

**NEW** **MASSES** **15 CTS**  
**NOVEMBER • • • 1932**



STEINHILBER

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# New Masses Activities

1. We have moved: our new address is 799 Broadway, Room 625.
2. We shall be glad to receive contributions to our Sustaining Fund. (And how we need the money!)
3. Lack of funds made it impossible to publish an October issue but all subscribers will receive the full number of issues subscribed for. (see ¶ 2).
4. We are arranging a number of affairs: a series of concerts and literary evenings; debates; our Annual Ball . . . All of which will be well worth our friends' support. (see ¶ 2 and 3).

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¶ At this concert Sergei and Marie Radamsky who have recently returned from the U.S.S.R. will sing a number of Soviet songs (never before presented in the U. S. A.) as well as American workers' songs and songs of the oppressed set to music by proletarian composers (never before sung in the U. S. A.).

¶ The concert will be followed by questions and discussion.

¶ Tickets (\$1.00, 75c, 50c) may be obtained from the *New Masses* office, 799 Broadway, room 625. Phone: Stuyvesant 9-1967.

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# NEW MASSES

1910—Seventh Year of the New Masses -- 1926 -- Twenty Second Year of the Masses—1932

VOLUME 8

NOVEMBER, 1932

NUMBER 4

*Editorial Board:* ROBERT EVANS, WHITTAKER CHAMBERS, HUGO GELLERT, MICHAEL GOLD, LOUIS LOZOWICK, MOISSAYE J. OLGIN

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Published monthly by NEW MASSES, inc., Office of publication, 799 Broadway, New York City. Copyright 1932, by NEW MASSES, Inc., Reg. U. S. Patent Office. Drawings and text may not be reprinted without permission. Entered as second class matter, June 24, 1926, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

Subscribers are notified that no change of address can be effected in less than a month. The NEW MASSES is a co-operative venture. It does not pay for contributions. 357

*Subscription \$1.50 a year in U. S. and Colonies and Mexico. Foreign, \$2.00. Single Copies, 15 Cents; 20c abroad.*

## TOWARD A CLASSLESS SOCIETY

Fifteen years ago the Russian proletariat, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, destroyed the power of the landlords and capitalists and established the first workers' and peasants' republic in the history of mankind. This republic turned over the land to the peasants and nationalized the banks, mines and factories. In doing so, the Soviet state created the foundations for a socialist society based on the broadest proletarian democracy which has released the creative energies and revolutionary enthusiasm of all who work with hand or brain.

This profound change was achieved despite hunger, devastation, civil war and the military intervention of the imperialist powers, and despite the counter-revolutionary activities of kulaks and reactionary specialists. Amidst continual dangers and difficulties, the Soviet proletariat has marched forward from victory to victory, consolidating the political and economic basis of the new socialist society, developing the cultural revolution, and strengthening its ties with the advanced workers of all countries.

The unprecedented achievements of the October Revolution are now common knowledge. Today the international proletariat joins the workers of the Soviet Union in celebrating the completion of the Five Year Plan in four years along with the fifteenth anniversary of the Soviet state. It sees the first gigantic results of a collectivist society from which the profiteer and exploiter has been eliminated. Vast industrial plants have been constructed and equipped with the latest technical devices. In metallurgy, coal production, machine construction, oil output, tractor building and agricultural machinery the schedules of the Five Year Plan have already been surpassed. Agriculture has been converted from a system of impoverished little farms where the land was cultivated with wooden plows into a system where the land is cultivated on a socialist basis with the most modern agricultural machinery. Already over 61 percent of the peasant households have been collectivized and over 80 percent of the total sown area belongs to state and collective farms. Deserts are being irrigated; steppes are being fertilized; and new regions are continually being added to the area under cultivation.

At the same time the standard of living of the Soviet workers, of whom there are now some 22,000,000, is rising from year to year. During the last three years the income of the average worker's family has increased by sixty percent. Unemployment has been abolished since the summer of 1930. The expenditures for social services for workers has reached the enormous sum of 3.5 billion rubles per year. These material advances have taken place only because Soviet society is one in which the worker and peasant have direct control over the social, economic and political mechanism.

Accompanying these extraordinary economic achievements, there has taken place a profound cultural revolution which has transformed in every aspect the entire life of 160,000,000 people. The masses who under the Czar were called the "dark people" have become masters of their own destiny; they have learned to read and write; they have acquired the elements of technique and administration; they have entered the world of creative science, arts

and letters. On the basis of that which is best in the culture of the past, they are developing a new socialist culture in which all may participate not only passively but as active creators. Nowhere in the world today is there such a rebirth of culture as in that state where the workers and peasants are the builders of culture. While in capitalist countries the education budgets are being ruthlessly cut and schools are being closed down, the Soviet Union is rapidly expanding its educational facilities. Illiteracy has been almost completely wiped out in a country where only fifteen years ago more than 80 percent of the population was illiterate. There are millions of students, ninety percent of them of worker and peasant origin, in the Soviet universities, technical schools, and workers' faculties. The Soviet theatres, cinema, newspapers, magazines, and scientific institutes are integral parts of the life of the masses, work under their influence and reflect their aspirations.

Out of the misery and backwardness left by a feudal-capitalist civilization, the Soviet proletariat has emancipated the working and peasant women. It gave them complete social, political and economic equality with men, permitting them to give their creative energies fully and freely to the great common task of building socialism. At the same time, the Soviet state has given full rights to all the minor nationalities which had been oppressed under czarism. These now have the right of self-determination and complete equality in the fraternal alliance of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

For fifteen years two worlds have existed side by side—the world of rising socialism and the world of dying capitalism. Since the beginning of the world war, capitalism has been in the throes of a deep general crisis accentuated by the October Revolution which tore away one-sixth of the earth's surface from the power of the capitalists. In the decade following the war, capitalism achieved a relative and temporary stabilization. Nevertheless the forces of capitalism have continually declined under the pressure of the economic crisis which grows more acute from day to day, the growing revolutionary resistance of the masses, and the sharpening of the antagonisms between the rival imperialist powers. Capitalism has been thrown back to the level of the last century. Industrial production declines month by month with the exception of the war industry. The credit systems of the capitalist states have been shattered and an era of inflation has begun. Agriculture, in a state of permanent crisis since the war, has become completely paralyzed. The falling prices of farm products, the steady increase of taxes and debts have forced millions of farmers to lose their homes and to enter the ranks of the proletariat. Unemployment among the workers in capitalist countries has reached unprecedented proportions. More than 40,000,000 workers are without jobs and without visible means of support.

The advanced workers and honest intellectuals of all countries realize the meaning of the striking contrast between these critical conditions and the achievements of the Soviet proletariat which now stands on the threshold of the Second Five Year Plan. While capitalism rushes more and more rapidly toward the abyss, the

Soviet Union is already preparing to abolish all capitalist elements and with them classes in general. One of the basic aims of the Second Five Year Plan is to do away with the causes which give rise to class distinctions and exploitation, to destroy all relics of capitalism in economics and in the psychology of the people, and to convert the whole of the working population of the Soviet Union into conscious and active builders of a classless, socialist society.

With these great historic tasks in view, the Second Five Year Plan provides for the complete re-equipment of all branches of national economy on the basis of the most modern technique, for the satisfaction of all the needs of the rapidly developing economic life, and for the further improvement of the well-being of the masses of the population.

The triumphs of the Soviet Union have alarmed the capitalist world for the past fifteen years. This alarm grows as the capitalist crisis deepens and as the proletarian revolution grows. The example of the Russian workers has been a beacon-light to the oppressed of other countries. Over 70,000,000 people in large sections of China are already under the banner of their soviet, rousing India and Indo-China to fight their imperialist overlords. The revolution moves forward in Spain, and is gathering force from day to day in Poland and Germany. Throughout the world there are strikes of workers in the cities, revolts of farmers in the agricultural districts, revolutionary demonstrations of the unemployed, and uprisings of oppressed colonial peoples against the capitalist offensive, against fascism, against war.

The acuteness of the economic crisis is driving the imperialist powers toward a new redivision of the world. War is not a mere possibility; it has already been going on for a year in Manchuria, which is to serve as a base from which to attack the Soviet Union on the eastern border. In the west, Poland, Rumania, Latvia and Finland are armed to the teeth, waiting for the signal to attack the first socialist state.

The end of capitalist stabilization is leading the world to a new cycle of imperialist wars and proletarian revolutions. It must be clear to every worker and every honest intellectual that the years immediately ahead of us will be marked by decisive class struggles. On the one hand, the capitalist world will seek to destroy the socialist world by force of arms; on the other hand, the workers will battle against the economic crisis, against fascism, and against imperialist war. They will struggle for the destruction of the system of fraud, robbery, and violence called capitalism, and for the establishment of that classless society of which the Soviet Union is the advance guard.

## Every Vote a Blow!

As the presidential campaign draws to a close, the following becomes clear to an increasing number of workers and intellectuals: the Republican Party wishes to save the capitalist system by helping the rich without any concealment. The Democratic Party wishes to save the capitalist system by helping the rich under the demagogic disguise of helping the "forgotten man." The Socialist Party wishes to save the capitalist system by giving it a social-democratic mask.

More and more people are beginning to realize that only phrases differentiate the three parties of capitalism, and nobody realizes it better than the capitalist press which treats Norman Thomas not as an "enemy of society" as it did Debs, but as a gentleman and a scholar as it does Hoover and Roosevelt. All three are "safe" because they agree on keeping capitalism "safe."

The capitalist class on one hand and the advanced workers and intellectuals on the other realize that only the Communist Party combats capitalism with its horrors of exploitation, starvation, unemployment, and war. That is why the capitalist authorities in the reactionary city of Los Angeles clubbed and arrested the Communist candidate for president, William Z. Foster, and gave the socialist candidate Norman Thomas the "honor" of a police escort. That is also why the police of Akron arrested James W. Ford, the Communist candidate for vice-president.

The police in every city breaks up only Communist meetings and arrests only Communist speakers and gives the same kind of respectful protection to Socialists that it gives to Republicans and Democrats. The capitalists have ruled America for 150 years;

they can recognize very quickly who are their friends and who their enemies. They know that Roosevelt will in all likelihood be elected, and that he will serve their purposes as well as Herbert Hoover—or Calvin Coolidge or Woodrow Wilson. It is not unusual for the same capitalist (*vide* Sam Insull) to contribute to both "major" capitalist parties. They also know that the "minor" capitalist party, the Socialist Party, can serve a useful purpose at a time when the capitalist system is torn by an economic crisis of colossal proportions. This purpose is to divert the so-called "protest" vote into innocuous channels.

The issues of the present campaign have been discussed throughout the length and breadth of the land until everybody knows them by heart. Eventually they all boil down to the main issue, the increasing inability of the capitalist system to solve its basic economic and cultural crisis. The choice thus come down not to individual candidates, but to social systems.

In this campaign the Communist Party alone leads the struggle against the barbarous and decaying system of capitalism and for a new socialist society. It shows that the way out of the crisis is not any patching up of the present system, but the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a workers' and farmers' government. It links this great goal up with the daily struggles and needs of the working class for jobs and bread. It is the only party which has rallied the workers against capitalist terror, clubbings, imprisonment, deportation and murder. It is the only party which compelled the capitalists to admit the existence of unemployment. It has fought the Jim Crow system used by the capitalist class to pit white against black worker. It has fought evictions and led the struggle for unemployment insurance. It is the party of all exploited workers—the miner, the factory hand, the farmer, the ex-serviceman. It has exposed the class character of capitalist justice and led a militant fight in behalf of Tom Mooney, the Scottsboro boys, and all other class-war prisoners. It alone among all the political parties in this country rallies the workers and farmers in the struggle against the forthcoming imperialist war.

