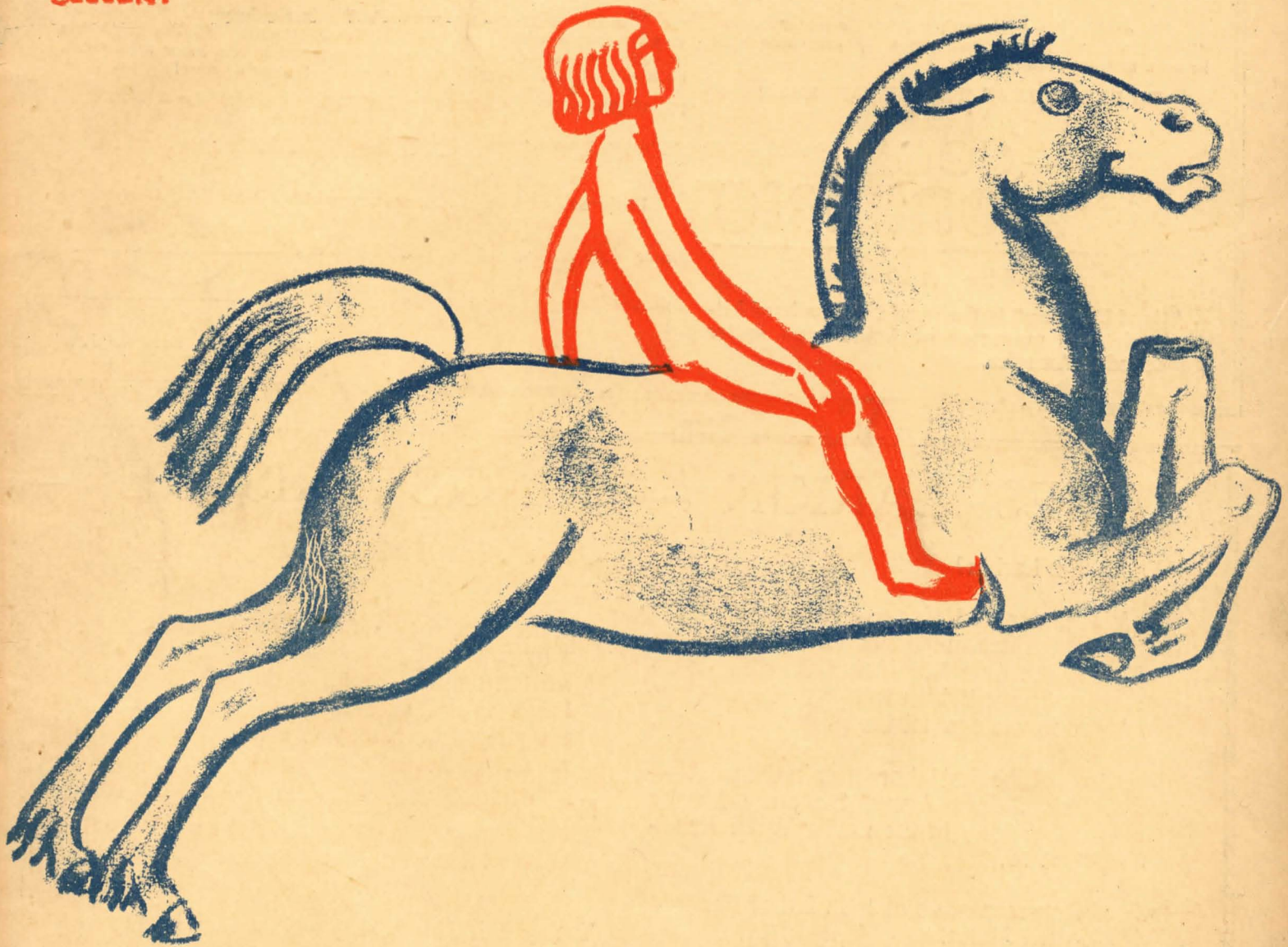


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*Drawn by Maurice Becker.*

## A Proposed Emblem for the Farmer-Labor Party

# THE LIBERATOR

Vol. 3, No. 9 [Serial No. 30]

September, 1920

## Nietzsche, Plato and Bertrand Russell

By Max Eastman

NIETZSCHE'S "Anti-Christ" would be a good medicine for those soft-headed idealists who are doing so much to botch the progress of science and life in this critical time. They suffer from a very Christian sickness. And yet that sickness is so insidious that even the most pagan might be startled to learn that there are not only healthier and wiser views of life, but healthier and wiser religions than Christianity—religions which, no matter how superstitiously, nevertheless resolutely sought to enhance life and escape from suffering and failure, religions whose key-note was health rather than weakness, fulfillment rather than pale, vaporous promise. Nietzsche makes it credible that Christianity—not the exact teaching of Jesus, but Christianity as we know it—is a supreme ingenuity of the priestly class, whose prevailing motive is their dominance, and who have therefore "a vital interest in making mankind sick, and in confusing the values of 'good' and 'bad,' 'true' and 'false,' in a manner that is not only dangerous to life, but also slanders it."

The quotation is from a new translation of "The Anti-Christ" by H. L. Mencken\*—a translation that abates none of the reckless and magnificent contempts of the original. It is a great book, a book that stands up and will be visible across the centuries. And if I were presiding over a course of study in Communism, I would begin by asking every member of my class to read it. For until we have got purged of the contagion of this holy feeling that the world can be saved by softness, we are not even ready to begin the search for a true theory of progress.

The most positive thing that Nietzsche preaches in this book, however, he did not exemplify, and that is the spirit of science. The insistence upon *fact*, upon *method*, the "quiet, cautious, distrustful manner," even the "modesty," of the scientific thinker, are here celebrated, and set off against the arrant shouting of dog-

matic lies and sacred self-deceptions by the "turkey-cocks of God." But it was a certain admixture of the turkey-cock in Nietzsche himself—yes, and of the priest, exactly—that stopped him short upon the path of true leadership in this century. With all his sense for the hard glory of science, he could not acknowledge its ultimate sovereignty. He could not but think that there is something else of the same kind which is above it—some mixture of its high points of generality with a fervid imaginative passion that is poetry. In short, *Nietzsche* is above it. And so the toilers in science are not of the first, but of the second grade, in the hierarchy of his "free spirits." And so he did not compel himself to stoop down to the long diligence, the infinite and infinitesimal, strong-hearted and humble, labor of objective verification. Of that supreme achievement he fell short. At that point his far-seeing eyes, clouded only with egotism, surrendered to the mist.

There is not "intelligence" on the one hand, and "science" on the other. There is *scientific intelligence* on the one hand and *poetic realization* on the other. And those who know the difference between these two things, and how to keep them separate, and how also to combine them without blemishing either, can slowly pass beyond what was Beyond Good and Evil in the way of wisdom.

Nietzsche advocated the creation of a *genuine aristocracy*. And we may as well agree with him, I think, that that is what we want—not a flat morass of mediocrity, but an eminence, and also a lively dominance, through sheer natural force and influence, of the people of real ability and value. That at least is what we will get, if we succeed in annihilating this uncouth and vulgar imitation of an aristocracy, which has held dominion ever since property inserted itself into the place of prowess as determining the ranks of men. Our divergence from Nietzsche, therefore, is not deeply a divergence of purpose. We diverge from him because

\*Published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

we follow his own true, but too feeble, direction along the path of science. We concentrate our minds upon "fact," upon "method." We ask by what "quiet, cautious and distrustful"—if not perhaps too "modest"—steps, we can *begin to move* toward the inauguration of a genuine aristocracy upon the earth. And no sooner have we done this than we discover that Nietzsche was careless of the findings of biology. He believed in a general heredity of acquired characteristics—an error which nullifies every amateur plan or prediction about the future of man. He was careless of the findings of economics. He scorned the writings of Karl Marx as "democratic" in total and very conventional ignorance of their content—thinking him but a new preacher of an ideal, whereas Marx was the discoverer of *facts* which are relevant to the methodical enactment of any ideal whatsoever of human progress.

But that is enough to show by what intellectual steps, if I were conducting a course in Communism, I should proceed from Nietzsche's mighty ideologies—this colossal sign-post of man's genius, *The Anti-Christ*—downward into those still more colossal conceptions, arduous and disciplinary and dry—as dynamite is kept dry—which were inexorably proceeding, throughout Nietzsche's lifetime and ours, toward their fulfillment in the disruption of all ideologies, and of this world that is and always has been deluded by them.

### Nietzschean Bolsheviks

The translator of "The Anti-Christ" places himself beside Nietzsche in a venturesome preface, showing us a brilliant but passionless and decadent disciple, one who sneers without contempt, and making us feel that there was only one Nietzschean and he died in the madhouse. This preface advises a world that trembles before the menace of Bolshevism that it might "combat the monster with a clearer conscience and less burden of compromising theory—if it could launch its forces frankly at the fundamental doctrine," which is "democracy in another aspect, the old *ressentiment* [spite, that is, or vengefulness] of the lower orders in free function once more." Nietzsche saw all such movements to be what they are, says Mr. Mencken, "variations upon the endless struggle of quantity against quality, of the weak and timorous against the strong and enterprising, of the botched against the fit."

A valuable comment upon this hasty dictum is furnished by the intellectual news of the moment—namely, that Bertrand Russell has arrived home from Russia wounded and shocked by the hard vigor of the Bolshevik leaders, and has run to cover in a conviction "that kindness and tolerance are worth all the creeds in the world."

I take this to be the real character of Bertrand Russell's reaction to Bolshevism; because there is a degree of the fantastic, of sheer professorial gullibility, in his manner of swallowing down the whole established Men-

shevik propaganda—lies, truths, and true lies, and lying truths, all together—which makes it quite certain that he found his place among the Mensheviks *before* this intellectual process began. His extreme state of feeling is revealed in the fact that in flying home to that conviction about "kindness and tolerance," he even asserts that "English life has been based" upon that conviction "ever since 1688"—although it is a view, he admits, "which we do not apply to other nations and to subject races."\* One must have to be homesick indeed for "English life," and for the tender philosophy that is applied by the owners of England to the starved and degenerated poor upon their own island, in order to achieve such an assertion. And to publish it almost in the same paragraph, in which one *admits the whole communist "indictment of capitalist society"* is simply to lay aside the controls of rationality altogether, and emit a very human cry out of a disappointed heart.

In view of this fact the character of Bertrand Russell, and the quality of his idealism, becomes of high interest. And his article arrives for me with a magical timeliness—just in the midst of what I had set out to say about Nietzsche, and the feeling of Communism.

For Bertrand Russell is the sincerest and most gifted representative on earth of the three things against which Nietzsche thundered his most devastating contempt—a belief in the "true world" of metaphysical "philosophy," an indiscriminate ardor of democracy, and a pacific and soft ethics, the residue of the Christian religion. And the cry with which Bertrand Russell warns his fellow idealists of England and America against the lure of the Bolsheviks, might almost be summed up in these words: "They are not '*philosophic*,' they are not *democratic*, they are not *soft*. They have extreme faith in a *scientific theory*, they have created an *aristocracy of brains and character*, and they are *ruthlessly efficient*. . . . In short they are Nietzschean *free spirits*, and not Christian *saints*. Beware of them!"

But it is not necessary to paraphrase, for Bertrand Russell's own description of the character of Lenin, or of the Russian Communist in general, could be almost a quotation from one of Nietzsche's annunciations of the "new nobility."

"The Communist," says Mr. Russell, "who sincerely believes the party creed is convinced that private property is the root of all evil; he is so certain of this that he shrinks from no measures, however harsh, which seem necessary for constructing and preserving the Communist State. He spares himself as little as he spares others. He works sixteen hours a day, and foregoes his Saturday half-holiday. He volunteers for any difficult or dangerous work which needs to be done, such as clearing away piles of infected corpses left by Kolchak or

\*A wise admission, since the first business of King William after the "bloodless revolution" of 1688 was to start in slaughtering the Irish.

