *New Masses* make a critical estimate of this great contribution of Soviet Russia to the world. The book has 12 pages of illustrations of contemporary Russian paintings, scenes from theatrical performances, etc.

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