In its program of immediate demands, the Communist Party alone has expressed the needs of the workers and farmers. It demands unemployment and social insurance at the expense of the government and the employers. It fights Hoover's wage-cutting policy. It is for emergency relief for the impoverished farmers without restrictions by the government and banks. It is for the exemption of impoverished farmers from taxes and forced collection of rents and debts. It demands equal rights for the Negroes and self-determination for the Black Belt. It fights capitalist terror and all forms of suppression of the political forms of the workers. It fights imperialist war and urges the defense of the Soviet Union and of Soviet China.

For these reasons more workers and farmers than ever before will support the Communist Party in the elections. But in this campaign we see a new phenomenon in American life. Large numbers of intellectuals, realizing that communism means not only economic, political, and social emancipation but also a revolution in culture, have joined workers and farmers in their revolutionary struggle against capitalism under the leadership of the Communist Party.

Revolutionary writers and artists, organized in some twenty John Reed Clubs throughout the country have participated actively in the Foster-Ford campaign together with worker writers and artists in the Workers' Cultural Federation. At the same time, a number of prominent intellectuals have organized the League of Professional Groups for Foster and Ford. Their campaign pamphlet, "Culture and the Crisis—an Open Letter to the Intellectual Workers of America," declares:

"The intellectual worker is confronted on all sides by the mass unity of capitalism—chaotic and benighted in itself, yet organized enough when it works with its pawns—enforcing its own needs, confining them to its own limited and sterilizing program... In the interests of a truly human society in which all forms of exploitation have been abolished; in behalf of a new cultural renaissance which will produce integrated creative personalities, we call upon all men and women—especially workers in the professions and the arts—to join the revolutionary struggle against capitalism under the leadership of the Communist Party."

Indeed, the intellectual, the worker, the farmer must realize that a vote for the Communist candidates is not only a "protest" vote, but a blow struck against the oppressive system of capitalism.

**VLADIMIR LIDIN****SOVIET LITERATURE**

The present generation of Soviet writers was born in the flames of revolution. We were participants in all the stages of its development; we were eye-witnesses of all its events; and fate has imposed upon us writers the tremendous but glorious task of being its historians. Now, looking back at the fifteen years which have passed, we can summarize the results of this experience and face the future.

The period of war communism was a transition period. The severity of that period tested the adaptation for life of all those who had to bear the brunt of the conflict and eventually find their predestined vocation as writers. Furthermore, those years created a new generation of writers. The new-born revolution by no means destroyed the glorious traditions of Russian literature which those Russian intellectuals who had been knocked out of their idealistic illusions by the tremendous concussion thought had been done away with forever. On the contrary, the revolution preserved all the most valuable things which it had inherited from the past. The revolution published our old classical writers, circulating their works in millions of copies; at the same time it gave voice to the contemporaries, to the Soviet writers. This voice has reached the West, whose readers have had ample opportunity either to recognize or reject it. It is a well known fact that western readers have appreciated the works of our Soviet writers.

What does our generation of writers represent? Of whom does it consist? Who has replaced the writers of the past, the writer who had plenty of time for observation, for a slow, undisturbed life?

The civil war, the village, the factory, the years of starvation and wandering through our vast country—these are the events which fired the imagination of most of our modern writers. They had a great opportunity to study life at close range, and not through books either; no, they faced life itself in the midst of that gigantic construction which has been and still is going forward. This epoch has endowed our writers with colossal experience. In that sense we are the most fortunate of the generations. Life itself has presented us with the most dramatic variety of themes. We witnessed the ruin of a whole empire, a ruin about which the most advanced writers of the past could only have dreamed. Under our very eyes whole classes of society were swept off the earth by history as if they were so much useless dust in an untidy room.

We have participated in the greatest revolution in the world's history. Our intimate lyrical world, the world of individual self-contemplation had to give way to a new social world. Our art obtained deep social roots; our literature is a social literature. Even postwar Europe has ceased to be a world inclined toward intimacies and personal lyrics. Today the voice of the lyric European nightingale reminds one too much of the hissing sound of the bullet. The advanced writers of Europe, our friends, have for quite some time been obsessed by a social longing. They read our literature eagerly. It is not up to us to say whether we do our work well or ill; but one thing we do know; we know that we produce a literature which in its essence cannot be called "entertaining" or "amusing." The modern petit-bourgeois reader who looks for such things in literature will find our books as chilly and uncomfortable as an unheated room. Let him console himself by reading Dekobra.

For a period of five years our literature drew its themes from the civil war, from the years of starvation from the destruction of the old world. A shelf of books dealing with these themes would be a priceless reference source for any historian who would seek to recreate the color, taste and smell of that epoch. The years of NEP which followed that period have also been reflected in our literature, although to a lesser extent. All the books dealing with the civil war period are permeated with heroic pathos. The NEP period, on the other hand, contributed to our literature chiefly satirical books depicting the negative sides of that transition period.

But the revolution marched on victoriously. Retreats belong to the past. New themes and new songs have appeared on the stage.

New fronts have been formed, industrial fronts, fronts of economic attack.

Decrepit, subjugated czarist Russia which had been entirely dependent on the west; illiterate Russia with its embryonic barbaric industries lagging far behind Europe and America; that Russia which was known to the west only for its samovar, balalayka, caviar and severe eastern frosts; that dormant Russia where the upper classes talked French while the lower classes lived on dung-heaps—that Russia has at last awakened from its sleep of a thousand years. Its dormant power has turned out to be tremendously forceful and energetic. The bent spiral has unravelled. Upon the wild plains of the land gigantic industrial enterprises have been erected. The lazy and barely navigable Russian rivers have begun feeding electric power plants. The poor peasant who could scarcely harrow the soil with his primitive implements has ceased to be an individual landholder and has become a member of a collective farm. Tractors and other agricultural machines have become commonplaces to the Soviet farmer. Our epoch presents us with endless historical perspectives. We are building socialism.

The eyes of the Soviet writer are open to the world. His ears must be like the ears of the musician, catching those sounds which are usually unheard by the layman. Unless he wants to lag behind hopelessly and to lose himself as a writer, he must march along with the epoch. Our epoch presents us with an unprecedented variety of themes. It says to the writer: "You have been granted the gift of depicting life. Listen to life with rapture. Reflect life. Let your pen be like the chisel of the sculptor who can hew an eagle out of a bare rock."

Such is the task which confronts us. Consider the colossal construction for the speeding up of which all the forces of our country have been gathered together, that construction which is attracting the attention of the entire world. A Soviet writer cannot inspect that construction like a tourist armed only with a camera and a cane. We must take an active part in that life. We must put into the new life everything we have. Nobody compels us to lay bricks or to assemble machines. In western countries some people believe that the tasks imposed upon us by our epoch consists of such jobs. These people maintain that the writers' brigades (which undertake to liquidate deficiencies in, let us say, the paper industry which would be one of the industries most familiar for a writer) are something like military battalions; they claim that such writers are kept in barracks and that the whole business is a form of compulsory "mobilization." This is pure nonsense. The writers are not mobilized. They are given excellent sleeping cars on the trains and are furnished with the best living conditions. The writers brigades go to factories, state and collective farms, cotton and rice regions; they visit Dnieperstroy and the Ural-Kuznetzk basin. They go to see with their own eyes what they cannot describe without seeing. I doubt whether any other country in the world can show a similar example of the thoughtfulness of a government in regard to its writers. Nowhere in the world outside the Soviet Union is the writer given such ample opportunities for travel, for study, for acquainting himself with every aspect of life, for going in any direction to any part of the country by ship, train or airplane. I might add that during my extensive trips through Europe I have never heard of any government outside our own which builds houses, clubs and restaurants for writers, giving them complete freedom to distribute apartments among themselves and organizing their life as they please.

Are we lonely in this world? Do we really live on that "isolated island" populated by unknown people who keep on fighting among themselves and who die of barbaric diseases and ideological epidemics? That is the picture which our enemies draw of the present state of Soviet literature. No, gentlemen. We occupy too prominent a position on the map not to be noticed, and we do not die of barbaric diseases. Sometimes we witness the withering away of a writer's reputation. But this withering away befalls those who do not understand or do not wish to understand the essence of the epoch in which we live. Books are not a shelter on the "island" on which we live; on the contrary, books expose the writer. The

revolution is not an institute for raising prematurely born babies or babies with inherited vices. Only those writers survive in our literature who feel they are an integral part of the common cause for which the entire country is struggling with incredible effort.

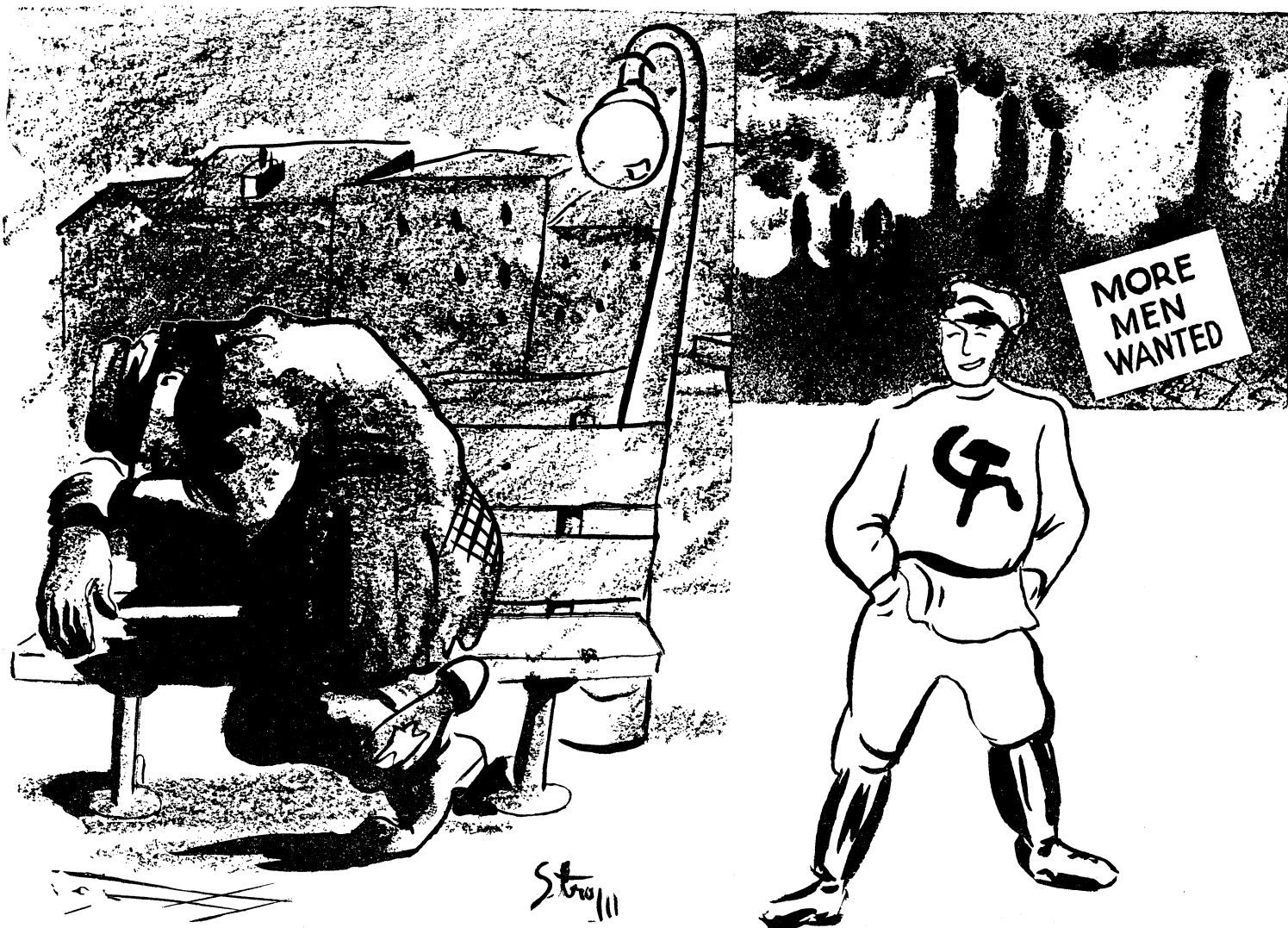
In place of the old man there has appeared a new man. The illiterate peasant of yesterday is today the transmitter of new forms of life. The idealistic intellectual of the past, who never had any definite foundation, has been replaced by the working intellectual of a new type. The worker in the factory is not only a man fulfilling his labor discipline; he is also a man who thinks politically, who joins shock-brigades to carry out the great tasks which confront the Soviet Union. And this is precisely the man whom our literature must portray. Furthermore, it is one of the most important tasks of our literature to reflect the new family relations, the new school, the new youth. The requirements are tremendous; the plans for embracing life are huge. We do not have to resort to fantasy to find a theme; life itself furnishes the themes; life breaks the windows of the writer's isolated studio. The writer leaves his studio; he travels; he observes life. During the past few years our writers have visited the remotest corners of our country, even those regions which until then had been visited only by special expeditions. Kamchatka, Siberia, the Arctic Ocean, Franz Joseph Land, Turkestan, Central Asia, the Urals, the Don Basin, Dnieperstroy, Magnitogorsk. . . . One could go on endlessly enumerating the far away sections of the Soviet Union and all the spots where gigantic industries have sprung up. About all these things our writers have written books. Backward, ruthlessly persecuted peoples whose life never attracted the writer before have now become the most interesting themes for the modern Soviet book. The national minorities who, during the three hundred years