Denikin. In spite of his position of power and his control of supplies, he lives an austere life. He is not pursuing personal ends, but aiming at the creation of a new social order. The same motives, however, which make him austere make him also ruthless."

It is upon such grounds as these that Mr. Russell asks us to believe that "if the Bolsheviks remain in power, it may be assumed that their Communism will fade, and that they will increasingly resemble any other Asiatic government—for example, our own government in India."

And the worst of it is that so many of us *will* believe it. For we too are afflicted with the idealization of the soft. We have got so accustomed to observing the ineffectuality of those we call "good," that we are quite ready to consider anything that is effectual "bad." If the Bolsheviks were *not* willing to stake everything—from Saturday half-holidays, sleep, comfort, lives, liberties, even to the ideals of "kindliness and tolerance"—upon the truth of their theory, Bertrand Russell would instinctively discover points of hope that they might prove saviors of the world. But a man who understands what has been the matter with the world's saviors in the past, would then have no hope at all. To him Mr. Russell's discovery that the Bolsheviks are not meek enough to inherit the earth, is simply a last will and testament bequeathing it to them.

### Where His Heart Is

My proletarian friends will tell me that I am naively elaborate in my explanation of Bertrand Russell's reaction to the reality of a working-man's revolution. It is but another proof, they will say, of the theory of the class-struggle upon which the revolutionists are acting. Bertrand Russell is by birth a member of the ruling class, and by profession a fellow of the ancient society of its ideologists and apologizers. And merely because he was a little over-sensitive to the hypocrisies of "democracy," and had enough intellectual hardihood to accept the proletarian theory *in the abstract*, we need never have expected him to desert his class and calling in the face of a concrete situation. Whatever he may have had in his head, he had not the *interests* of the proletariat in his *heart*, and that is why he came out of Russia altogether disappointed, while Robert Williams of the Transport Workers' Union, who traveled with him, reports that "all my previous hopes and expectations were more than borne out by my actual contact with Soviet Russia's affairs." It is not a conflict of opinion, but of will. And so we ought to be glad that Bertrand Russell has got a dose of the concrete facts. His mind will hereafter be found where his heart is, and his heart will be—as Marx and Jesus for once agreed—where his treasure is.

That is, in effect, what my very Marxian friends will tell me. And it is hard to combat so simple a statement,

which accords so well with all the facts. It is quite true that Bertrand Russell was without curiosity as to the particular class interests of the proletariat in his visit to Russia. He throws out quite casually the remark that the Bolsheviks are succeeding in enlisting the highest business and engineering ability in the organization of industry "without permitting it to amass wealth as it does in capitalist communities." He calls this "the greatest success so far outside the domain of war" of the Bolshevik government. But to a proletarian, or to a man who ever had the proletarian theory in the sinews of his heart, that is the essence of all success. It is everything, and more than everything, that, under the conditions of war, and blockade, and conspiracy, and sabotage, and disease and universal slander, could as yet conceivably be asked or expected of a government expressing the interests of the working-class, and believing them to be ultimately the interests of human civilization.

Mr. Russell even confesses that this success of the Bolsheviks in organizing industry without capitalism "makes it possible to suppose that, if Russia is allowed to have peace, an amazing industrial development may take place, making Russia a rival of the United States." Let any workingman reflect upon that! An industrial development comparable to that of the United States, and no waste in competitive buying and selling, and no waste through strikes or lockouts, and no inhibition of production when prices fall—the whole social and industrial machine working only to *produce, produce, produce*—and the whole product going to the working-class! It is a certification that the first step in the road to freedom, the only road there is to *their* freedom, has actually been taken. And since upon this all-essential fact Bertrand Russell and Robert Williams are agreed, it is clear that they differ only in their interests, which are those of opposing classes. Mr. Russell went to Russia "believing himself a Communist," and he found out that he was a humanitarian bourgeois professor. That is an important discovery about Bertrand Russell, but not about Russia.

### Russell and Lenin

So I will be told by my friends who are wise in a sociological way. And what they say is altogether true so far as it goes. But I believe I know Bertrand Russell better than they do, and that there is something further that is also true. It is possible for persons of drastic and pure intellect, or militantly sympathetic emotion, to abstract from their own economic or social situation, conceive the process of revolutionary struggle scientifically, and put their personal force in upon the side where lie the ultimate hopes of human life. It is possible and it has occasionally occurred. And we were not fondly credulous in hoping that in the case of Bertrand Russell this little occasional miracle had occurred again.





### General Nikolaev

*Alexander Nikolaev was one man, of bourgeois eminence who gave himself loyally to the Communist revolution. A general under the Czar, he became under the Soviets commander of a brigade in the Red Army. During a temporary reverse on the Narva front he was captured by the White Guard and found himself among his old associates. He refused to renounce his allegiance to the Red Army and died, defying his executioners with the cry, "Long live the power of the workers and peasants!"*

For Bertrand Russell is in his own proper field a prodigy. He is a prodigy of disinterested logic. I would almost say he is the first philosopher who ever philosophized without trying to reach a conclusion which would satisfy any other passion but curiosity about the solution of a problem. He must have spent the best of his energetic time for many a day writing his book on "Our Knowledge of the External World as a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy." It takes a good while to write the title. And yet all the metaphysical satisfaction he arrives at in that book is this—that he is not quite sure whether an external world exists, but he believes that it can be proven either that a little of it does exist, or else that it does not, if we all keep at work on the matter for a long time!

Bertrand Russell is a prodigy of "scientific method"—in philosophy. And he is also a man of moral courage

and of deep and sincere idealism. Just such a man, you would say, as might comprehend and be able to expound the revolution as a process—a thing that must begin at a beginning, and proceed through certain consecutive steps towards a goal of fundamental freedom, with at least a framework of "kindliness and tolerance" in our social relations. What is it, then, that prevents him from bringing over that austere and celebrated "scientific method" into his contemplation of the problems of society? It is the contagious Christian disease of idealizing the soft, and worshipping the ineffectual. Nothing else.

Mr. Russell did not like Lenin. Although he found him "very friendly and apparently simple, entirely without a trace of *hauteur*," and although Lenin laughed a great deal, and the laugh seemed at first merely "friendly and jolly," it gradually began to appear that there was something a little "grim" about him.

"He is dictatorial, calm, incapable of fear, extraordinarily devoid of self-seeking, an embodied theory. The materialistic interpretation of history one feels is his life-blood. . . . I got the impression that he despises a great many people and is an intellectual aristocrat."

Thus Bertrand Russell expresses his disaffection. And if I may put that also in other words, *Lenin did not give Mr. Russell any food for his tender emotions about human progress*. He was just as "grim" in excluding the ethico-deific from his conception of history and his plans for getting along *the road to freedom*, as Mr. Russell is about excluding it from his investigations as to *the existence of an eternal world*.

There is actually nothing any more "fanatical," or any more like a "religious belief," or an "embodied theory," in Lenin's fidelity to the Marxian hypothesis than in Bertrand Russell's adherence to the tenets of Christianical democracy. Indeed if their conflicting conceptions occupied the same position in our traditional culture, it would be evident to everyone that Lenin's mind is the more flexible of the two. Lenin is all but an avowed pragmatist, Bertrand Russell the leading defender of "absolute truth." But the "democracy" system of ideas is a part of our established inheritance; therefore a rigid adherence to that seems "liberal." The Marxian interpretation and method is new, both in mental content and in its organization of the sentiments, therefore the coolest kind of scientific fidelity to that method seems fanatical. That is why Bertrand Russell is unable to perceive the gift that makes Lenin unique among all the revolutionary leaders of history, his mental flexibility and quick sense for concrete facts. That is why he could not like Lenin intellectually.

In Gorky, on the other hand, Mr. Russell found a shrine at which he could kneel with an overflowing heart. For Gorky has always thought of the revolution as a coming of "love" and "the people," rather than of



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science and the proletariat, into power. He has longed for a tender and "democratic" socialism, even while accepting Communism under the duress of actuality. And moreover Gorky, when Bertrand Russell arrived, was *sick in bed*—"apparently dying and obviously broken-hearted." In short, he was the idealist on a crucifix, the failing Messiah of tenderness, or thus at least he could be perceived, if one had the spiritual need. And so at his bedside Bertrand Russell laid the laurels which he had brought with him for Russia's liberators, and there bade farewell to the "higher things of civilization"—things, namely, that die through lack of the hard sense for fact and the resolute persuance of method.\*

And so it is by no means an accident that in order to sum up in a word his objections to Bolshevism, Bertrand Russell is compelled to revert to the ideal of a great pagan who never dreamed of confusing the good with the helpless and unhealthy. What they are creating in Russia, says Bertrand Russell, is Plato's Republic! And for my part I do not know how to describe the joyful feeling of quiet and final relief that came to me when I read those words. For after all, what we want to know about Russia is not what incidental misfortunes are befalling the lives and belongings and the sacred rights and vested idealisms of thousands of goodly people. All that is inevitable, and is nothing to the daily miseries of millions, and the steady corruption of all moral beauty and mental rectitude under the hypocritical slave-system of the ages. What we want to know about Russia is whether the change is fundamental, cataclysmic, *utopian*—for science realizes utopias in other fields, and will do so in the field of politics. What we want to know is whether these violations of "justice" and "liberty"—the admired surface-wrinkles upon our system of society—have been committed in a process of destroying that kind of society altogether, and establishing a new one in which at least the having of hopes about justice will not be ridiculous, and the evangel of liberty not obviously futile and pathetic. And upon this point we could not be more profoundly reassured than by learning that, the profit system having been abolished, "the parallel is exact" between Plato's Republic and that which is coming into its place.

For Plato was a Communist. He was the first conceiver of a kingdom of truth and genuine nobility upon this earth, a society in which great qualities of mind and heart should actually coincide with great influence and power. And furthermore he knew—as Nietzsche was a little too contemporary-snobbish to know—that such a

\*It should be noted that Gorky was not able to say much to Mr. Russell, and the conclusion that he is broken-hearted seems to have been only an inference from his appearance. Gorky has been "apparently dying" ever since I saw him nine years ago on the Island of Capri, and a burning manifesto of his to the plaintive remnant of Russia's ruling classes, recently sent to the *Liberator* in translation, shows no sign of a broken heart. Gorky, by the way, was elected a member of the Petrograd Soviet a few days after Mr. Russell left Russia.

society could come into being only after distinctions based upon the possession of wealth have been absolutely and cleanly removed, and the state no more suffers from "the disease of riches and poverty." He had perhaps an intuitive sense of the competitive disposition of men, and realized that only by transferring their passions of rivalry into better fields than that of accumulation and display, could he make them produce something greater than themselves. At any rate he perceived the fact that a general eminence and survival of what is really noble, can not even be dreamed of until there is taken for granted an equality of property-rights in the material conditions of free life.

Bertrand Russell introduces his parallel between the Soviet Republic and that of Plato with an idea that it will be bad news to the advocates of a Soviet Republic. "I suppose it may be assumed," he says, "that every teacher of Plato throughout the world abhors Bolshevism, and that every Bolshevik regards Plato as an antiquated *bourgeois*." In which statement Mr. Russell shows that he is better acquainted with teachers of Plato than he is with Bolsheviks. Plato can not prevent these professors from "teaching" him; but neither can they altogether conceal the revolutionary vigor and mighty relevance of his thoughts. It was with a quotation from Plato's Republic that we greeted Lenin in *THE LIBERATOR* as "A Statesman of the New Order" when the qualities of his genius first appeared in scattering translations smuggled out of Russia. It was with a quotation from Plato's Republic that we welcomed the first report of Lunacharsky on "Education Under the Soviets." For Plato knew that once the foundation of a great and beautiful society is laid, its growth and preservation will depend absolutely upon its system of education—a truth which he expressed humorously by saying that the first act of a wise government would be to "send out into the country all the inhabitants of the city who were more than ten years old, and take possession of their children, who would be unaffected by the habits of their parents." And Lunacharsky's documents proved beyond question that the Bolsheviks understand this truth also, and have had the force to act upon it drastically. It is a truth which Bertrand Russell evidently does not understand, for he has given us a full prediction of what the Bolshevik society will develop into, without ever a specific word as to what they are doing with the children. I recommend Plato to him, therefore, as well as Nietzsche and Karl Marx.