of the czarist empire knew nothing but oppression and death, now create their own national literature, their own theatre, their own cinema.

I already see the Soviet Union entirely transformed. These are years of a hard and austere rebirth. On the road to the new life there lie the ancient rocks of passivity, petit-bourgeois taste, low culture and rudeness, all those things so beloved before the revolution by those classes which thought it profitable and necessary that the so-called "lower classes" should drown their sorrows in the saloon. Those superior creatures never dreamed that the "lower classes" would crave knowledge and culture.

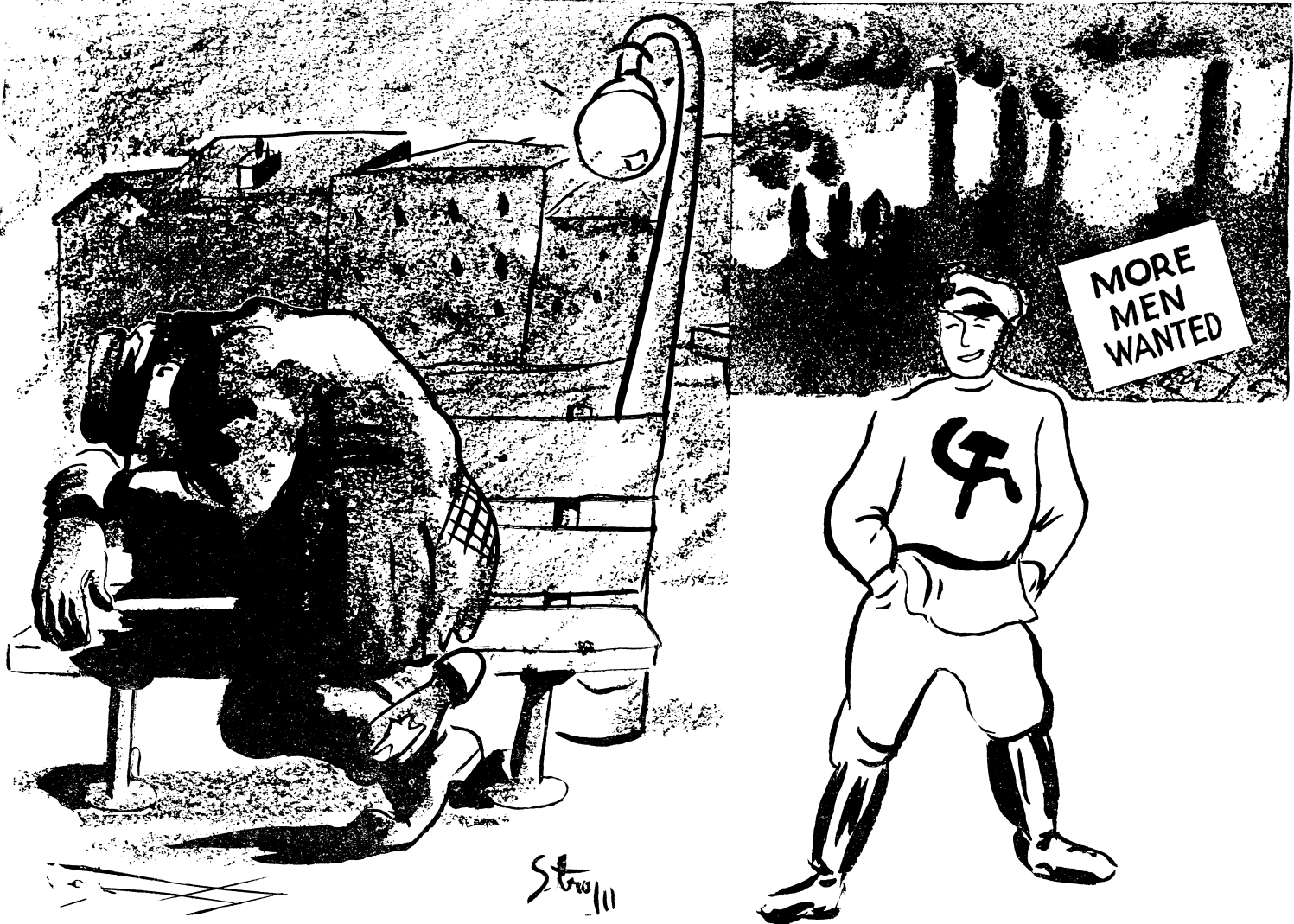
It may not fall to the lot of our generation of writers to give a full detailed description of these years. Not every generation produces geniuses. But our work is preparatory, and it is only one part of the gigantic construction of socialism. And we are not alone. We have many companions who will gladly share with us our strenuous job. These are the young inexperienced writers developed by the workers' literary circles. At present many of these are far from perfect; their command of the technique of writing leaves much to be desired. But they have already acquired rich experiences through work in the factories and on the collective farms; they know how to observe closely the various aspects of life; and they are reading and perfecting themselves in the technique of writing.

Soviet literature is not uniform. It contains various groupings and various currents. Naturally, each group fights for its right to exist. How could it be otherwise? We are living people, and literature is a very living thing. But in spite of everything, we all feel and understand those gigantic tasks which this epoch has placed upon our shoulders; and we hold each other responsible for the proper and timely fulfillment of that task.



TWO WORLDS—1932.

by Strom



TWO WORLDS—1932.

by Strom





MORE  
MEN  
WANTED

Strom

MOISSAYE J. OLGIN

# THE WORK OF MAXIM GORKY

He started his literary work when the proletariat of Russia was just beginning to stir; he is celebrating the 40th anniversary of his literary work after fifteen years of proletarian dictatorship in Russia. He stood at the cradle of the socialist movement among the workers of Russia; he stands at the threshold of the second Five-Year Plan which is to complete in the rough the structure of a socialist society. Throughout all these years he has remained faithful to the working class, to the revolution, and to socialism. His unusual artistic power has been devoted to fighting bourgeois society in the name of the oppressed human being, in the name of securing conditions for the growth of a free human personality, in the name of the social revolution.

He came into literature as a challenge. Sympathies for the exploited and downtrodden were not lacking in Russian literature. They were a tradition. Didn't Chekhov sigh over the fate of the inmates of *Ward Number Six*? Weren't his *Three Sisters* dreaming about a beautiful sun-colored life? Wasn't Tolstoy the advocate of the night-lodging inmates in the cities, of the Katjushas innocently sentenced to prison, of the peasants groaning under the burden of landlord rule? Did not Uspensky land in an insane asylum as a result of his steeping himself in the life of the Russian village? Didn't even Turgenev, the apollonic esthete, create immortal pictures saturated with sympathy for the serfs? And how about Korolenko with his Siberian characters, with his "Makar's Dreams"?

Sympathy for the poor brother, for the victim of social injustice was one of the major notes in the work of the Russian writers. And if Gorky startled the writing brotherhood from the very moment of his appearance it was not due to his subjects; it was due to his manner and spirit.

He was not only telling about the dwellers "down below," he was the dweller himself. He was the downtrodden personified. He was not looking down at anybody; he was just what he was. And he said to the writing community: "Spare us your sympathy. We can well take care of ourselves."

He was a challenge because he presented the coming of the new class. He jarred on everybody's ears because he didn't fit into the traditional conception of the "poor brother." He didn't look poor. He wasn't even melancholy. He was rudely aggressive. He flaunted his healthy appetite in the faces of the beauty-loving intellectuals. He was not an intellectual in the accepted sense. He was a citizen of the "lower depths." Those depths were shaking a hairy fist at the whole structure of bourgeois civilization.

Looking backward from the height of forty years it does not seem as if he had said it all correctly at the very outset. He was romantic. He was sometimes unduly sentimental. He wove gypsy legends. He idealized the Russian equivalent of the American hobo. But it wasn't exactly *what* he said as *how* he said it in the face of a sedate intellectual world.

Those Chelkashes and Malvas, Chudras and "creatures that were men" refused to recognize the moral code of bourgeois society. They obeyed powerful instincts. They had sharp teeth and an insatiable greed for things that did not belong to them. They took hold of everything within sight with a magnificent disregard for state and church. They were rebels in a sense. Some Russian critics, in their efforts at profundity, thought they discerned a tendency towards the superman in Gorky's early writings, and accused him of Nietzscheanism, whereas with him it was only the experience of proletarian youth come to articulation. Even in his earliest works you see the growing proletarian fighter. He is never himself by himself—he is part of a collective humanity which does not include the rich. He does not suffer in individual terms. His figures are highly impressive; they live; they move in an atmosphere of their own; they breathe the essence of life, but at the same time they are representatives of social groups.

What was perhaps most startling in those early challenges was the fact that Gorky showed how you can be poor, hungry and happy, how you can be stealing bread from a baker's stand and be a splendid specimen of humanity, how you can ignore the very existence of taboos set up by property-owning society and be an intensely attractive creature. In a sense, the first works of Gorky

were a mockery at the writing profession. Those hobos were defying anybody to envelope them with the vapor of commiseration.