Plato was a Communist, in so far as one could be, whose entire hopeful thought of humanity had not yet included the slaves. He was a communist in practically all that the word implies, except that he had no theory as to the location of the sovereignty—the sovereign power in his Republic is the author of the book—and he had no sound proposal of a *method* by which Communism might be introduced in the course of actual history. He



merely observed with a kind of superior humorous resignation, that it could never be introduced until someone who was terribly wise came into the possession of absolute political power. And he thought of that someone as the son of a king. He thought that the world must wait until by some grand, lucky chance a "philosopher"—that is, a man of the highest impersonal motivation and intelligence—should be born to the throne. And Plato knew pretty well, too, that the power which is behind all thrones—the power of those who possess the wealth upon which a throne must rest—would prevent even that tyrant-philosopher from doing anything really revolutionary. If he could not be dissuaded, he would be poisoned or throttled at the first gesture he made against the sacred institution of their property.

"And yet in the whole course of the ages," said Plato,

with his sad smile, "perhaps a single one may be saved."

The aspiring mind of the world has never for the space of a generation forgotten Plato's hope. In its dark sorrow and continual misery of broken efforts and visions shattered with the insuperable facts, it has waited for the king's son to come. It has steadily refused to believe that Plato's republic was merely an abstract dream. And now after twenty-two hundred years the king's son has come. But he has come in overalls and old clothes of the farm, with the iron sceptre of Spartacus in his hand, with grim steel in his heart, tempered in centuries of massacre and disillusion, and with the inexorable discipline of science in his mind. He has come. And what Bertrand Russell really tells us in these articles of too-Christian disappointment, is that he is powerfully fulfilling his appointed task.

## Allies in Blunderland

**C**ENTURIES of sleep, it was estimated, were lost by New York City during an all-night thunderstorm. And all this insomnia was unnecessary. A few minutes with Harding's speech of acceptance would have brought anybody sweet repose.

**T**HE Republican management is casting about for a slogan to tie to the rockingchair. We respectfully suggest, "Sleep it off with Harding."

**M**RS. DOUGLAS ROBINSON defends Senator Wadsworth in Theodore Roosevelt's name. If she keeps on using her brother's name for all kinds of rough work she will wear it out.

**G**EORGE WHITE, alias "Klondike Pete," the new chairman of the Democratic National Committee,

is an oil millionaire. It is thought that he will exercise a restraining influence on Cox if the candidate shows signs of attacking the institution of private property.

**M**R. WHITE is described by the Democratic press agents as "a man of deeds." Probably they mean warranty deeds.

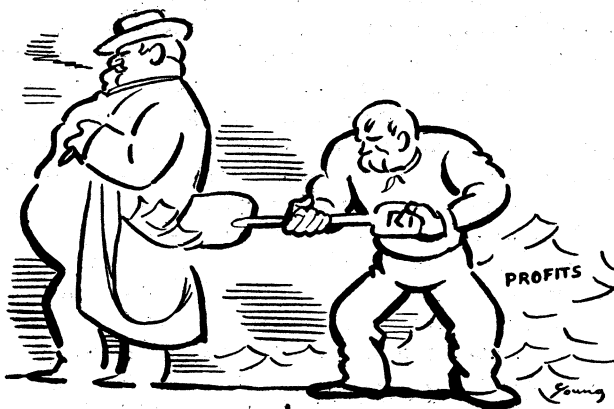
**T**HERE were a few Swedes and a Dane on the Resolute's crew, but on the whole America's victory in the cup races was a splendid national victory—for Norway.

**S**PEAKER SWEET had to withdraw as candidate for Governor of New York on account of non-support. A good bouncer is too valuable to be promoted.

**T**HE New York *Times* regrets that the damaging Interchurch report on the steel strike comes out now when the defeated steel workers are busy and contented. The workers are a happy and carefree crew as they bandy hot metal around for twelve hours a day. A short life and a Gary one.

**T**HE whole world needs cloth, says Wool Trust Wood, but it is impossible to get orders, so we have to shut down our mills. Nobody has said anything lately about the capitalist system of industry that is more damaging than that.

**I**N the trial of the Communists in Chicago, Prosecutor Comerford rose to this oratorical height: "Take the statues of Washington and Lincoln out of the park and



Shovel, you proletariat, the boss needs the money.



### The Tourists

"Sorry to disappoint you, Marie, but there's not a single skull left."

erect shafts to Lenin and Trotzky. Go to the churches and take the Christ off the cross. Put in his place Judas." The idea of executing Judas instead of Christ was too much for the jury and the Communists were convicted.

**T**HE leaders of the Committee of Forty-eight must feel slightly dizzy after their recent summersault through the newspapers. One day they were bomb-throwing anarchists and the next they were well-meaning reformers who fell among radicals and lost their clothes.

**T**HE Department of Labor announces that it cannot get the ships to deport 500 Russian undesirables. But the longer they wait the shorter the trip. Russia seems to be coming this way.

**T**HE Poles, we are told, were merely the cat's paw of England and France, in their fight on the Soviets. A Polecat's paw?

**P**OLAND has resigned as the "vanguard of civilization" and the job is open to any ambitious young nation fond of danger. The position has no future and very little present.

**L**LOYD GEORGE'S newest idea is to support the statesmanlike Lenin against the firebrand, Trotzky.

**O**PENING a new chapter in that classic work, "Allies in Blunderland."

HOWARD BRUBAKER.

# Guilty: the General Strike

By H. Austin Simons

IT is not particularly significant that another group of radicals are going to jail for their cause. Having gone myself, I may say this. But it is significant that for the first time an American court has outlawed the general strike. That is what happened in Chicago in the twelve-weeks-long trial of twenty members of the Communist Labor Party. For many days it was quite evident that the Seattle general strike was before the bar. And the verdict of the jury condemned that strike as well as William Bross Lloyd, Ludwig Lore, Jack Carney, Edgar Owens, Max Bedacht, L. E. Katterfeld and the fourteen others who were on trial.

We shall hear more of this case. Palmer has smashed the "red movement" numerous times! At least, he has disorganized it badly. His successor's job is already laid out: it is to disrupt the pontifical movement of organized labor itself. A long step in that direction was taken at this trial.

Two days less than two months were required to pick the jury. And, for all the care taken, the foreman, in a published statement, admitted that "There never was a doubt in our minds as to the guilt of the defendants." Several more days were consumed in the preliminary evidence of the State: coppers telling of the New Year raids, brazenly admitting their violations of constitutional civil rights; a reporter, formerly for the Milwaukee Leader, telling of a speech Lloyd had made in that city, urging the workers to arm themselves with "rifles—and rotten eggs" for the capture of the arsenals and banks of the city; the postmaster of Wausau, Wis., identifying a letter Lloyd had written to a Socialist there, arguing that the right wing national executive committee should not be re-elected.

Then the State called Harry J. Wilson, and shamelessly recorded another incident in the history of industrial espionage in the United States. Wilson had been wounded three times during the war, had been shipwrecked by torpedo while being invalided home; had drawn government pay for two months while convalescing, then had been employed by the Minute Men of Seattle—peace-time successors to the American Protective League—at \$5 a day. (Even as a spy he was a scab!—for John Bffel tells me that the customary wage for treachery on the Pacific Coast is \$10 a day). Wilson's assignment was to get into the Soldiers', Sailors' and Workmen's Council, and make daily reports upon its activities. Before he began he was taken to the Federal building, where the local chief of the Bureau of Investigation assured him that he, a private detective, "would have the United States back of him in any crisis." Then

he got a job at \$30 a week as organizer for the council. His testimony seemed unimportant. He reported many speeches made by officers of the council, but the strongest statement he quoted was, "We must take over the industries by peaceful means if possible, *by force if necessary.*"

Then the incomparable Ole Hanson—Chautauqua Ole, with his small-town shock of white hair, his frock coat, his green-brown eyes that have a habit of suddenly dilating to register the horror of aggrieved civic virtue—was escorted in by his "bodyguard," Egan of the Chicago "Anarchist squad."

Ole had attended a street meeting on the night when the Seattle shipyards strike was called. He testified that the principal speaker declared, "We can't overthrow the government by ballots; we must do it with bullets." Ole's chief concern those days was for the municipal electric light plant. The night before the general strike was declared he had had a conference with the strike committee. "I said the plant belonged to all the people and we, the people, would run it. Someone asked, 'Well, what will you do if it doesn't run?' I replied, 'If you cut the wires I'll arrest you. If you attempt to take it over I'll shoot you. When we give in I—well, I won't be here!'"

William S. Forrest cross-examined Ole. The strike committee hadn't ordered the electric light plant closed? Oh, no; it had run steadily. Why had Ole resigned as Mayor? "Because of poverty, neuritis and the absolute necessity of earning a livelihood for my family." What had been his salary as Mayor? \$7,500 a year. What did he earn by lecturing and writing on the menace of Bolshevism? Well, he'd received \$38,000 in the last seven months.

"No dollar patriot," Mr. Darrow remarked, "a patriot at \$60,000 a year!"

The State endeavored to correct that unfortunate impression. It re-called Hanson and brought out the fact that he had nine children and three grandchildren.

"Didn't he have them when he asked to be elected Mayor?" Darrow inquired. . . .

Jim Duncan, a union printer, and the white-haired chairman of the civics committee of Seattle Woman's Club, were the only witnesses for the defense. The lawyers for the defense had said to the reporters, "You can say that if the State introduces Mayor Hanson we'll take care of Ole." And Jim Duncan made good that statement.

The general strike was called in sympathy with the shipyard workers who demanded a wage increase of 10 per cent. Never one word was said about confiscating



any property, overthrowing the government, or committing any other unlawful act. . . . The town was more peaceful during the "disorder" than on many a previous day. The strike committee had organized the Veteran Guard to act as an auxiliary police force; each ex-soldier in it was armed only with a white silk badge. . . . Ole had intimated that the fifteen restaurants operated under auspices of the strike committee had not been sufficient to feed the entire population of Seattle. Of course not; most of the citizens had eaten, as usual, in their homes. . . . Ole had been indignant over the sacrilege of an "exemption card" on a hearse. Well, it hadn't been shown that exemption cards had been refused for any hearses, had it?

Two days before the general strike Duncan had been taken to luncheon by Ole and two other city officials. Ole had "pleaded" with Jim Duncan to allow the electric lights to burn.

The State objected to the word "pleaded," and the Court ruled that the witness must tell exactly what was said. Duncan then quoted the Mayor:

"Jim, Jim, won't you please give me the lights? I don't give a damn about the street cars, but I've got to have the lights. Come on, Jim, be a good fellow. Give me the lights. I need those lights, Jim."

"What else was said?"

"O, nothing much. He kept up that 'Jim-Jim' stuff for an hour. I told him that I was not responsible for the lights and could do nothing about them."

Well, after the State's attorneys had dragged in this evidence concerning the Seattle affair, what use did they make of it? Did they show that the general strike, approved in the platform of the C. L. P., resulted in starvation, civic chaos, and burglary and rape in unlighted streets? Did they prove that it was an instrument of terror and bloodshed? Did they establish that it had taken industries from their owners, the functions of government from Ole? No; it appeared that it was a legitimate enterprise throughout, that always the only threat of violence emanated from the city hall, that the city hall and the Chamber of Commerce were close partners in opposition.

Forrest, arguing for the defense, accepted the challenge of the State in making the general strike a major issue. He argued that no strike is illegal, no matter if its purpose be legal or not; that evidence concerning the Seattle strike should be disregarded. He attacked the "Overthrow Statute" and attempted to force an interpretation of it that might be of incalculable importance as affecting the similar laws now in force in twenty states. He sought by the most exquisite subtleties of reason and definition to eliminate from the text of the law the phrase "or other unlawful means," so that conviction could be only for direct advocacy of violence toward the overthrow of the government. Finally—and unfortunately—he analyzed the documentary evidence,

the platform, program and constitution of the Communist Labor Party, the "Moscow" and the "Left Wing" manifestoes. He held that the C. L. P. had repudiated the latter manifesto when it drafted its platform and program. The party, he argued, had not unreservedly endorsed the Third International,



**James A. Duncan of Seattle**

and its program of "open combat with the bourgeois state." Then he went through the platform, sentence by sentence, labeling each one a "falsehood," or "folly," or, in some instances, "only common sense that everyone agrees to." He disemboweled the party documents.

These two days of talk by the suave and gifted little gentleman with the wing collar and the black ribbon over his slick white bosom were intellectually intriguing, but what had they to do with the class war? As one listened to these subtleties, the brave words of the party pronouncements seemed as of a forgotten foreign tongue. And the subject of the argument—Seattle, and its handbills headed "Russia Did It! Why Can't We?"—seemed unconscionably remote.

But it must be remembered that Forrest represented only Lloyd and Dr. Karl Sandburg. Some of the defendants smarted under this right-wing-Socialist policy of defense. There was no group-unity among the men on trial. Some held more tenaciously than ever to legalism. Others had been driven to a new and harrowing adventure of underground activity; it did not take this trial to make them believe that legalism and the class struggle have little to do with each other. They put themselves on record by this statement, handed to Darrow before his final argument:

*"When we voted for the Communist Labor Party platform and program we did NOT thereby repudiate the Left Wing manifesto. The purpose was to re-state its principles more clearly and appropriately. Our party program was in strict harmony with the Left Wing mani-*

*festo and with the program of the Third International. We desire that our defense be conducted without any repudiation of either of these documents. Signed —"*

Forrest took two and a half days to propound all the law that was introduced on both sides. It was an amazingly brilliant intellectual performance. Forrest is such a man as might become a justice of the Supreme Court in some New England state: a figure of refined proportions; more than half his head is above his ears; each sparse strand of his white hair glistens; the smallness of his blue eyes is accentuated by the close fold of their lids; his nose is that of a Roman poet; delicate lines mark off his chin; he wears a wing collar, and a black ribbon around his neck is attached to a watch in his trousers pocket. Lloyd tells me he engaged Forrest because of his "consummate erudition in the law," and in that he made no mistake.

Cunnea, another counsel for the defense, is a typical radical Irishman, thickset—lop-sided from the malformation of his limb—but very magnetic and likeable as he stands there conferring with the other two, whispering out of the corner of his mouth. Darrow is the third—bulky, bronze, wrinkled. Seeing him there I forget him as I have known him these past few months, presenting his fatalism in debate with young scientific idealists, the clever chairman of literary dinners attended by intellectual snobs. I remember the impression as of some colossal being—ruggedly colossal and somehow sinister—that I had of him as a small boy, when I read of his defense of Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone.

We, "the people of Illinois," are represented by three lawyers—Barnhart, young Lloyd Heth and Frank Comerford. Barnhart is a steady plughorse of the law; he'd be an honest man if he had an honest job. Heth is a Harvard man, a teacher of law in some school in "the Loup," an understudy of the State's attorney. Special Prosecutor Frank Comerford is the Beau Brummel of the occasion. Someone must have told him that he re-



Clarence Darrow

sembles a movie star—he dresses and deports himself as though he had some particular one in mind. Fifteen years ago he exposed the "jackpot system" of legislation - by - gambling in the Illinois General Assembly, and saved himself from impeachment therefore by one of the most dramatic speeches in the history of the State Legislature. Then he

became a "labor lawyer." During the war he went to Poland as a sort of correspondent for the Chicago Tribune. When he came back he lectured on the horrors of Bolshevism. Now he's a specialist in "red persecution."

The most dramatic moment in the conflict between these six men came in the midst of Darrow's final argument:

"Here are twenty men whom you can put in jail if you want to," he was telling the jury. "But do you think you can stop Bolshevism that way? Does the State's attorney think so? *Do those in back of the State's attorney think so?*"

Comerford jumped to his feet. "I object, your Honor, to these insinuations, that there is 'something back' of this case," he shouted. "Furthermore, I denounce these statements of Mr. Darrow as wilful, malicious, ugly lies."

Forrest rose quickly from his chair: "I object to that statement of the prosecutor," he cried. "I know of my own knowledge that Mr. Darrow's statements are not falsehoods. I know that this case was managed by Mr. Harry Berger (a former assistant State's attorney) and was financed by members of the Chicago commercial exchanges. And the prosecution knows it, too."

The jury was hustled out. Judge Hebel was on his feet, trying with a sort of impatient impotence to silence the hubbub. But the cat was out of the bag. The statement that had been made from the platforms of a score of protest meetings since the raids now was a matter of public record. The final sordid touch was given to the State's case: the spy Wilson, Ole Hanson defending Americanism for \$60,000 a year, now a slush fund of \$40,000 provided to the State's attorney for arrest and prosecution of "reds!" Truly, capitalism is in decay: the corpse is noisome.

For the rest of two days Darrow hurled his eloquent rhetoric against the enemies of human freedom. . . . "These twenty men are charged with advocating the common ownership of property. Are these the only men who ever dreamed that dream? Why, Moses preached it. But then, Moses is long dead—lucky for Moses! Comerford here asks, with his cheap and sneering sarcasm, 'Are these men lineal descendants of Christ?' I answer, 'Yes; they are, and you [turning upon the moving-picture prosecutor] you would have helped to send him to the cross had you been there! . . . They say my clients are followers of Lenin and Trotsky. And they are, gentlemen, they are. What are you going to do about it? These men stand for the new Russia, and I stand with them on that. . . . I don't know whether Bolshevism is right or wrong. I don't know whether or not communism will work. But I do know that capitalism doesn't work. And I know that no liberty-loving man would replace the new Russia with the old!'" . . .

Once Comerford goaded him to a fine outburst of defiant truth. "Will you please tell us, Mr. Darrow," he



**Darrow in his suspenders was a feature of the Court Room as one hot day followed another.**

said, "what legal methods there are for changing the government except the ballot?"

"O, the ballot, the ballot! You make me sick!" he cried. "The ballot never got anybody anything. As if we did nothing but vote and then sit around waiting for the next election! . . . Men have a right to urge their fellow workers to quit work until laws are changed. It will be done more and more in future. . . . How did we get the eight-hour day in the railroad industry? Vote for it? No! The men threatened to strike: then the politicians passed the law. . . . When people give up the right to strike and depend solely on the ballot, they're lost. . . . You get what you want only when you go out and fight for it."

How intellectually poverty-stricken reaction is, in all the ages! In reply to Darrow's oratory and Forrest's intricacies of logic, Comerford contented himself with waving the flag that he and his associates had slushed over with filth. And for a husky finale he read the words of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Heth also scorned the legal issues and resorted to vituperation—highbrow vituperation, Harvard vituperation, more eloquent than the garden variety, but not more substantial. And on these grounds the jury brought in its verdict condemning to prison the twenty defendants; condemning the general strike; condemning the theory that an organization can be revolutionary and legal at the same time.

## Important

ONLY \$15,000 is now needed to set at liberty *forty of the victims of the war hysteria.*

The Circuit Court of Appeals of the State of Illinois, during a temporary lapse into sanity, has decided to release that many of the I. W. W. prisoners on a blanket bail of \$50,000. Thirty-five thousand dollars already has been raised. We want the readers of THE LIBERATOR to lend that remaining \$15,000 to the I. W. W.

Please write to us immediately, or to Elizabeth Gurley Flynn at the Workers' Defense Union, 7 East 15th Street, New York City, if you have any cash or bonds that can be used for this purpose.

These men are in Fort Leavenworth Prison, serving 5, 10 and 20 year sentences for the crime of being intelligent and courageous. They may have to complete those sentences and they may not, according as the Supreme Court may feel about it. But in any case *they do not have to be in there now.*

This is their second summer in jail; for some of them it is the third. Some of them have families; some of them are sick; some of them are in permanent solitary confinement. All of them are silent. They are patiently and bravely suffering for their devotion to the cause that hasn't any money.

Surely the readers of this magazine can raise a loan of \$15,000 to complete the fund that will put a stop to this unnecessary sacrifice. I think the money should be here two days after the magazine is published.

Remember that a loan of money is a gift of liberty.  
M. E.

## THE LIBERATOR

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### Politics

“Have you got that bottle?”

“Good lord no! Haven't you?”

# Fraycar's Fist

A Story by Mary Heaton Vorse

## I.

**F**RAYCAR is dead and buried, but his memory lives. His fist and his anger are symbols of the steel worker's irreconcilable revolt.

If you choose to be fanciful when you look at the everlasting smoke that rolls up night and day from the tall chimneys you may imagine that it comes from the fires in the hearts of the men who work in the mills.

I pieced together this story of Fraycar from many sources. Young Pivac, who will never marry Rosie Fraycar because he is dying of consumption, told me part of it. I learned some of it from Father Kalish. I heard more from Greznac, standing in his empty saloon, and there is the detail given me by the wife of the county detective. One by one they built up Fraycar's life before my eyes until it seemed as though I watched some menacing and heroic figure being moulded by an invisible hand. I see his rage dominating the strike—its heart—since it was the emotion back of reason which made the strike possible.

I first heard of Fraycar on a raw, spiritless day in the last stretches of the strike, a time monotonous, dreary, desperate. The strikers hanging on grimly—hunger stabbing the men—hope oozing from the leaders—Valley Forge.

We were sitting around strike headquarters waiting for something to happen, when news came over the phone that the State police had broken up a striker's funeral over in Halkett, a nearby town. I heard Dink Williams, the big organizer, telephoning:

"Broke up a funeral, did they—the sons o' guns! Whose? A Slavish fella named Fraycar? No—never heard of him. Not active in the strike? Then *why*, *why*? Rode 'em down, did they—lost their umbrellas—musta looked rich to them cossacks to see them umbrellas flying! So long—see you when you get here."

Williams was a big, bald man; he limped and had only one eye and a scar jagging a red road across the innocent looking surface of his pink scalp, which was covered light with a grizzled down. An old mine worker.

"What made them cossacks ride down a funeral for?" he wondered, staring around at us.

"Corpse inciting to riot," suggested young Barstow, a flip young newspaper man.

"You said a mouthful, young fella," Dink answered, cocking his one angry eye at Barstow. "Corpses 've incited to riot before now, but not *this* fella—I wonder what for. I wonder—"

Williams sat with his game leg sprawled out in the dislocated way it had of looking as if it didn't belong to him.

"Havash was phoning. He says there's never been such a funeral. Says after the carriages there wasn't no end of it. When the cossacks rode 'em down they went slipping an' splashing down the side streets and that there was wrecked umbrellas everywhere."

During the afternoon men came in dripping. Huge, silent men. They had not much to say. Yes, the mounted police broke up the funeral. The men had run.

"They said there were too many of us," was their explanation.

There was at that time, there being a strike, an ordinance against processions; this funeral had become a procession, a demonstration.

These men did not seem surprised to have the funeral broken up. The "cossacks," as they knew them, were there to prevent, inhibit, invade other assemblages as harmless as funerals. Life is violent in the steel country. It has been violent since the Homestead days. There were men killed in Halkett in '16.