Even in his early days Gorky was a revolutionist. He belonged to underground revolutionary circles. He shared with the Bolsheviks their convictions regarding the class-struggle and the coming revolution. Lenin himself had just loomed up on the horizon,—a young lion, the great theoretician and strategist of the class struggle, destined to lead a victorious social revolution twenty-five years later. Lenin wrote in 1894:

"When the foremost representatives of the working class will have assimilated the ideas of scientific socialism, the idea about the historical role of the Russian worker, when these ideas will have become widespread and there will have been organized among the workers firm organizations which shall transform the present sporadic economic war of the workers into a conscious class struggle,—then the Russian worker, having risen at the head of all the democratic elements, will throw absolutism down and lead the Russian proletariat (alongside with the proletariat of *all countries*) on the free road of open political struggle to a victorious Communist revolution."

Gorky soon recognized that his idealized slum dwellers were not his real heroes. Having shocked the intellectuals by his revolutionary onslaught, having placed on the stage the allegorical figure of Danko who, in order to light for his brothers the road "from the dark thickets into sun-lit wide space," Gorky tore out his own burning heart and lifted it as a torch over the crowd. He hurled himself on the very substance of Russian society, to dissect it limb by limb, to hew, with a firm hand and sure eye, out of the raw material of Russia's mass life an endless gallery of characters, to record an unceasing variety of incidents tragic and comic, to follow up the appearance of new social configurations and social types, to dig ever deeper into the darkest substratum of mass psychology, to pass from the present to the past, near and remote, and from the past to the present, to people his works with a teeming multiplicity of the most variegated humans who after decades remain as fresh as on the day of their creation.

Gorky's range is the whole of Russia. Gorky's interest goes all the way down from Mayakin, the pillar of capitalist society, to the new world citizen just born in the field, to a working mother that was overcome in the middle of the road,—born, be it noted, with the aid of the author doing midwife's duty. To know Gorky is to know the very fabric of the Russian people of yesterday and today. It is a vast amount of work bearing witness to a gigantic artistic memory, to a powerful pictorial talent, to an ability for creating a living image by a few bold strokes, to an interest in life's phenonema and to a creative vitality equal to none.

Throughout all this riot of artistic work Gorky remained faithful to a number of fundamental tenets.

He remained the friend of the masses. His chief concern is the baker's helper, the truckman, the factory hand, the farm hand, the painter's apprentice, the lumberjack, the night watchman, the clerk. In dealing with these characters he draws from a vast store of experience accumulated in his adolescence and youth. He is not a Kuprin who goes a-slumming to fish out types. He is not an Andreyev who has to *invent* his personages and make them act by virtue of sheer artistic suggestion. He is not even a Serafimovich who always, in spite of democratic tendencies, speaks of "them." Gorky, when creating proletarian figures, is always among his own people. He is at his best in these creations. He is not primarily interested in showing the "better" types; neither is he sitting judgment over his people. He just thrusts his artistic pitchfork into the thick mass of humanity whether in the town of Okurov or in the remotest priest-ridden village, whether on a Volga log raft or among the intellectuals in a Petersburg salon,—and brings out whatever happens. What he brings out palpitates with life and remains alive forever. Gorky is not making propaganda in the sense of trying to prove that the workers are good and the exploiters are bad. That is below the dignity of his talent. He gives those people as they are, as they have emerged from the crucible of his experience on the lense of his creative ima-

gination and because the capitalist social system is intrinsically wrong, and because every social type is unavoidably a representative of his class, Gorky's works give you material of incalculable value for the understanding of the class composition and the class-struggle of Russia. If Gorky were to argue on behalf of his own method he would say together with Foma Gordejev! "You have not built a life, you have made a garbage heap of it. You have created with your own hands mountains of dirt; it is suffocating. Have you a conscience? Do you think of God? Pennies, these are your gods. As to conscience, you have driven it away . . . . Where is it? Blood-suckers! You live on somebody else's toil! No end of people must shed bloody tears on account of your miserable deeds! You scoundrels do not deserve even to be in hell . . . You will be boiled not in fire but in hot mud. Not for centuries will you get rid of your tortures." It was not Gorky's fault, indeed, that capitalism was so little attractive.

In one respect Gorky was a propagandist all his life: he did not try to beautify ugly reality. He gave it as it existed. He hated exploitation, the degradation of the human personality, the humiliation of the human mind. In his intense sympathy for the sufferers he resembled Dostojevsky, but while the latter sought escape in mystic moods, Gorky sought escape in fighting the hateful system.

It was natural for him to portray the revolutionary movement in its varying aspects. From "Mother" to the "Life of Klim Samgin" there is an immense distance artistically. The former novel has something of the romantic: the latter is all sound and sober realism; the main hero of the former, the old working woman who turns Bolshevik after her son is arrested, is somewhat idealized; the figures in the "Life of Klim Samgin" are ruthlessly exposed both as to positive and negative qualities. The spirit that pervades these and many other works dealing with the revolutionary movement, however, remains unchanged. Toiling humanity breaking its chains. Workers rising against exploitation. The human personality in the oppressed battling to assert itself. The vision of a great tomorrow illuminating the difficult road.

"Man,—that sounds proud," said Gorky in one of his early writings. He has remained faithful to this slogan throughout his life. Gorky is perhaps the most humane writer living in spite—or even because—of the fact that he is not sentimental, that he sees people in their proper proportions. Gorky loves life. He loves the processes of life. He loves the crowded avenues of life. He seems always to be moving in a crowd. And this is why he so adamantly despises the typical bourgeois intellectual who lives for himself by himself. With what sarcasm Gorky scolded the esthetic intellectuals who tried to run away from the revolution under various ideological pretenses. "Here we see them," he writes in 1905, "disturbed and pitiful, hiding from the revolution wherever they can—in the dark corners of mysticism, in the pretty bowers of estheticism, in the artificial structures hastily built by them out of stolen material. Sad-eyed and hopeless, they wander through the labyrinths of metaphysics over and over again returning to the narrow paths of religion all heaped with the rubbish of centuries, everywhere bringing with them their vulgarity, the hysterical moanings of a soul smitten with petty fear, their sterility, their brazenness, and everything they touch they shower with a hail of pretty but empty words that have a false and pitiful ring."

Gorky was actively and intensely interested in political events. He lived those events with all the passion of his being. The writer of these lines has a personal interest in the following passage of a letter written by Gorky to Brjusov right after the sentencing of 218 students of the Kiev University to serve one year in the army—"for correction." The writer was among the sentenced; the punishment was the czar's reaction to a students' demonstration. Gorky wrote:

"My mood is that of a mad dog who was beaten up and leashed to a chain. If you, sir, love man, I hope you will understand me. You see, I feel that to send a student to the army is hideous; it is a brazen crime against his personal freedom. It is an idiotic measure of scoundrels oversated with power. My heart is boiling over and I would be glad to spit into the shameless mugs of those man-haters who when reading your 'Northern Flowers,' will give them a gracious praise. But then they praise me too. This is revolting and intolerable to such a degree that an inexpressible hatred is surging in me against everything, even against Bunin whom I love but whom I do not understand; I do not understand why his talent, beautiful like opaque old silver, is not being sharpened by him like a knife to be thrust where it belongs."

Gorky has never been one of the literati. He is never an outsider, an observer. He is always part of the revolutionary struggle even when he lives abroad, even when he is confined to the Capri island in consequence of his illness. He is conscious of being an active part of the stream of social life.

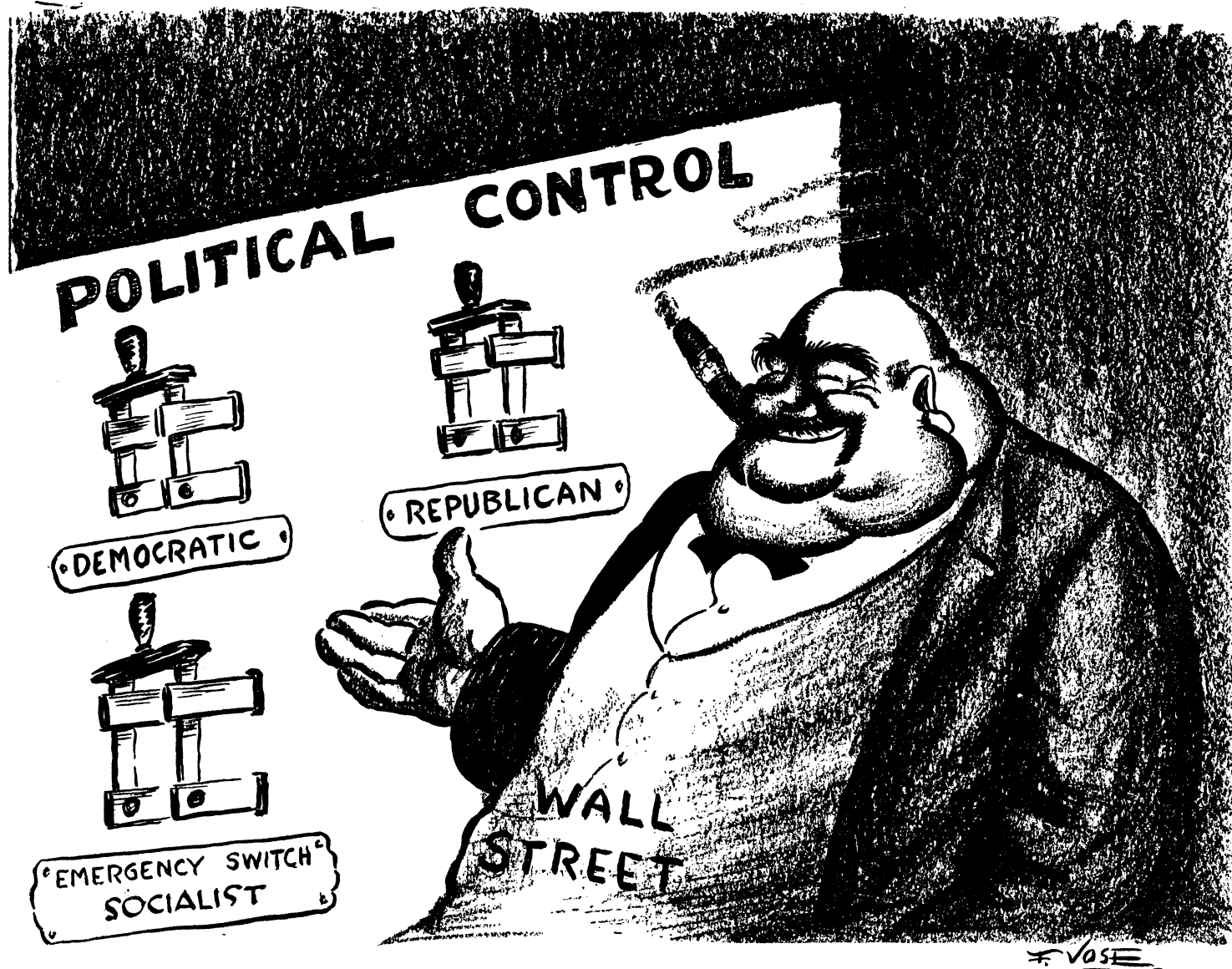
Gorky hates with all his might the darkness of the Russian past, the domination of man over man, the ignorance, the brutality, the crudity of "holy Russia." No less does he hate those poison flowers of art that thrive on the accursed soil. He was and is an enemy of religion, an enemy of the church and an enemy of those writers who tried to find "profundities" in religious mysticism luxuriating amidst poverty and filth. When he was accused of opposing Dostojevsky's "Devils" he wrote: "Kipling is very talented, but the Hindoos cannot fail to recognize the damage he causes by his preaching of imperialism, and many Englishmen agree with them in that . . . . Dostojevsky is great, and Tolstoy is a genius, and you gentlemen, if you please, are all talented and clever, but Russia and its people are more significant and more important than Tolstoy, Dostojevsky, and even Pushkin, not to speak about us all."

In one form or another Gorky always remained a member of a revolutionary organization. Since 1905 he has been affiliated with the Bolshevik party. There were times when he deviated from the Communist line as in the case of that ultra-left movement known as "recallism" (demanding the recall of the Bolshevik Duma deputies) or in the case of other disagreements with one of the other measures undertaken by the Bolshevik Party. There were times when he had his quarrels even with the new Soviet state. But all his life he remained loyal to the revolution and loyal to socialism. Gorky as a writer and Gorky as a fighter was always hated by the bourgeoisie and by the very many intellectuals defending the bourgeoisie. For about thirty years his enemies were shouting about the "death" of Gorky. In this their wish was father to their thought. Gorky kept on growing, broadening, reaching out into new fields, creating monumental works to the dismay of the enemies.

Gorky is considered the father of proletarian literature in Russia. His very language was a challenge to the language prevailing in pre-war Russian literature. He is colorful but he is an enemy of that artful polish and exaggerated refinement that the language received at the hands of the Russian symbolists. He is natural in the true sense of the word, but he never tries to imitate folklore in the manner in which it was done by the Russian classics: he has no need of that. He is idiomatic but without the "holy Russian" darkness that creeps into the language of a Dostojevsky or a Chekhov or a Sergejev Tsensky or an Andrey Belyj. He is strong with the strength of one who does not have to tighten his muscles to show power. He is musical like the Russian steppe, like the ripples of the Volga, but he is seldom sentimental and never shallow.

Gorky is the father of Russian proletarian literature not only because he gave samples of great art of molding social material under the rays of the class-conception of society with the purpose of bringing the class-struggle into bolder relief, but also in the sense of having been the first organizer of the young proletarian writers who began their activities at the turn of the century. In 1914, three years before the revolution, a volume of stories of young proletarian writers, factory workers, the first of its kind, was published with the aid of, and with an introduction by, Gorky. Here Gorky, addressing himself to the readers and to the writer workers, says:

"This book written by your comrades is a new and very significant phenomenon in your life. It speaks eloquently of the growth of the intellectual powers of the proletariat. You understand very well that for a self-taught writer to write a little story is infinitely more difficult than for a professional writer to write a novel of several hundred pages. Without equivocation we may say that this collection of yours is interesting. You have ground to be proud. And who can tell the future? Maybe this little book will be mentioned in the future as one of the first steps of the Russian proletariat towards the creation of its own artistic literature. One may object that this is a fantasy, that such a literature has never existed. Well, there are many things that have never existed; the working class itself has never existed in those forms and with that spiritual content which it has acquired in later days. I am convinced that the proletariat can create artistic literature as it has created, with great difficulty and toil, its daily press."



Gorky foresaw the development of the proletariat's creative forces as Lenin foresaw the development of the proletariat towards the social revolution. Lenin valued Gorky, thinking of him as "an authority in proletarian art," as "the greatest representative of proletarian art," defending him against attacks while criticizing his mistakes and declaring that "Gorky is a tremendous artistic talent who has done and will do much service to the world proletarian movement."

Gorky never knew the line of demarcation between "literature" and journalism, the art of the creative writer and the art of the pamphleteer. Such works as the "Island of the Yellow Devil" or "Beautiful France" are a happy blending of satirical denunciation and striking artistic presentation. Many chapters of his works are of similar nature. When necessity requires, Gorky puts aside his artistic pen to grip the publicist's club with which he belabors the enemies of the working class and the enemies of the revolution, all the while using his artistic talent to make his ideas stand out in clear relief. It is difficult to say in which field he is a greater master.

As a publicist he is particularly effective in his attacks upon bourgeois culture. His letter to the American intellectuals published in pamphlet form in this country\* may serve as an example. He defends the Soviet Union, describing the achievement of the proletarian dictatorship, countering the attacks of the capitalists. Never for a moment does he lose sight of the great future of a classless society now under construction. In this publicist's work he is as realistic, as close to the earth as in his artistic writings.

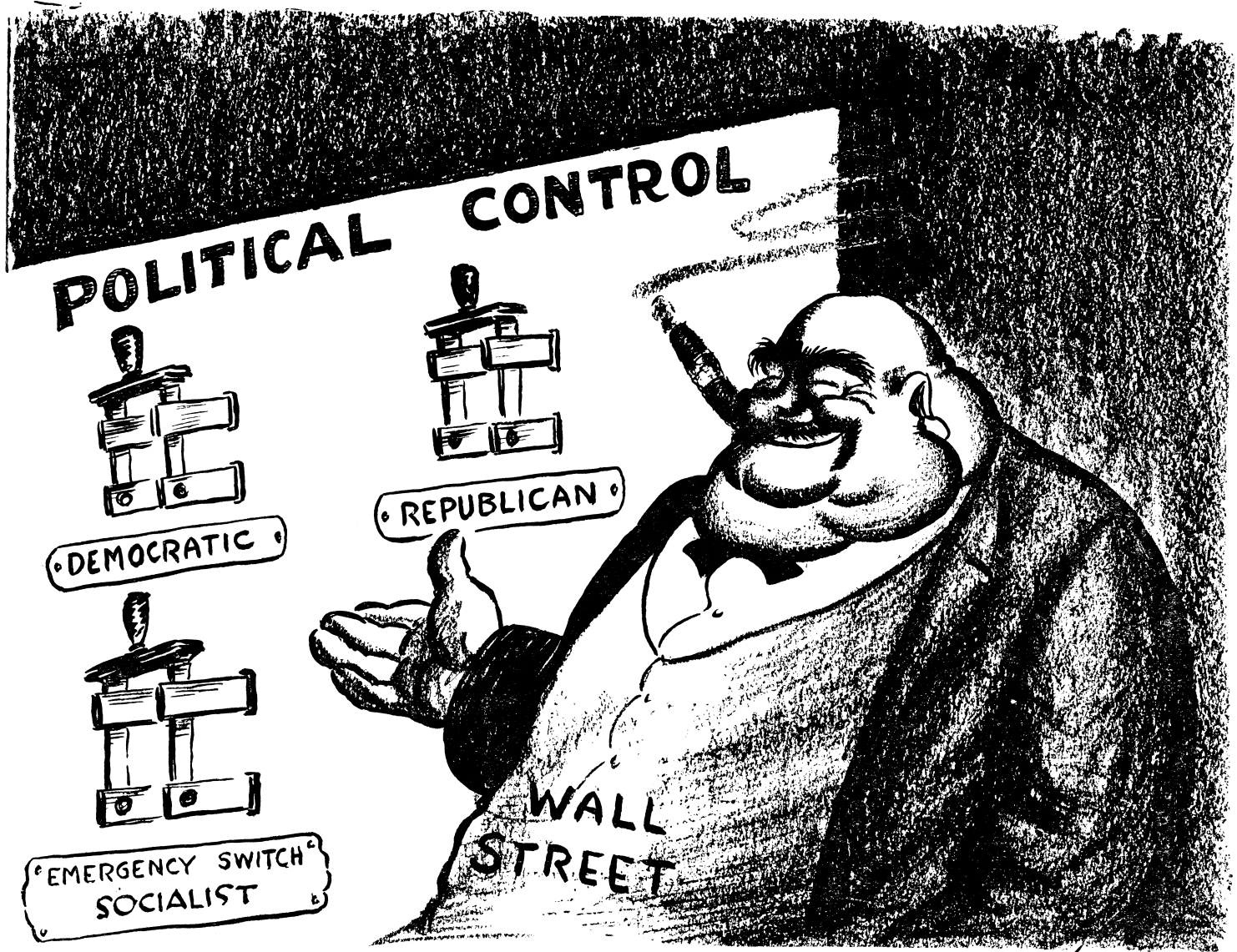
Russia of today does not appear to him in a haze of ideal beauty. He sees the ugly remnants of "old mother Russia"; he is aware

of the scars of the dark past that Russia still bears, he feels the obstacles which arise not only in the objective world but also within the minds of those who build the new life. But never for a moment does he forget that these are the sufferings of growth, that old "Mother Russia" is vanishing, that new Russia is rapidly casting off the remnants of the old hideous habiliments, that the future is assured. In this ability to see the future amidst the difficulties of to-day Gorky finds Lenin's greatest genius. "He knew how to foresee what must happen like nobody else before him knew. He knew this and he knew how to do it, it seems to me, because with one half of his great soul he lived in the future, because his iron-clad but flexible logic showed him the remote future in perfectly concrete real forms. This seems to explain his astonishing stability in relation to the reality which never dismayed him, no matter how difficult and complicated it was, which never shook his firm belief that the moment will come when the working class and the peasantry must and shall be the masters of the whole world." This holds true not only of Lenin but of his friend and collaborator Gorky.

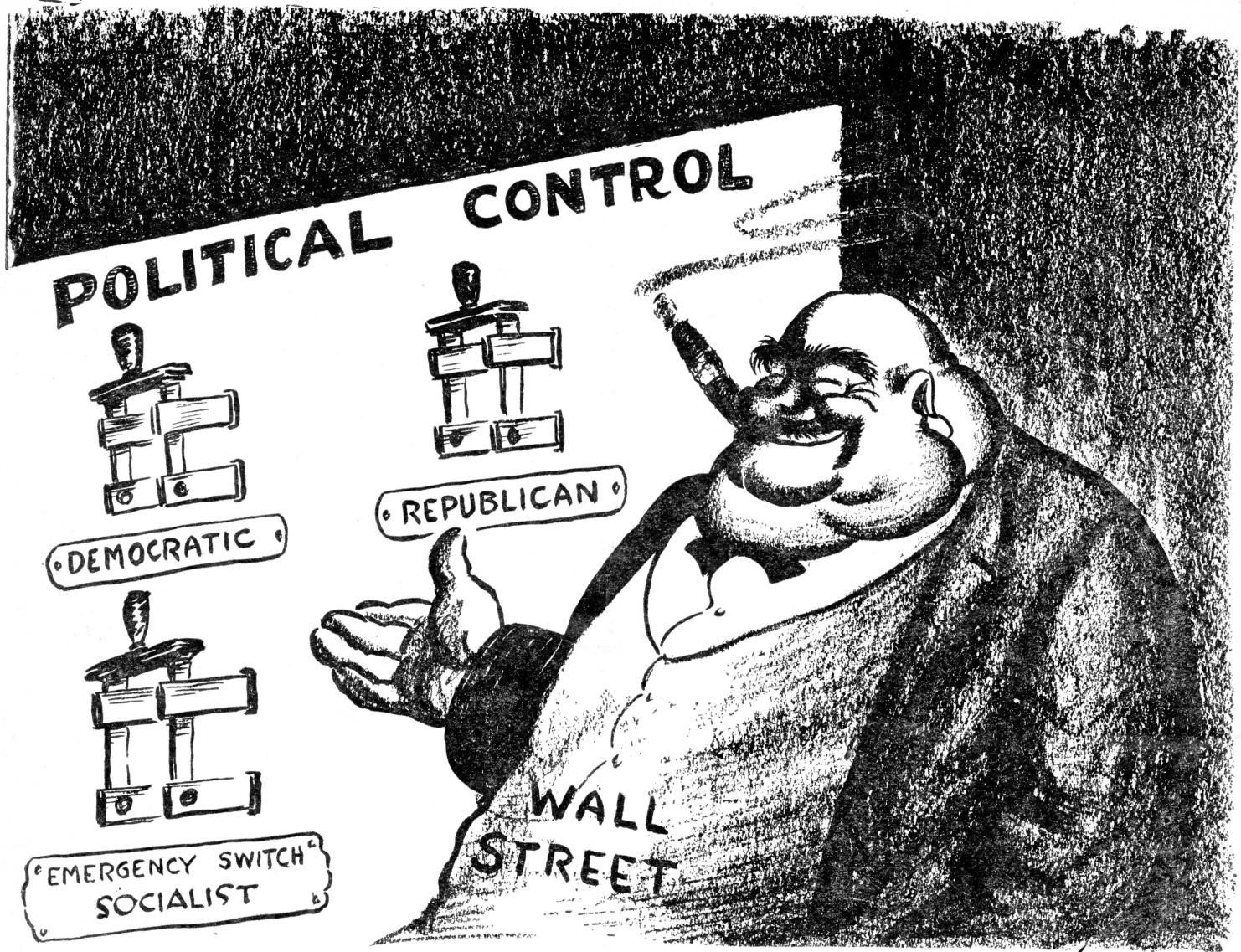
Gorky is one of the outstanding champions of the Soviet Union and of socialist construction. The fortieth anniversary of his literary activity was celebrated in a fashion worthy of the Socialist country and the great artist fighter. This was the first time in history that a great writer was celebrated not by dozens or hundreds of thousands, but by scores of millions of toilers in cities and villages.