I got the impression from the sparse trickle of talk of a very large funeral—a funeral as long as Main Street. During the afternoon Fraycar's funeral took form in my mind; it became something I myself had seen. A heavy picture, black on black, black with a massive background of smoke. Smoke uncoiling itself to the clouded sky, smoke of such density as to seem solid. This smoke was the background of a black hurly burly of men in heavy shoes, slipping and sliding on slushy pavements.

I saw it as if I had been there, the piles of dirty snow, the oily smoke writhing upwards to the menacing slate colored sky. The wind wrenching umbrellas from hands. Black and white streets—mounds of tarnished snow—back streets shining with rain.

There was no clew among all these taciturn mourners why they had come in such numbers. But they had come from Monessen and Donora and Duquesne as easily as from South Pittsburgh—it seemed that every Slav and Pole and Roumanian had come to Fraycar's funeral. They came from Rankin stewing over the smoke of the mills and from Charleroi. Men had come who did not belong to Fraycar's church or his society.

One man said to another: "He told his last wishes in the end." "He said his last wishes," the other agreed. They spoke with grimness. This speech seemed to have unloosed something in the men. Talk became louder.

The room began to smell of wet leather, of black dye, of men. There was a clash of guttural talk from a group in a corner. A big fellow shook his fist upward in a slow, menacing gesture. There was something solemn in this shaken fist, the symbol of revolt.



A Drawing by Boardman Robinson.

# The Retreat from Russia

It was part of some story. A crash of laughter followed—disquieting laughter. Laughter more menacing than anger.

It seemed that Fraycar had died one might say of rage. With bare hands he had attacked a State trooper and tried to pull him from his horse.

Out of the confusion of talk came the high note of a boy's voice:

"I seen him go for the cossack! I seen him jump at him! They was chasin' everyone back into their houses. Fraycar was comin' along.

"Get into the house," said one of the cossacks.

"This ain't my house," Fraycar answered.

"Get into the house, you ——!" the cossack yells and lifts his club. Then Fraycar give a roar. I seen him spring with his hands crooked. I seen him fall back. He lay there crumpled up. First we thought he was shot, but he'd had a sort o' shock."

"His rage killed him," Dink Williams said into the silence that followed the boy's story.

That was my first picture of Fraycar—fury incarnate, leaping at a mounted trooper. Terror was what these police had meant to the strikers—these magnificent mounted troops with their riot clubs upraised. Anger had to come molten and fierce; anger had to be stronger than one's love of life to be stronger than that terror.

I heard this story again from the wife of the county detective. She had a nice home with a piano and Globe-Werneke bookcases and growing plants. There were pictures on the wall. And you could have found no prettier woman anywhere.

"I saw the cossacks on horseback come riding along as if they was God. Everyone comes out running and rubbering when they pass to see the show. When they got to the end of the street they turned around and chased everyone in. They chased women off their own porches and doorsteps. They tried to chase Fraycar, but he sprang at them."

You could not forget the man who was so blind with fury of outrage that he could attack an armed and mounted trooper. The thought of him followed one—something unexplained. There had to be a reason for the fury of his hate, which made him give his life in this act of violence.

## II.

The next I heard of Fraycar was in the union office of the steel workers in Halkett. This town is a rampart of mills along the river. Near the mills are slums. Bricked streets, bricked courtyard—bricked courtyard—garbage. That is Halkett.

The Baltimore & Ohio Railway slashes insolently through the town as though it were master. But it is not master—the mastery is for the mills which make steel ingots and pigiron from piles of red dust. The town mounts an abrupt hill as though to get away from the

belching mills, and everyone who can lives on the hillside—away. The steel workers—the condemned—live on the stinking, oozing bricked river bottom near the mills. The river is near but they do not glimpse it. Not far is country but they see no green thing. No green thing can grow in Halkett—the smoke blakens all.

There was a crowd of men in the office—men of ten nationalities. They had come for the strike bulletin and stood crowded together. They were neither clever nor pushing; but they had strength and they had patience. They had no smartness or nimbleness of wit; but it is on such men that the strength of peoples is builded.

Pivac was telling something. He talked in English because his listeners were of many races, though of but one occupation. They all made steel.

Pivac was talking about Fraycar.

"Right off when I first come to this country I was comin' up Mill Street one night, a little drunk. It was a bright night, so bright you could see the smoke like day. Awful still. Then I heard someone cursin' in Slavish. I seen Fraycar standin' there cursin'. He seemed bigger than anyone I ever see. God he cursed! He was cursin' the mills. Slag and slack, fire and steel, men and bosses. I stood there. I don't know what got me. I ran—I ran——"

A paroxysm of coughing interrupted Pivac. There was a murmur of talk among the men.

"I seen him like that—I seen him in Greznac's saloon."

Fraycar had seemed to young Pivac like a black blot of fury, ranging there where the mill wall rises up sheer against a mean street. Above the wall are the great tank-like structures of the mills and the chimneys belching forth their perpetual smoke.

Men have been shot in this street. Everyone knows that. Everyone who goes to work knows that in 1916 there were machine guns at these gatés.

During the strike many men died in the mill from molten metal. Men die easily making steel.

Fraycar cursed death, too, standing in the moonlight. He cursed the molten steel and the machines for killing and the men for being killed.

Pivac finished; this paroxysm of coughing dyed his dirty handkerchief red. "After I ran away, I had to come back. Fraycar stood there. He lifted up his fist. He roared: '*I am stronger than you!*'"

There was silence. Then a man in the crowd repeated: "*I am stronger than you.*" "*I am stronger than you.*" They repeated it in many languages. A light air of excitement swept through the room. It was as though they had been drinking an exciting wine. Their dark eyes flashed. Everyone was repeating Fraycar's words and Fraycar's gesture.

## III.

The rest of the story came to me from Father Kalish. I ran into him one day as I was slipping along Halkett's



streets. There was a glaze of ice under foot. The mounds of snow were a dismal gray, but it had rained and they were covered with a thin coating of ice—a day like that of Fraycar's funeral. The rain fell dense, insistent; a smoke cap brooded over the town. From the mill chimneys the smoke rose slowly coil on coil so thick it looked like something you could cut.

Father Kalish asked me to go with him, and we walked down Braddock Street together. This is a street which borders the B. & O. track. There is a sidewalk fenced off from the shining tracks and a row of sordid houses past which the trains run shrieking day and night.

Back of the houses are foul courtyards divided from other yards by untidy, blackened board fences. There are always piles of ashes mixed with tin cans, and children playing among them.

Before one of these houses Father Kalish stopped.

"Fraycar lived here," he said.

He knocked on the door, and it was opened by a woman wide of flank, deep bosomed, a big bulk of a woman, heavy and strong with much child-bearing. She might have come over yesterday from the old country. She had lived here a quarter of a century. She was a fair woman with eyes set wide apart.

A young girl was sitting bathing her feet—Rosie Fraycar. She got up and scuttled away. The girl was lovely, milk white, honey haired, her clear sea-green eyes set wide apart. Her two front teeth had a tiny space between them, which seemed like the last emphasis of her beauty. One dwells upon this because flawless beauty is rare; and here it was in this gray street. Strange flower to bloom in this place—strange child to have been fathered by Fraycar. There was the distance of centuries of civilization between the girl and her mother. Rosie was lovely; too lovely, too perfect. You couldn't imagine her staying here.

"She's a comfort to you," said Father Kalish, nodding after the girl.

"She's a good girl," the mother agreed. She spoke without emphasis. She sat there massive, remote, in her immaculate room with its frieze of holy pictures which gave only the effect of a line of color, since they seemed to flow into one another. It was the cleanest place I had ever seen. The stove shone, and on each side there were five blue enamel pot covers arranged in a pattern. The curtains were freshly washed. There was an onyx clock and some begonias in cans.

Rose came back, but it was her mother who held me. I never was near a woman who seemed less trivial. I had the sense that she had lived always within sight of the doors of birth and death. There is something shrunken in the natures of people who, like us, evade the thought of the unborn and who do not accept death.

I had, too, the sense that more was passing between Father Kalish and Mrs. Fraycar than appeared in the talk.

While he talked I looked around the room—a room neat as a church, a room of perfection, passionately clean in the midst of Braddock Street. I thought of Fraycar cursing in the moonlight, cursing before the implacable sinister walls and over all the smoke rolling up—and this house with its cleanness, also a protest, a revolt as long as life, against Halkett, a mute rebellion against the stinking court and Braddock Street.

Suddenly Father Kalish asked:

"How long have you lived in this house? Twenty-four years?"

"Twenty-four years," she answered gravely.

They looked at one another—a long look. I knew what was passing in their minds. Here Fraycar had come as a young man. Here between the shrieking railway and the stinking court eleven children had been born.

#### IV.

We left; and walking through the filth of Halkett, Father Kalish told me the end of my story, and what it was that had brought the steel workers streaming out behind Fraycar's funeral.

"I haven't been to that house," he said, "since the day Fraycar died. When they took him home he was unconscious for a day. Then I heard he had regained consciousness and I was already starting to go to him when Joe came panting to me.

"What's the matter, my boy?" I said. "Is your father worse?"

"He won't speak—he's come to, but he won't speak. He won't tell his last wishes."

"Such a thing is a great calamity in a Slovak family. For with us when someone is going to die no one makes believe it's not so. When a Slovak man dies all the family sits around with him and he tells what he wants to be buried in and all about the funeral. It seems to help the family to have them leave last wishes. There is the feeling that you're doing something for the one you love even if they have gone. It's natural when you think of it, that a poor man should be interested in his funeral when that's the only time in all his life that he has had things nice. Our people, whatever they do, have splendid funerals. I preach against the extravagance of it in vain. They say to me, 'Father, if we have nothing when we're alive, anyway we can have a funeral when we die.'

"So no matter if you live in two rooms at Braddock Street all your life like Fraycar, with the smell of garbage in your nose all summer—day shift and night shift, ten hours day and fourteen night—they can't cheat you when you die. And now Fraycar was lying there and he wouldn't even speak of his funeral.

"Why won't he speak?" I said to Joe.

"It's because he's angry—it's because he can't remember.' But what he couldn't remember I could not get out of the boy. So I hurried along to the house.

"How is he, Missus?" I asked Mrs. Fraycar.

"He's dying with his face to the wall—he won't speak. I've gone in first with one pair of pants and then with the other. One pair he bought when he was pall-bearer to the saloon-keeper's father. These are new and the ones he should wear. But who knows? He may feel more at ease lying in the old Sunday ones, and how if I choose the wrong ones could I forgive myself?"

"She rocked to and fro as I sat there. It was a wet day outside and she had spread pieces of bagging over her handmade rugs, which she had woven, every one herself, out in the courtyard. Even over the doorstep was some bagging to keep the house clean just like today.

"It's hard to have your man dying with his eyes staring on a wall," she went on, "and never a word to let you know what his last wishes are, and a vein throbbing like a heart in his forehead. And it isn't his last wishes that's the worse. It's that he should be dying tormented by the anger that's been tormenting him all his life. For the matter with him is that he can't remember why he always cursed the mills when he was drunk."

"There was a sound in the other room, and we all started up and stood in the doorway. The room was full of beds. Nothing but beds in the room. It's like that in all our homes. When you've got seven children at home in two rooms, how do you make out? Steve was lying in the middle of the biggest bed. A terrible figure of a man, his shoulders wide as the doorway, and his hairy arms thrown out of the covers. A man like a giant, and his face purple as a plum against the white pillow.

"Steve opened his knotted arms and threw them out wide. His voice was thick as if there was blood in his throat.

"Tell me," he cried at us, "what made me so mad when I got drunk? I knew when I pulled the cossack from his horse, and now I don't. Maybe Greznac knows. I got drunk a thousand times in his saloon and run out cursing the mills."