Gorky is inseparable from the Soviet Union. Gorky is bringing the Soviet Union to millions of workers still exploited under capitalism throughout the world. The workers must know Gorky. It is the duty of such magazines as the *New Masses* and such organizations as the John Reed Club to bring Gorky most intimately to the consciousness of the American workers.

\* To American Intellectuals, by Maxim Gorky. International Publishers. 10c.



F. VOSE



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**BERNHARD J. STERN**

# THE CONGRESS AGAINST WAR

The response to the World Congress Against Imperialist War held in Amsterdam August 27th to 29th and attended by 2100 delegates was overwhelmingly from workers organizations. Many delegates came from afar by foot or on bicycles; on the morning of the opening of the Congress, the streets of Amsterdam surged with German, Belgian, French and other workers singing working class songs as they marched to the meeting place. Youth predominated; the Congress hall was electric with vitality and strength. Some of the delegates participated at great personal risk; an Italian sailor in full uniform defied fascist terror by speaking from the rostrum; three Polish worker delegates were arrested on the frontier upon their return.

All shades of political opinion opposed to war were represented at the Congress as had been the intention of the original appeal by Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse. In spite of the attempt of the leaders of the Second International to discredit the Congress as a Communist plot—as if an attempt by Communists to bring masses of workers and intellectuals into a joint demonstration and struggle against war were perfidious—over three hundred socialist party delegates representing the rank and file were present. Eight hundred of the delegates were Communists and the remainder of those present avowed no party affiliation on their registration cards.

The atmosphere of the Congress was charged with militancy which mounted as the sessions proceeded. The delegates were alertly conscious that the world situation made urgent immediate awakening and channelizing of vigorous anti-war sentiments. The war already being waged in the Far East, the danger of an attack on the Soviet Union on the eastern and western fronts, the failure of the much heralded but obviously hypocritical League of Nations Disarmament Congress which accelerated the competitive race for armaments all over the world, and the rabid nationalistic hates and imperialistic rivalries engendered by ruling groups in their competition for shrinking markets, made the delegates determined to strike out mightily to defeat an attempt to engulf the masses of the world in another carnage.

The opening address was by Barbusse whose wiry, almost emaciated figure was tensely strained as he related the history of the Congress—how it had sought and had been refused a meeting place by the governments of Switzerland, France and England and how Holland had denied entry to Maxim Gorky and other members of the Soviet delegation to the Congress. He appealed for unity among the divergent groups at the Congress and urged consideration for a minimum program of action against war. His climax was a ringing declaration that the peace of the world depended upon the workers, and that intellectuals who oppose war must fight under the direction of workers organizations.

Mme. Gabrielle Duchene read the pacifist address of Rolland calling for all to rally under the simple slogan "War on War." A representative of the French peasants who had been sent to the Congress by a fund collected, franc by franc, from poor peasants in a region which was formerly a stronghold of French nationalism, described the rising indignation against militarism in rural France and pleaded for an active, not a passive struggle against war. Patel, an Indian nationalist leader, told of England's war against India and declared that he could not support a blanket demand for disarmament because he considered it the duty of India and all oppressed peoples to arm in preparation for the overthrow of their exploiters. The veteran leader of the Japanese proletariat, Sen Katayama, recalled the pledge to fight against war which he had made at a socialist congress at Amsterdam in 1904 during the Russo-Japanese war and he urged the delegates to keep their pledge for a continuous struggle to prevent war as he had done. Lou Wincott who participated in the British naval mutiny at Invergordon told how some of the English soldiers had refused to take up arms against the sailors in revolt; he concluded that at the outbreak of the next war the soldiers and sailors of imperialist armies would take matters into their own hands.

Three speakers represented the American group of thirty-two delegates,— Sherwood Anderson; Joseph Gardner, a Negro ex-

soldier and coal miner from Illinois; and H. W. L. Dana. Anderson spoke briefly of how in war time writers had been used to invent and promulgate atrocity stories and he expressed the hope that the swing to the left of the writers in the United States would prevent such aid to the imperialists in the next war. Gardner described how the bonus army was driven from Washington, and Dana spoke of war preparations in America. There were hosts of other speakers from all parts of the world, of all races, from all social horizons—factory workers, writers and artists, scientists, peasants, officials— representing diverse viewpoints and advocating different tactics but united in the common struggle against imperialist war.

Marcel Cachin, Communist member of the French Chamber of Deputies and Willi Munzenberg, Communist deputy to the German Reichstag, put forth most effectively and dramatically the Communist program of action against war. They stressed the fact that war as a colossal mass movement cannot be prevented by the sacrifices of individual conscientious objectors no matter how courageous and well motivated these persons might be. They advocated mass anti-war activities in the armies and navies, in munition plants and among transport workers who could triple the production and delivery of munitions. They pointed as an object lesson in fighting imperialist war, to the Russian Bolshevik revolution which had not only ended Russian participation in the imperialist war but had begun the building of socialism which will eliminate the basic roots of war. Exposing the recreancy of the leaders of the Second International in the last war, they warned that the masses would not tolerate such a betrayal of anti-war principles again. Both emphasized that much as Communists differed from other groups in their tactics, they were willing to unite with them in an active campaign against war.

The manifesto of the Congress, which was formulated by the resolutions committee on the basis of a preliminary draft by Barbusse, summarized the facts which revealed the imminence of a new world war, analyzed the causes which breed war and concluded with the following pledge and appeal:

Each of us here takes a sort of pledge, and we take it all together.

We swear that we will never allow the formidable unity which has been established here among the exploited and victimized masses to be broken up.

We swear to fight with all our force and with all the means at our command against imperialist capitalism, that purveyor to the slaughterhouse.

We swear to dedicate ourselves with all our forces and all our resources to our direct and immediate tasks, standing up:

against armaments, against war preparations, and in consequence against the governments ruling us;  
 against jingoism, nationalist chauvinism, and fascism, the police army of imperialism which leads to imperialist war and provokes civil war against the masses of the working class;  
 against war budgets, a vote for which is a dishonour and a crime;  
 against the loans and taxes that rob the masses to feed armaments;  
 against the campaign of propaganda and slander aimed at the Soviet Union, the country of socialist construction which we will not allow to be touched;  
 against the dismemberment of China, of which each imperialist power covets a portion;  
 against the exploitation, oppression, and massacre of the colonial nations;  
 for the support of the national minorities and the peoples fighting for their national and social independence;  
 for the effective support of the Japanese workers who have raised the standard of struggle against their own imperialist government.

All the burdens of war, as well as all the burdens of armed peace and of war preparations, are laid on the shoulders of the working class, whose vanguard is formed by the armament and

transport workers. The working class must therefore immediately organize and be on its guard.

We swear to fight with all our power against the gathering disaster.

And we continue to appeal to all: to appeal to all workers, peasants, and intellectuals of all countries, to the exploited and oppressed. We call upon them to join us, and in public meetings and demonstrations to take the pledges we have taken here and to put them into effect.

The Paris meeting at which the French delegates returning from the Congress were welcomed, gave the answer to some who feared that the anti-war spirit aroused by the Amsterdam Congress would dissipate when the sessions ended. Over ten thousand workers stood crammed shoulder to shoulder in Salle Bullier and thousands surged outside the hall in the largest Paris working class demonstration in twelve years. The attack of the entire Paris police force and the Republican Guard upon the overflow crowd gave evidence that the authorities sensed the threat of this protest against French militaristic activities. For there was grim realism in the cries of *A bas la guerre, Contre la guerre* and *Les Soviets partout* shouted by thousands of workers with raised clenched fists.

The imperialists' preparations for war speed on, with United States playing a dominant role. It is significant that a few days after the Congress, General Douglas MacArthur who directed the troops that dispersed the bonus army in Washington, attended army manoeuvres in Poland. There is therefore immediate need that the appeal of the Congress be carried to the remotest corners of the country, that workers, farmers, students and intellectuals be stirred to action in an effective struggle against imperialist war.

**Tom Mooney**

**GREETINGS U. S. S. R.!**

*Colifornia State Prison  
San Quentin, Calif.,  
October 12, 1932.*

*Through the columns of the "New Masses," I extend my revolutionary greetings to you, Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, on the 15th anniversary of your birth.*

*Conceived in the teachings of Marx and Lenin, born of the world war and the collapse of Russian Czarism and capitalism, baptized in the blood of millions of heroic workers and peasants, grown in spite of the desperate attacks of world reaction, you have today become a mighty giant whose shadow strikes terror in the camp of world capitalism.*

*Surrounded on all sides by enemies armed to the teeth, you must guard against the foes who know that your life means their death. But in the camp of your enemies, the capitalists of the world, you have innumerable friends, the world's toiling masses. These see more clearly every day that while capitalism means unemployment, speed-up, wage cuts, malnutrition and starvation, the Soviet Union means a steady rise of the living and cultural level of the workers and poor farmers.*

*When 15 years ago you, workers and peasants of the Soviet Union, arose from your knees and threw off your backs the parasites and leeches who had sucked your blood for centuries, you struck a blow for freedom, not only for yourselves but for the workers of the world. It is therefore the duty of the world's toiling masses to prevent attacks upon you and, if they do occur, to frustrate them at all costs.*

*You, workers and peasants of the Soviet Union, never forgot capitalist victims in other lands. Your demonstration on my behalf in front of the American Embassy at Petrograd in April, 1917, called the attention of the entire world to my frame-up and was directly responsible for my death sentence being commuted to life imprisonment.*

*All hail to you, Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, and to your heroic masses whose sacrifices and unremitting toil are making possible the unprecedented growth of a new life and a new world dedicated to the abolition of capitalism and to the building up of an International Workers' Fatherland.*

**Sherwood Anderson**

**AT AMSTERDAM**

I am here at this World Congress Against Imperialist War at Amsterdam, Holland. I am writing in a great noisy hall—thousands of people from Germany, England, France and some twenty or thirty other countries are here. The room is tense. There are some noted literary figures here but the general mass are workers. They are socialists, communists and pacifists from many countries.

Speakers spring up and talk. They are peasants. They are factory workers.

How well they talk. Always the workers speak better, more directly, than the intellectuals.

As in America, all Europe is in the grip of a vast depression. Many of these workers have come here afoot. They are strong looking men. Suddenly they all break out into song. These workers have been taught by long years of suffering to stand together. They sing together. The rafters of the building shake with song and shouts.

The hall—a vast automobile exposition building—is divided into groups. After a speech from the central rostrum—on which I now sit writing—men spring up in various parts of the great hall. The speech from the central rostrum is reported in many languages.

From America there are some thirty delegates, representing farmers, ex-soldiers, sailors, textile workers, carpenters and miners. I am the only professional writer from America.

It is amazing how well the workers and the peasants speak. There is a kind of force, a strength that shakes the nerves. In Europe they have quit being afraid of the words socialism, communism, etc. You feel everywhere in the people the conviction that the world is in a great period of change. There is a struggle. This and that idea is thrust out suddenly, boldly. The hall shakes with shouts of approval or with hisses.

Today—Sunday—the day of the great mass meeting—the workers of Holland marching today—the streets outside the hall are filled with marching thousands.

Against this the beautiful quiet city. Never before have I been in a more beautiful city. The whole city is spotlessly clean. Down the middle of the wide streets go tree-lined canals. Nearly all of the freight brought into the city to be distributed is floated directly to the door of the store or warehouse. Everywhere you see barges floating, some propelled by long poles, some by engines.

The European is unlike the American in that almost every man speaks three or four languages and here I have been able to meet with and talk to writers from all over the world. It has all been very exciting and absorbing to me.

As to the Congress—from all these European countries you hear the same cry, "It is of no importance to sign petitions for peace or to go to the League of Nations." Every speaker cries out the same thing.

"If the workers, in the munition plants, will refuse longer to make munitions—if the transport workers will not transport munitions . . ."

"Strike. Strike against war," is the universal cry here. Not in one country but in all countries. The great effort is to get the workers of all countries together, to get them to quit hating each other. "Workers of the world unite!" The feeling is that all but the very rich man suffers from war. The hope here is to make this understood by more and more workers from all countries.

There is something alive here, glowingly alive. Let the capitalistic newspapers of the world play all this down. In the end it will assert itself. Here workers of the world, for once anyway, have got together.

It is a beginning. There is a song of hope in it. There is a fist raised. It is a mass of workers, from many countries, having sincere feeling for each other. Internationality. Do not let anyone tell you that the workers' world congress against war is not a success.

*Amsterdam, Holland, August 28, 1932.*



**A. V. Lunacharsky**

## MARXISM and ART

According to Marxism as a theory of the development of human society, art is a definite superstructure upon the mutual relations between men engaged in productive processes, relations which are themselves determined by the forms of labor prevailing in a given period. Art appears as a superstructure on this economic foundation in two ways: first, as part of industry itself, and secondly as an ideology.

Art has played an important role in the life of humanity, from the most primitive times until the present as a specific tendency in the whole of human production. Perhaps nothing can be found among the products of human labor where every detail—such as color, form etc. is dictated exclusively by utilitarian motives. If we take any object, be it a book or a building, a cup or a lamp-post, and consider its basic outlines, it will be seen that these outlines cannot be explained merely on the grounds of usefulness. Harmonious proportions without doubt evoke pleasure in the spectator, regardless of utility. This is the simplest aspect of the question; but even on a more complicated scale, it is impossible to find any human product which does not bear some trace of the desire to beautify—to polish, glaze and color objects of use. It is clear that man has a powerful tendency to combine in the products he creates not only purely utilitarian aspects but also aesthetic ones. In the long run this tendency is connected with our senses. We know that there are pleasant and unpleasant sounds and colors. Man always attempts to make his productions pleasant; attractive, interesting.

Naturally, aesthetic taste varies from people to people, from period to period. One of the most interesting tasks would be to investigate the roots of all the different styles in art. Why for example, Chinese art, which evokes such pleasure, is so different from Greek art. It would be interesting to analyze the evolution of French furniture, to discover why the pomp of the Louis XIV style develops into the solid severity of the Louis XVI style; then the graceful austerity of the revolutionary style; then into the harmonious discipline of the imposing Empire style. Only Marxism can discover the true causes of the endless variety of style in art. But for this purpose Marxism must investigate not only the social order of a given period and the traditions of preceding periods; but also the prevailing technical equipment.

Art, however, is not only an aspect of work; it is an ideology. From the Marxian viewpoint, an ideology is a systematic reflection of all life as it appears to human consciousness, which fills the entire conscious life of mankind. Human consciousness takes form in individual, momentary, isolated thoughts; but when these ideas and feelings begin to crystalize they become ideologies.

Various sociological schools which existed before Marxism or alongside of it taught that the organization of thought and feeling is an independent process, and even that this idealistic process is the very essence of human life; they believed that human society first organizes its thought and feeling through its great specialists, the thinkers and artists, and then proceeds to organize its environment according to the theories evolved by these intellectual specialists. Marxism, however, has shown that the opposite is true. Ideologies grow out of realities and bear the earmarks of this reality. Every ideology receives its material from reality; the actual forms of reality control the ideas and intuitions of the thinker, who cannot ever free himself from definite social interests. The thinker is always tendentious; that is, he always seeks to organize his material toward a definite end.

More than that: Marxism points out that society is divided into antagonistic social classes which struggle against each other. In this sense, classes are groups of people, participating in the process of production, who occupy different positions in production and different attitudes toward production; and therefore have quite different interests; such as, for example, the landowners, the bourgeoisie, the peasantry, the proletariat.

When a Marxist speaks of the class character of ideas, he is not content with merely saying that every system of ideas belongs to this or that basic class, to the ruling class, or to the class struggling for power, or to the class under domination. Marxian analysis goes further: it seeks to determine the relations between various legal theories, philosophic systems, religious teachings and schools of art and the various groups within the basic classes, or

even intermediary classes in society. Often a given society is extremely complicated. It is a crime against true Marxism to take ideological phenomena and explain them by the interests of only one of the important classes. The history of ideas is entirely rooted in the history of society, and as the evolution of human society is varied and complex, ideologies are equally varied and complex. Furthermore, while Marxism denies that ideologies play the dominant role in the evolution of society, it does not deny the importance of ideologies. When social classes create their legal systems, their religions, their philosophy, their morals, their art, they are not wasting energy. This is no mere reflection of reality in various mirrors. These reflections themselves become social forces: they become banners and slogans around which the social class gathers, with the aid of which it fights its enemies and recruits among them its agents and vassals.

Art plays a prominent role among the ideologies. To a certain degree it is the organizer of social thought. In itself it is a special medium for apprehending reality. Science, which seeks to be accurate and objective, helps us to apprehend reality in another way. But scientific knowledge is abstract; it says nothing to human emotion. In order to understand any aspect of reality thoroughly it is not enough to have merely an intellectual concept of it; it is also necessary to have an emotional attitude toward it. This attitude finds expression in ethics and aesthetics. It is possible, for instance, to know something about the Russian peasants from statistical reports; but it is quite another matter to become acquainted with the Russian peasants through the works of a novelist like Uspensky.

However, we know that statistical reports may be distorted, either deliberately or unconsciously; similarly, the artistic reflection of life may also be deliberately or unconsciously distorted by class interest. But it is precisely this factor which makes art so powerful. It is not merely an instrument for apprehending reality; it is also a weapon for propagating definite viewpoints, a definite approach to reality. In so far as art organizes thoughts, it organizes them together with feelings. Sometimes art organizes only the feelings. Music for example, and architecture, (considered as art and not as engineering) are incapable of expressing thought. It takes a great deal of trouble to translate their language into the words which express our concepts; and the result is crude. Nevertheless, the effect of music and architecture are colossal.

In fields where living facts express themselves directly in ideas, it is easy to trace ideologies to the social groups which evolve them; but where it is a matter of organizing feelings, which is the essence of art, such a process becomes difficult. That is precisely why the history and theory of art have defended themselves so successfully hitherto against Marxism. But of late great progress has been made in this field. Several works by the German Marxist historian and art theoretician Hausenstein are forward steps in this direction. Hausenstein has been successful in developing the weakest sides of the Marxian theory of art.

These are principles of Marxism in so far as Marxism is a theory of human society and its evolution. But Marxism is more than such a theory; it is a definite program; it is itself the ideology of a definite class—the proletariat. Marxism is the only ideology which does no violence to reality. This is due to the fact that the proletariat is the class of the future; it is to the interest of the proletariat to base itself on that science which points out what actually exists and indicates the tendencies of the future. Similarly, the tendencies of the proletariat are good for the whole of humanity. The proletariat is the last oppressed class; in emancipating itself it emancipates all humanity from a social order based on classes. There has never been so far a more important or more liberating social change than that which the proletariat will bring about. It is for this reason that the aims of the proletariat are at the same time the aims of mankind.

The theoreticians of the proletariat must do more than point out with real objectivity how this or that aspect of art springs out of the social order; they have the right to adopt a critical attitude toward works of art, both past and present. The proletarian theoretician can designate those art works of the past which are clearly dominated by the monstrous spirit of exploitation; those works which express the passive sufferings of the masses or their slavish submission; or which are permeated with the spirit of compromise, evasion, surrender, and skepticism. The proletarian critic can spot those works of art which deliberately avoid all liv-

WILLIAM  
SIEGEL

NOVEMBER, 1917

by William Siegel

ing content and resort to an empty play of intellect or vaporous dreams, in order to escape reality, to evade all responsibility for it. On the other hand, the proletarian critic can find certain valuable elements in old works of art, which, while often belonging to the ruling classes, are nevertheless full of the spirit of vast organizational plans, of man's faith in his own powers, of aspiration for knowledge and a just life; or works whose main tendency is that of revolt against evil, which proclaim the rights of the oppressed sections of mankind.

Endless are the voices, the complaints, the laughter, the songs which sound in the artistic works of the past; and if they were analyzed from beginning to end it would be possible to find a definite social value in each work. Some would turn out to be acceptable to the proletariat; they would have a friendly ring, like the voices of men who in one way or another were the prophets or precursors of the proletariat; other works would turn out to be doubtful in their tendency but interesting because they reveal unique social situations; still others would be found to be repulsive or inimical.

In addition to evaluating works of art according to their contents, the proletarian critic can also evaluate them on the basis of form. Marxism, for example, teaches us that those classes which are interested in expressing new ideas, in organizing great feelings will always create art works rich in content; on the other hand, decaying classes, which have no ideology, which have no hope of defending their rights, abandon themselves to purely formal art, which serves the purpose of making their life a little less monotonous and more acceptable. In the field of artistic form

it is possible to develop the most varied evils; it is possible to develop extreme aesthetic licentiousness; or colossal, stupid pomp; or the sensual refinement of a landowner.