"Joe wiggled out as quick as an eel after Greznac, while we stood there ashamed that we couldn't help Fraycar.

"We went back and Mrs. Fraycar sat down in the heavy fashion of women who are carrying a grief.

"I never found out why he got so angry," she said. "With all the children, I had more to do than to find out why our father cursed. It was his way, I thought. When he was drunk he was like a giant trying to break out of a cage. He would drink—Holy Virgin, how he would drink! And his anger would flow out. Often he talked about it with me. "What did I mean by that?" he'd say. "Why was I angry? I know and yet I don't know. When I'm drunk I know why, and when I am sober I don't. I'm always angry inside. Mother, my anger don't go out any more than the blast furnace."

"The door opened and the saloon-keeper and his mother came in. She was an old woman, as wrinkled as a fig, and her head tied up in a black cloth.

"How is he?" they asked. "Has he spoken?"

"Mrs. Fraycar shook her head.

"Don't you grieve, my dearie," said the old woman, "don't grieve. Our father when he died did worse by speaking than if he had held his tongue. You know it's true yourself, John; you know your father did no good by speaking, for he was obstinate when he was alive, and he was obstinate when he was dying. Remember, Mary, he would have Sam Tomko as pall-bearer instead of my Uncle Mike, and he a bachelor and old and with money in the bank. Little did our father care for his children as he lay dying. Sam Tomko he would have. Your own Steve came and reasoned with him. For Steve also was his pall-bearer. "Leave me out," he said; "my feelings won't be hurt." Then our father cursed at me. "This is your doing, woman," he said. "Are my last wishes sacred or are they not?" What could I say? He had his will as was his right. So don't grieve, my dear—there's worse than hearing no last wishes."

"Greznac went to the room where Steve was lying as we had left him, watching the door with his furious eyes. Steve asked in his thick voice:

"What made me mad when I was drunk?"

"When you were drunk," said Greznac, "it was as if smoke and the flames choked and burned you. You seemed more like a demon than a man when the anger took you and you run out into the street. As well try to stop a furnace in blast."

"But why? Why?" Steve began. The vein on his forehead was swollen and seemed almost black in his purple face. The beating of it frightened us.

"Men get drunk in saloons every night. What makes some laugh and some cry? Why do some want to kiss the bartender, and some go home and beat their wives? No one knows," said Greznac. "You got mad. One could see it bubbling and welling, until you would give a bellow and run out. This was a strange thing—no one laughed at you. When you left there was silence. You understand? The men would stop talking. The men at the bar drinking would stop with their glasses half raised to their lips. The young fellows would run out and watch you from a distance, and Mike Tomko, drunk as he was himself, would follow you until you went home."

"This wasn't what Steve wanted to hear. It didn't help him. We all stood silent in the face of his anguish."

## V.

We had left the mean streets behind and mounted the hills. Father Kalish paused before the door of his rectory. I went in with him. We sat down in the living-room overlooking the town and he went on:

"It does seem strange that none of us knew the reason for Steve Fraycar's anger. Everyone knew this habit of his. We took it for granted as one takes things in life. We stood there stupidly, and Celia, Fraycar's married daughter, came in from upstairs, where she lived. One baby clung to her skirts; another was in her arms. A cloak was wrapped around her big body after the un-

comfortable way you try to hide such things in this country.

"She stood in the doorway, tears running down her face. All the children were proud of their father because of his anger, which had marked him out from among the other steel workers. I had heard her laugh about how she would say when she was little and the boys teased her: 'Leave me be or my father will tear you to bits.'

"Don't cry, Celia,' Fraycar said. "Death's—nothing to cry for—death—birth—I go—a new one comes.'

"She sat down on the edge of the bed. The children stared at their grandfather. She had stopped crying, but she could not speak.

"Celia,' said Steve, 'you look—as if you were born—among the slim birch trees where—I used to walk with your mother. There were—blue flowers there. It is a long ways—from here to there.' They were both silent while she held his hand. Presently he said: 'Celia, there's a long—way from you to me.'

"Mrs. Fraycar sat rocking to and fro, and I know it wasn't for his last wishes that she grieved. I knew that she felt, as I did, that for the sake of his soul, which was passing, he needed to know the reason for his anger.

"If we send for Mike——' I said after a time. For it came to me that perhaps his old friend, Mike Tomko, the one who had always taken him home when he was drunk, could help his soul to search out what he needed to know. And then, as if in answer to our wish, he was there wiping his feet outside the door, a man as big as Steve, an old man nearing fifty, with a chest like a cask. Fraycar turned his angry eyes on him.

"They told you I'm dying, eh Mike?"

"We all have to go sometime,' Mike answered.

"My time has come. We're at the end of the journey we started together. How long ago was it?"

"Twenty-five years ago,' Mike answered.

"And Fraycar said slowly: 'I have been—twenty-four years—in this house—eleven children—have been born in this room.'

"And I knew what was in the minds of both, for Tomko had gotten away from the courtyard where the little heat waves rose up in summer, and where the garbage accumu-

lated all winter to rot in the spring, and he had a house all paid for but seven hundred and fifty dollars. Twenty-four years Fraycar and his wife had lived here, always expecting to get free.

"Talk,' said Fraycar in his thick voice. 'Talk of old times.'

"So Tomko began talking in his deep voice in a soothing fashion.

"Do you remember,' he said, 'when we first talked of coming? We were boys and we would go out for a walk down past the mill. Long lines of geese would waddle past us, ducks were swimming in the mill-pond. Our lives—they were like the clear water running down the hill. We would talk of America. Sundays we went to church, all the boys and all the girls looking at each other. We used to lie on the side of the hill and talk about the girls and heroes, and how Big Marco wrestled. Budapest—how far that seemed. There was no steam-car nearer to our village than five miles. What dreams we dreamed! Everyone dreams those dreams who comes here. We saw our dreams come true. We worked early and late. America! It sounded like the call of a trumpet—a golden trumpet, it called to us sitting by our river or working in the brown earth. America! What it meant—what dreams!

"I can see us sitting on the deck of the ship—each



A Drawing by Adolph Dehn.

with his young wife. You said, "I shall save my money and go back and buy me a farm." I said, 'I shall be an American, a citizen!' How our hearts beat when we came to the great harbor. What happened to our dreams—what happened to us? I wanted always to get away to green fields.'

Father Kalish paused and looked out of his window over the mills. He began again:

"The room had gotten dark, and I noticed that tears were running down Mary Fraycar's face. There were tears, too, in Fraycar's eyes. And then I noticed that I, too, was crying, for Tomko was telling the story of all my people who come here to the mills—the story of their dreams turned to dust in their hearts.

"'Back and forth from the mills,' Tomko's voice went on, 'back and forth—a shuttle.' They would not let us go. Those mills said, "You must live in my shadow. Your eyes shall never look on a green thing." Something chokes me—there is no air to breathe here. Look at the sun. You can look in its eye. It is more like the moon than the sun. Look at the twisting, writhing smoke keeping time to the wind blowing up and down the river. Back and forth from the mills—back and forth—a shuttle—a machine.'

## GOLD AND WHITE

**T**HE snow on the yellow pavement;

And the light of your coming—

Why should it make my cooled blood hot  
With a new drumming?

And my mind runs back to a windy meadow,  
Where the wind lays his

Breath on an agitated surf of buttercups  
With a froth of daisies.

Waves of yellow and white where a lavish tide  
Has flung them.

Tossed in a bright and futile abandon—  
And you among them. . . .

You stand, as you stood there, strangely unreal,  
Warm and quiescent.

Yet something eludes me; you melt like these snowflakes,  
Escaping the present.

## ESCAPE

**W**HEN toil with many a promise  
Would keep me in its pay,

Her breast, it is my Sabbath,  
Her lips my holiday.

I laugh at labor, knowing  
Its ineffectual power

Here, in her holy bosom's  
Serene and certain hour.

Here I am held and washed in  
Waves of a great content,

"It was, as though Tomko's thoughts came dripping from his mouth. He kept on talking while the boys, one after another, came in the room—Fraycar's five grown sons, four steel workers. Tomko didn't see them, nor did Fraycar, who lay there still and formidable, the vein beating in his forehead.

"Suddenly Fraycar threw out his hand. '*I know now!*' he called. 'I know. It's *this!* These children—this room—our dreams. I know—I know. It's this—it's all of this—dreams. Twenty-four years ready to go!

"'When I was drunk I thought the machines were alive. I thought we were owned by the cranes—I thought we were slaves! I thought they kept us here. The mills sucked me in mornings—they spit me out nights. When I was drunk I thought the mills were eating me. I cursed at the machines that owned me. *It's not them—it's not the mills keeps us!* I have nothing—I die as I was born. I have only one thing. I leave you my anger.' He lifted up his great fist. '*I leave you this!*' he shouted."

The dark smoke rolled up slowly to the gray sky in front of Father Kalish's window. He walked to it and looked down gravely at Halkett.

"Hundreds of men have heard Fraycar's last message," he said. "Hundreds and hundreds saw that shaken fist."

Tides of majestic passions.  
That never can be spent.

Her arm is some white harbor  
Where ships can lie at peace,  
And there church-bells are ringing,  
And happy songs increase.

There I would end my journeys  
And never slip away—  
Her breast, my singing Sabbath,  
Her lips, my holiday.

## LIBERATION

**A**ND suddenly the touch of flesh  
Is hateful as those hungry curves,  
And every point of contact is a fresh  
Agony to these whipped and exhausted nerves.

Warm hollows, will you never let  
Me go till you have buried all my will?  
Oh, to be free of the body, to lie and forget  
The use of lips and hands, to lie and be still.

I want a bed with room to spare,  
Where nothing breathes and sleep is sure;  
There lust shall have a deeper sense, for there  
The worm shall be my only paramour.

Slowly the worm shall have his fill  
(As I have had) of flesh and frequency,  
Until the body falls away, until  
' Passion devours me—and sets me free.

Louis Untermeyer.



# The Democratic Convention

By Charles Erskine Scott Wood

**A** BAND, banners, buncombe, the Democratic donkey braying, the great gloomy auditorium, a flag-draped platform for the Democratic altar and on it A. Mitchell Palmer, the very high priest of liberty; a gallery for a holy of holies, and here most of the office boys who do the Supreme Will's behests under the name of Cabinet officers, Burluson, Daniels, Meredith, Payne, Palmer, Glass; a wilderness of office holders, big and little on platform, in corridors and as delegates on the floor. Sharp, lean, keen, smooth-shaven, predacious faces, con-

ferring with unctuous, smooth-shaven, double-chinned faces, politicians all. The flock bleating. Where is labor? Not a man. Where are the educators and thinkers? Where are the scientists? The industrial scientists? Where are the writers? The economists, the sociologists? Not one. Nothing but smooth, middle class politicians, in a middle class mob, met to do the bidding of their smooth bosses, behind whom finally stand the great predatory powers, exactly as it was in Chicago. The Star-Spangled Banner; all rise. Many tried to sing and gave



Choosing Our Next President

it up. A monster American flag (I mean in size, Mr. Palmer) drops across the whole end of the auditorium, in front of the great organ. Yells, cheers, hurrahs;—as they subside the flag is hauled up and discloses a long-jawed portrait of Wilson painted by a sign painter, bringing to mind those terrible signs which used to swing in front of Washington taverns on the old turnpikes a century ago. More shouting, cheers, hurrahs; shrill yells of women and waving of women's hands and handkerchiefs. "Hail, Columbia" and "Dixie" by the band, working overtime. Finally exhaustion and the Democratic convention has begun.

\* \* \*

Litter everywhere. Torn papers. A perfect carpet of telegraph blanks, newspapers, scraps of paper, banners, pennants, broken flag staffs, little muslin American flags, trodden under foot. (O, American Legion! O, Mr. Palmer!) A huge cloth sign in a corner of the gallery: "Stick by McAdoo," lopping down dejectedly from one end. Emptiness, silence. The Democratic Convention is over. Its petty promise and bourgeois pretense have vanished back whence they came. The white collared middle class, led by their smooth bosses, will contest with their exact duplicates, their Republican brethren, for the victory of office holding, and whichever wins, that of the masters who own the house they live in will be done.

Between this beginning and ending, what bargainings, what whisperings, between the individual gladiators and their following. What fevered meetings behind closed doors through the night while the sheep outside bleated or snored. Prayers and beseechings to the sick man at Washington, that he give them a sign to break the deadlock. The name of some compromise candidate, not of his dictation, but acceptable to the supreme will, for sick or well, the President of the United States has great political power in this campaign. But not a sign, not even an acknowledgment that their wires had been received, till the angry muttering grew louder and louder in the press section, the corridors and among the delegates. "He wants a third term himself." The sheep became angry. They all had sense enough to know they could not pack the Old Man of the Sea any longer, nor anything in his image, and so, worn out, exhausted, irritated that he would not help to a solution, hotel bills running at fifteen dollars a day, business at home calling, want of sleep insisting, the Wilson sheep rebelled, and at 1:40 A. M., Monday, July the 5th, they went over to Murphy and Taggart and Brennan and Marsh and Moore, and nominated Cox.

Four hours before Bryan had said to me that he did not know what was going to happen. One thing was certain, there were three interlocking powers in the convention without whose consent no two-thirds vote could be secured to make a nomination. These were the liquor interest, Wall Street and the Administration. Whether

there was a third of the convention which could and would block these powers, he did not know, but he doubted it, and he added: "These fellows in here think they are the American people and the Democratic Party. They will find out their mistake." The feature of the convention was Bryan's reply to his adversaries, in support of his three suggested amendments to the platform; one, bone-dry; two, anti-militarism; three, a public bulletin to throw the spotlight on all candidates and their expenditures. Bryan's politics are religion and his religion politics. When he closed his magnificent peroration:

"I have made many mistakes, but when I stand before my God on that last day at least there will not be blood upon my hands,"—there was the first real, spontaneous outburst. Without help from the band, which under orders remained contemptuously silent, galleries, delegates, friends, enemies applauded for forty minutes. But he was steam-rollered just the same.

Why discuss the platform? Any difference between it and the Republican platform is for campaign purposes only. Both conventions came from the middle class, both were governed by the big interests. Why should the platforms be different?

\* \* \*

It was refreshing to get out of the convention. Here were fresh air and blue skies and the plain people and the pickets, with their banners, "Why are we starving women and children in Russia?" "Why do we keep Gene Debs in jail?" Why indeed?



Drawn by Cornelia Barns.

"Ain't he handsome?"

# "Communism But"

"I share the belief in Communism, but——"

—Bertrand Russell

AMERICAN and English readers may very well be puzzled by Bertrand Russell's articles about Soviet Russia. It all seemed simple enough when, in the first of the *Nation* articles, it appeared that Mr. Russell was simply a disillusioned idealist. He had gone to Russia expecting to see something splendid, and he had seen something awful! That was intelligible enough, and Mr. Russell's apparent recantation was mimeographed and sent broadcast to the American press by the propagandists who were only recently so loudly acclaiming the prospective salvation of Russia by Admiral Kolchak.

Meanwhile, Mr. Russell's articles furnished the text of editorials in all the reactionary newspapers, the general burden of which was: "He went, he saw, and now he's cured!"

But the case is not so simple. In the very same article in which Mr. Russell rehearsed so grimly the horrors of Bolshevism, he declared that he would, like Gorky, support the Bolshevik government if he "were a Russian."

That was rather incomprehensible. Why the devil should he support such a government, if all he said about it was true? What! support a tyranny maintained by Czarist police, in the shadow of whose menace "ordinary mortals live in terror"—a government, which "it may be assumed" will "increasingly resemble" any Asiatic despotism! Bertrand Russell, the pacifist, the lover of liberty, would support such a government if he were a Russian? Yet he says so. There is something queer about this.

And a subsequent article in the *Nation* makes the case still more puzzling to the ordinary reader. After having said the worst—or almost the worst—that could be said about a government, he now devotes several columns to apologizing for it. In his previous article, he says, he has "had occasion to mention" some "disagreeable features" of Bolshevism. Now he asks us to remember that these are chiefly due to civil war and the blockade. The government which was, in his former article, likely, "if the Bolsheviks remain in power," to become an Asiatic despotism, is now envisaged as one which, if peace is once made, would be "enabled to depend on popularity rather than on force." Its character "would alter rapidly under such conditions"—for the better. "Liberal ideas of freedom" would "become prominent." Peace and trade are in fact "the sole cure of the evils from which Russia is now suffering."

And what about democracy? In the first article, the lack of democracy was one of the chief evils of Bolshevism. In the second article Mr. Russell is convinced that

"Russia is not ready for a democracy, and needs a strong government."

Does this mean that Mr. Russell is for Bolshevism, after all? Bolshevism furnishes a strong government, and—it would seem, if one took account only of this argument of Mr. Russell's—just the sort of government that Russia needs. But such a conclusion is too hasty; for Mr. Russell, suddenly asserting himself a Communist, declares that he does not believe in the sort of communism "which concentrates power in the hands of a few men."

At this point the ordinary reader will be likely to give up the guessing-contest. Mr. Russell's articles have furnished perfectly good arguments on both sides of the question. But where does Mr. Russell stand? His followers in this country are unable to answer that question; and it looks very much as if Mr. Russell does not know himself.

There is one country, however, where Mr. Russell's attitude will be understood perfectly, and that country is Russia. Bertrand Russell is a familiar Russian phenomenon. The political woods in Russia are full of people like that. Under the label of Menshevik, Right Social Revolutionist, Left Social Revolutionist, and Anarchist, they have been cluttering up the progress of Russian history for the past three years. His opinions are an old story to the Russians. Every one of his complicated idealistic attitudes is well known. All of his arguments have been learned by heart—and answered over and over again until the Communists are sick and tired of answering them.

Though Bertrand Russell entered Russia "believing himself a Communist," he seems to have had from the first a disgruntled and hostile attitude. He conveys it in the satirical touch by which his descriptions of the commonest circumstances are somewhat spitefully embellished.

He was conveyed to Petrograd in a "special train de luxe," he was entertained at "splendid" banquets and "innumerable functions." It was a "royal progress." Everything was done to make him and his companions, the British Labor delegates, "feel like the Prince of Wales." Mr. Russell was annoyed, it seems, by all this splendor; and we, too, hearing about it, are also annoyed. We do not feel that it is quite fitting for a workers' government to be putting on such royal airs; and those "banquets" seem rather out of place in a country where millions do not have enough to eat. But Mr. Russell does not tell us in specific detail just what he had to eat at those banquets; and we have to turn to the testimony of Comrade Lansbury, who was there a few months be-

fore,\* to find out what he, a distinguished guest, was sumptuously repasted with; and we find out that he had soup (generally made from "water that fish had been boiled in"), kasha (or "birdseed," as Comrade Lansbury calls it), sometimes a little meat, and black bread and tea! Comrade Lansbury's joyful comment was: "Well, anyhow, these people are very, very far from actual starvation." May we assume that the substance of Mr. Russell's splendid banquets was, in sober realistic fact, and notwithstanding the spiteful little phrases of Mr. Russell, much the same as Comrade Lansbury's modest fare?

The little sneer with which Mr. Russell records these hospitable efforts of the Bolshevik government on behalf of their visitors is unmistakably repeated a little later: "The utmost possible use was made of us for Bolshevik propaganda"—an effort which Mr. Russell plainly resented. "I went to Russia believing myself a Communist," says Mr. Russell. Now what kind of Communist is it that would resent being made use of for Bolshevik propaganda? Not the ordinary kind. But it is all clear enough when we realize that Mr. Russell was not an ordinary kind of Communist. He was a "Communist, but——." He did not want to be taken for the real thing.

He went to Russia, it would seem, not at all as an enthusiast, but as one hoping or fearing to confirm the "doubts" which he had already entertained upon the subject. And once inside Soviet Russia, his course of action, whether he was aware of it or not, was exquisitely calculated to confirm any doubts he might have, of any and all sorts. For he went straight to the enemies of Bolshevism to find out about it!

He explains that he did not want to attend the propaganda meetings "where one knew the speeches beforehand." Instead, he says, he was able, "with the help of neutral interpreters, mostly English or American," to conduct a private investigation into Russian conditions and Russian methods of government.

Thus he saw "politicians of opposition parties"—"Mensheviks, Social Revolutionists of different groups, and Anarchists." He saw them "without the presence of any Bolsheviks, and they spoke freely after they had overcome their initial fears." One can guess that they spoke freely. Mr. Russell's articles bear the impress of what they told him.

There is a vast naivete in that phrase about "neutral interpreters." Mr. Russell really believes that there are in Russia neutral English and American observers of Bolshevik affairs! And he has an equally naive idea of what constitutes propaganda. He refused to attend public propaganda meetings conducted by Bolsheviks, and, doubtless with great comfort in the results, attended a series of private propaganda meetings conducted by Mensheviks, Social Revolutionists, Anarchists, and every

other disgruntled and hostile minority in Russia, with the assistance of "neutral" interpreters!

Mr. Russell does not, indeed, tell us that the alleged facts which he presents in his articles are hearsay gathered from such sources; he generally leaves us to imagine that they are the result of his own personal observation. But most of these "facts" are of such a kind that they could not be personally observed by a casual visitor—they could only be taken upon someone's word. And most of these "facts" are the same old stories which have been current ever since the Bolshevik revolution—which have appeared in the anti-Bolshevik press everywhere, and been refuted again and again. They are valueless fragments of traditional Menshevik propaganda, interesting only as showing from what source Mr. Russell got his Russian history.

Mr. Russell's description of the electoral system has some points of more particular interest. In one very off-hand statement he explains that since the summer of 1918 "opposition parties have been illegal, with the exception of the Mensheviks." If Mr. Russell had stayed in Russia a few days longer, he could have seen a Russian election, and might have noted that, as we learn from the Petrograd *Pravda* of June 29, 1920, six Social Revolutionists were elected to the Petrograd Soviet, together with a Maximalist, a Bundist, and a number of Mensheviks. So much for "opposition parties."\*

But Mr. Russell has more to say about the elections. All whom Mr. Russell questioned "concurred in the statement that if they [*i. e.*, the peasants] elected a non-Communist representative, he could not get a pass on the railway and therefore could not attend the Volost or Gubernia Soviet." Nor is this all. The voters are able to "recall" their delegates and frequently do so, the reasons being drunkenness, failure to make a fortnightly report to the voters, absence at the front, and a change in the voters' politics. "It is evident," says Mr. Russell, "that the recall affords opportunities for government pressure, but I had no opportunity of finding out whether it was used for this purpose." The italics are ours.

We now see the Russian electoral system in all its hideousness: Opposition parties are illegal; nevertheless, somehow they exist. People dare not vote for the candidates of such parties, because if they do they are "marked men" (and are, shall we assume, shot by the Extraordinary Commission?) Under such circumstances no opposition candidates can be elected; yet somehow they are elected. But they cannot get a pass on the railroads to attend the Soviet meetings. When they do get to the Soviet meetings just the same, they are subject to the terrors of that devilish Bolshevik device, the "recall." Russia is indeed in a sad state.

\*The political rights of the Social Revolutionists, who were outlawed for supporting Kolchak and Denikin, were restored in February, 1919. See Arthur Ransome's account in "Russia in 1919."

\*"What I saw in Russia," by George Lansbury.



In the two installments of Bertrand Russell's Russian impressions which have appeared so far in America, there are just two charges worthy of anxious thought on the part of Soviet supporters over here. One is that Soviet rule has resulted in a complete and stultifying *bureaucratism*. For a healthy reassurance on this point let us re-read the frank declaration of the Russian Communist Party in its revised platform adopted March 18-23, 1919:

*"It was only by means of the Soviet organization of the state that the proletarian revolution was able to shatter at one blow the old machinery of the bourgeois state, the apparatus of functionaries and of judges, and destroy it from top to bottom. The insufficient level of culture of the great masses, the lack of necessary administrative experience in the representatives placed by the masses in positions of confidence, the necessity in our difficult circumstances of quickly attracting capable men of the old school, the call to war-service of the more advanced levels of the town workers—all these things have provoked a partial rebirth of bureaucratism inside of the Soviet system.*

*"The Russian Communist Party wages the most energetic struggle against this bureaucratism and demands the following measures in order to vanquish the evil completely: (a) Obligatory education of each Soviet member in the carrying out of some definite work in the administration of the state. (b) Their orderly rotation in these works, so as to extend their experience gradually to all branches of the administration. (c) Progressive education of all the working population, without exception, in the work of administration of the state.*

*"The complete and general realization of these measures, which represent a step further in the path followed by the Commune of Paris, and the simplification of administrative functions, combined with the elevation of the level of culture of the proletariat, will result in the suppression of the power of the state."*

The other charge, made not quite so confidently, but clearly suggested by Mr. Russell, is that the spirit of Nationalism, militarism, even imperialism, is rapidly growing with the success of the Red Armies. "If the Bolsheviks remain in power," Mr. Russell concludes, "it may be assumed that their communism will fade, and that they will increasingly resemble any other Asiatic government—for example our own government in India."

Russia's serene and triumphant answer to this charge lies in the just-published peace-terms to Poland. A victorious nation which, after establishing moderate military guarantees, offers its enemy more territory than she already has! A conqueror whose only "punitive" demand is that "land shall be given free" to the families of all the citizens of the conquered country who were killed, wounded or incapacitated in the war!

F. D.

# BOOKS

## "Hark, from the Tomb—"

*Shadowy Thresholds, by Cale Young Rice. (The Century Co.).*

THE doleful voice is that of Mr. Cale Young Rice protesting, through twenty-two pages of preface, against all the isms, the current lack of critical standards, the absence of a law compelling a critic to give credit to good work and, like a recurring *leit-motif*, the malicious nature of "personal" opinions. But Mr. Rice is not always discomfited. He is nothing if not constructive—particularly in his prose. Is he disheartened by the failure of the greatest to produce a genuine definition of poetry? Not at all. Here is one which he offers as "adequate."

"Poetry is the expression of our experience in emotional word-rhythms more lyrically measured or organized than prose, and having some permanency of appeal not possessed by mere verse."

Without pausing to produce a test of permanency for contemporary art, Mr. Rice continues, "Whether this definition be accepted or not, one thing is clear. We must get rid of the 'twilight zone' around poetry in which irresponsible criticism can ambush mere likes and dislikes."

It is good to see that finalities can be so simply explained, that the "eternal verities" have taken Mr. Rice into their confidence. I detach a few olympian—and impersonal—convictions:

"Rareness of rhythm—just now stressed as if it were the whole of inspiration—and of passion, imagination, etc., are immemorial standards of judging, and to them all critics must and invariably do, appeal."

"I have believed that poetry without fundamental vitality is bloodless; without passion, fleshless; without spirit, nerveless; and without thought, spineless."

"Most people prefer the beautiful to the ugly, the true to the false, the noble to the base."

"Preference is fundamental in all judgment, as faith—according to Mr. Balfour's famous argument—is the foundation of all belief."

Mr. Rice neglects to say that two and two—according to M. Clemenceau's equally famous conclusion—is four, but he makes out a fairly good case for the proposition. He is determined to be precise, fair-minded, even liberal. "I am not," he assures the agitated reader, "to be construed as opposing free-verse movements. Such verse I have even used—though," he adds hastily, "not the unimpassioned, unimaginitive, insufficiently rhythmic prose kinds, and not," he finishes bitingly, "with the belief that it is a substitute for inspiration."

It is somewhat surprising therefore to find that Mr. Rice's latest volume opens, after the eloquent preface, with nineteen poems in free verse. Here is one of them

—an example opposed to the “unimpassioned, unimaginative, insufficiently rhythmical prose kinds.”

“He swung, on the porch, in the rain,  
At his grandmother’s, near.  
They had sent him there; for the doctor  
Had said he would bring him a sister  
From a secret hollow stump  
Somewhere in the owl-kept woods.  
They came for him, and showed him  
A little red sightless thing  
So new to the world that he fled—  
Being too near, himself,  
To the Nescience whence it came.”

Upon reaching the rhymed poems, one plunges at once to the heart of the problem—the difficulty of “placing” Mr. Rice as a poet. For his is very respectable, very workmanlike verse indeed. True, it never attains any thrilling heights; but, on the other hand rarely does it descend to such levels of bathos as

“The moon, God’s perfect silver,  
With which He pays the world.”

“Beating, though but a tragedy  
Life seems on every land and sea;  
Beating to bring all breath, somehow,  
Out of despair’s blight.”

Usually his verse is full of a fine, forward-looking frenzy, a noble enthusiasm that leaps out of utterances descend to such levels of bathos as

“Woodrow Wilson, master of patience,  
Master of silence, master of speech;  
Master amid the world’s war-frenzy  
Of clear wisdom’s inward reach;  
Watcher of raging civilizations  
Till the one righteous hour arrives

When you can speak for all nations,  
Great is your guidance now that shrives  
Both friend and foe of base soul-gyves!”

What then is the difficulty? Why have not all the critics ungrudgingly awarded Mr. Rice the laureateship he has toiled for so arduously through fifteen not-so-varied volumes? Possibly it is because of Mr. Rice’s very confidence in the “fundamental standards.” His work, as a faithful but faraway reflection of greatness, contains all poetic shibboleths, all the properties of glamor, but it achieves nothing but a superficial glow; it is an approximation of poetry, never a condensation of it. His lines are full of a stereotyped prosody, the rhythmical ease of an outworn patter; they ring with discarded coins of the realm like “stealthy peril,” “blind confusion,” “dull satiety,” “soulless clod,” “sodden with sorrow’s tears,” “throbbing fears.” Mr. Rice feels “the swaying surge of passion thro me swarm”; he is resurgent and “soothless, sateless, because of desires that shove me”; he is confident that Peace Triumphant has been ushered in a cleansed world.

“Yes, Mother Earth, you have suffered; but sorrow  
Has brought you at last what it alone can.  
Races you had, that raged; but to-morrow  
Men on your sphere shall behold but man.  
Nations you had,—all strifefully claiming  
Food at your breast, and place in your arms,  
Isles that bejewelled you, and broad empire  
Over your lesser children-swarms.  
Nations you had; but now to one nation  
Fast they are merging—ready to say,  
For the first time, there is but one mother  
Of men—to be cherished by them alway!”

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And yet, in spite of Mr. Rice's elevating confidence, "Shadowy Thresholds" seems to have been produced not so much by inspiration as by irritation. This discomfiture, the querulousness of the preface obtrudes itself and persists even after the final poem is laid aside.

One more problem remains. A poet, says Mr. Rice, "who is called by any considerable number of reviewers a foremost, or *the* foremost, poet of his country is naturally a mark for criticism by those poet-critics who aspire to his place"—a dart aimed, it appears from the context, at the present trepidant reviewer: "Or if criticism fails, to a boycott of silence—on the theory that an enemy who has achieved should not be advertised." It is difficult to think of "a foremost or *the* foremost poet of his country," who has been so inconsistently

attacked by (1) a boycott of open scorn, and (2) a conspiracy of envious silence. Possibly in his next preface Mr. Rice, discarding his reticence, will reveal the name of *the* poet he means.

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drawal, with the British. He was twice cited by the British, was decorated by "our Russian Allies," and was in North Russia until the whole expedition was withdrawn. From his account of the expedition we quote the following illuminating passages:

"The men of this expedition were told many stories of Bolshevik atrocities. . . . It was important to inspire fear and hatred of the Bolsheviks in the hearts of our men. . . . After the evacuation of Shenkursk we were told, with complete details, of the murder of the nuns and the Abbess, and of the members of several families who were well known to us, also of the forced marriage to favored Bolsheviks of some of the young ladies who in the happy days had danced with our officers. We were told of rape and of tortures, all in convincing circumstantial setting. This 'information' we were told had been obtained most cleverly by us through spies and prisoners—and it did its work. In July, however, we learned the truth—at least I did. Three Russians whom I had known all winter and in whom I have the utmost confidence, went to Shenkursk, stayed there incognito a week, and came back. They told me that they had seen the nuns, and talked with the people who were supposed to have been murdered, that the Abbess was alive, that the girls were unmarried, and that there had been no forced marriages whatever. . . .

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"I saw a disarmed Bolshevik prisoner, who was making no attempt to escape and no trouble of any kind, and who was alone in charge of three armed soldiers, shot down in cold blood. The official whitewash on this

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case was that he was trying to escape. I have heard of many other cases of the shooting of Bolshevik prisoners. . . . I have seen at various times many prisoners brought in, but I have never yet seen one that was not robbed.

"We used gas shells on the Bolsheviks, but that I understand is no longer an atrocity. We fixed all the devil-traps we could think of for them when we evacuated villages. Once we shot more than thirty prisoners in our determination to punish three murderers. And when we caught the Commissar of Borok, a sergeant tells me we left his body in the street, stripped, with sixteen bayonet wounds. We surprised Borok, and the Commissar, a civilian, did not have time to arm himself. The sergeant was quite exultant over it. He killed Bolsheviks because they were barbarians and cruel. This was the only thing his government had ever told him as to why they should be killed. . . .

"The spoliation of scores of Russian villages and thousands of little farms, and the utter disorganization of life and industry of a great section of the country with the attendant wanderings and sufferings of thousands of peasant folk who had lost everything but life, are but the natural and necessary results of a military operation, and especially a weak and unsuccessful military operation such as this one was. One would hardly say, however, that it was necessary to close the school in order to use the schoolhouse for the storage of whisky, nor to put an entire Russian family into the street in order to make room for one officer, nor to loot personal property and ransack churches. . . .

"We have been told about the employment by the Bolsheviks of Chinese mercenaries, and the dreadfulness of this was much stressed in April, but in July, August and September, we were importing large numbers of Chinese to Archangel, dressing them in British uniforms, and training them for fighting Bolsheviks." (pp. 84-90).

"There was evidence one day on the railroad front that a new mutiny was brewing. All the men of the suspected company were put on a train and then disarmed. A guard went through the train and counted off the men, taking every tenth man outside to be shot without a trial. The men had not mutinied, but they might, and something had to be done." This was done by the British, after the Americans had left.

"I was told about another company of eighty Russians who were under suspicion at the same time. The British officer in command gave them the option of declaring who the ringleaders were or being shot en

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masse. Under the fear of this threat fifteen out of the eighty men were named and shot without trial." (pp. 94-95).

We recommend this account of Mr. Wilson's and Lloyd George's expedition, to those who may still believe in the "League of Nations." This, it will be observed, was not "war." There will be no "wars" under the League of Nations—merely little expeditions like this.

freedom

i dont see any need for any law of any kind in anything life love or the seven arts why i ask you why is a comma or a

question mark or meter or a foot or paragraph let us assume that the reader has a noodle too this reading

business has been made too easy anyhow there has come to be a grapenuts literature compounded

of predigested sawdust and put up in a neat pack age theres a reason

i believe in putting my thoughts down on a

shakespearian stage and letting the pit create its

own scenery this comrade by your leave is a poem with rhythm

rhyme and figure of speech as you please if you dont like it revise

it thats art the creator starts something and you finish it thought is dynamic and will out just as murder will if you dont get it the jokes on you so make this what you

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