There are epochs—as a rule those in which some social class is in full bloom—which are characterized by striking ideas and whose emotional content finds the proper formal expression. Then art is calm, precisely because of this harmony between content and form. The artist is sure that his work is significant, that it will be accepted by certain elements of his people. He is self-confident; he knows precisely how this or that content must be transmitted to the society of which he is a part. He is master of the requisite form. Under such circumstances, we have a classical period. But until the arrival of such an epoch there must be a period in which ideas and feelings are as yet unable to find their proper embodiment. Such a period usually coincides with the rise of a given class to power, and not with its highest point of power. During the period when the class is striving to find a political form for its class interests, its art is characterized by storm and stress, and its forms are restless. The artist of such a transition period strains his imagination to find the form which he is as yet unable to grasp. Even the ideas which do arise in his mind are not yet entirely clear to him. His feelings, however, are very turbulent; and thus there arises the romantic tendency in art. Finally, when a given class has passed its apex of power, when it is no longer useful to society; when new forces oppose it, it loses self-confidence. It has squandered all its ideas, and its feelings have become more and more inconsequential. Its former unity breaks up into individual atoms. This condition also finds its reflection in art. The soul of art (its ideas and feelings) begins to shrivel up



and is soon entirely lost; it retains merely a cold, formal knowledge which soon degenerates into academicism. But even this beautiful corpse does not long remain static. It soon begins to decay. The artists of such a class begin to neglect even form; they seek extravagance; or exaggerate one aspect of art to incongruous proportions. Art begins to rot.

This is a rough outline of the main ideas of Marxism on the art of the past. It should be pointed out here that by a proper analysis we can obtain the most useful results from the most negative works of art; first, in so far as they are symptoms of certain social phenomena and increase our historical knowledge; secondly, in so far as they contain various positive aspects. It is possible to find a decadent work of art a marvellous combination of color, line or sound; it is possible to find in a degenerate work of art something which is very useful from the technical point of view. Similarly, in a monumental building permeated with the slave-holding spirit of some despot we may find magnificent proportions which are the product not only of despotism but also of the mightiest forms of mass-organization. The Marxist can thus learn something from every art work of the past and transmit that knowledge to others.

But Marxism is not merely a method of understanding the real roots of art; it is also a method of criticizing them and using them. Proper enjoyment of past art, its proper development is useful for contemporary art.

Marxism faces the task of developing a history of literature, a general theory of literature, and a theory of literary, artistic creation. We are only at the beginning of these tasks. Of course, the last of these tasks, that of literary artistic creation, already leads us from Marxism as a social theory to Marxism as a living social force. A Marxist, a representative of this force, can appear in literature either as critic or creator.

A Marxist critic must have a sufficient amount of theoretical experience; he must be able to approach every work of art objectively, without prejudice, discovering its social roots, explaining its place in society, its connection with the social forces of a given period, especially his own period. Criticism, as distinguished from literary history, must be understood to mean a living reaction to the art of our own epoch. If for a Marxist historian of literature it is permissible and even desirable to exhibit some passion in the final evaluation of a work of art or of its elements as useful or harmful for the communist cause, such a passionate evaluation, such a fighting approach, is simply a DUTY for a Marxist critic. The critic must be a Marxist theoretician in his strict scientific objectivity; at the same time he must be a fighter.

As a creative writer the Marxist is intimately acquainted with theoretical Marxist works. It is ridiculous to think that culture can harm a Marxist artist; that his talent will suffer if he seeks to clear up for himself questions of literary history or of literary technique. On the contrary, it can only help him. However science can be useful to a Marxist writer only when he is a real artist. No theoretical tricks and no theoretical equipment, however rich, can serve as a substitute for genuine talent.

What is the difference between a Marxist talent, a Communist talent in literature and other kinds of talents? A Marxist talent distinguishes itself by the fact that the acuteness of its reactions is specifically colored. Such a talent reacts with particular sensitivity to everything which has a direct connection with the great contemporary struggle; it will react sharply to everything directly or indirectly connected with the world's axis, the outstanding social phenomenon of our times, the struggle between labor and capital.

The internal recreation of this material proceeds in the Marxist writer under the main center of his thinking and feeling; a really great Marxist writer carries within himself an enormous arsenal of idealism, a colossal mass of bitterness and contempt for the evil sides of life, a tremendous amount of fighting spirit. He will seek clarity and monumentality of form. Such a writer will above all be interested in finding a wide democratic audience. Under such conditions, the monumental clarity with which he expresses his experiences will triumph over all other tendencies in art.

*Translated by Joseph Freeman*

*I am happy to join in sending birthday greetings to the U.S.S.R., whose existence is the greatest triumph in all our human history.*

FLOYD DELL

## Stefan Faber

### G A S !

*It creeps over Shanghai.  
It is stacked in Memel,  
loaded in Hamburg,  
produced in Leverkusen.  
They try it out on rabbits and guinea pigs—  
whether it eats up the lungs quick enough.*

*It is traded on stock exchanges,  
It is on demand by the Branch.  
"Who has been buying it all up?  
Straight-deal merchant seeks gas!  
I've just got to supply,  
—supply, supply, supply—  
that gas!"*

*Gas was not invented for the small broker.  
It's the great big goods and only for the great big dealers.  
Who would enjoy its blessings  
must have plenty in his waistcoat pocket,  
must have governments in his waistcoat pocket,  
must have railroads in his waistcoat pocket,  
must have Geneva and Basle in his waistcoat pocket,  
must have Socialist Parties in his waistcoat pocket,  
must have trade unions in his waistcoat pocket,  
must have judges and priests in his waistcoat pocket,  
must have churches and guns in his waistcoat pocket . . .  
Blue Cross and Yellow Cross,  
Blue Cross and Yellow Cross—  
who would enjoy their blessings  
must have so many things in his waistcoat pocket.  
In Leverkusen it is made for Shanghai.  
In Memel it is stacked for Leningrad.  
All that gas.*

*Gas  
in Warsaw for Moscow.  
In Tokio for Vladivostock.  
In Bucharest for Kharkov.  
Gas  
in Leuna—for Wedding.  
In Ludwigshafen—for Neukoelln.*

*The gas in being made by workers.  
By workers in Germany  
against workers in Russia.  
By workers in Germany  
against workers in Germany.  
By workers who hold silence  
against workers who matter.  
By hands in Leuna  
against lungs in Berlin!  
By hands in Leuna  
against lungs in Leuna!  
By your hands  
against your lungs  
this gas!!*

Translated from the German by Ian MacPherson

*Greetings to the Soviet workers and farmers on the fifteenth anniversary of their revolution. Through fifteen years they have stood fast against a world of enemies,— abroad and at home. Through fifteen years they have planned and built the structure of a new social order. Through fifteen years of trail-blazing, they have put the workers of the world in their debt. Greetings to the Soviet workers and farmers on the fifteenth anniversary of their revolution.*

SCOTT NEARING

**JOSEPH NORTH****THE MARCHING MINERS OF ILLINOIS**

## 1.

Word flew from tipple to town; from Mercupin County to Wilmington. "On to Franklin County!" The miners threw down the gage of battle to the fascism rampant in Franklin County. Sheriff Browning Robinson and his amazon wife, faithful to the salaries advanced them by the owners of the giant New Orient, the Chicago, Wilmington and Franklin, the Old Ben Coal Co. mines whipped the little bourgeoisie of Franklin County into an army. Guns were shipped into the county in excess of the arms Wall Street supplies to Latin American generalissimos on the eve of "revolution".

Barbers and store-keepers, doctors and professional men had badges pinned on their chests and guns stuck in their hands: deputy sheriffs, "For the sake of Old Glory and prosperity."

Boy Scouts, school boys of fifteen and sixteen, found themselves toting sawed-off shotguns instead of Euclids—awaiting the big moment. When I came into West Frankford, metropolis of 18,000 in this coal county, I felt dozens of eyes needling from all points of the compass: the Citizens' Committees. These latter are more effective for the coal operators than the moribund Ku Klux Klan (which once flourished in this county so near Kentucky). The Citizens' Committees did not recognize religious bars; deputized Jewish shopkeepers stood shoulder to shoulder with Catholics against the "Red enemy."

The Slav barber I spoke with (after satisfying himself I was no secret emissary of Lewis, or of the Stuyvesant Peabody interests) whispered after looking cautiously about him: "They fine me \$200 if I no wear badge. They say "If you do not, maybe more'll happen to you . . . ."

The captain of State Police corralled his men from all parts of Illinois. "On to Franklin County." And before a startled world knew it, the miners of Illinois estimated at 35,000 strong, had formed a caravan 35 miles in length, proceeded slowly down the highways toward Franklin County.

At Springfield, Illinois, broad-waisted Mrs. Borevitch helped ailing Mrs. MacDowell on the miner's truck. "We must catch up: rest of boys already start half hour: quick Mrs. MacDowell, watch the springboard."

Mrs. Borevitch's son Andy ran out of the house, accordion in hand. "What in the wurld does the lad want with that?" Mrs. MacDowell asked. The Slav shrugged her shoulders. "Let him take it. Make music on road. We gonna pull mines in Franklin County. It's long ride." Thus the bustle of preparation over mining Illinois. The flame of revolt ran up and down the field.

The *Daily American* of West Frankfort, the *Benton News*—both in Franklin County, battered the drums of warning. "The Reds Are Coming: Citizens of Franklin County, Forewarned is Forearmed."

The caravan moved on, in truck and Ford: across the maze of beautiful highways over Illinois prairies—"On to Franklin County! On to Franklin County!"

One week before the march—at Ziegler—when the miners posed the question of their leader Pat Ansbury "What shall we do next?" he threw up his hands. The terror had him stumped. "I don't know what to do," he said, "All I can say is go back to your locals and decide for yourselves what to do next."

The miners decided. Ansbury's lack of faith in the militancy of the coal diggers was repudiated. Seeing the wave of resistance rising high, he determined to ride into power on it. Grabbing up his political mentor Gerry Allard, the two became "leaders" of the march.

"On to Franklin County." The caravan proceeded. Led by Mrs. Borevitch's son Andy and his accordion, one, two, two hundred and fifty miles of the trek were over.

At the edge of Franklin County, hidden in the cornstalks lay machine guns and Shelton gangsters.

Word ran up and down the 35 mile long column: "They say they'll fire on us." Word ran back down the column: "They didn't

fire on us in Taylorville. They won't dare fire on us now."

The American flags fluttered on the provision cars. Dowell, a mining village in Jackson County, three miles from the Franklin County line, was reached.

At Pinckneyville, the state police visored in their goggles, rode forward on motorcycle. "You fellers better turn back. They're thirsty for blood a few miles up the road there. We can't be responsible for what happens."

"To hell with them" came back the answer. "We're comin' through." The state highway patrolmen barricaded the road and ordered the caravan to divert the path down the highway that led from Dowell and toward the Franklin County line.

The caravan—a tremendous, headless python—moved on. Fifteen minutes later, while Andy was playing the Blue Danube Waltz in between the tall corn just over the county line, a sharp sputter of gunfire sounded.

Spruts of fire from the cornstalks: the deputies swarmed from the road, bats in the left hand, automatics in the right. Sheriff Robinson strode the storm. The deputies clubbed the drivers who were crouching for cover.

Andy hopped from the truck and ran into the cornfields for safety. He ran, accordion in hand, into the line of machine gun fire. The accordion fluttered from his hands as he sank to the ground.

Thirty, forty more fell to their knees as they tried to flee the rat-tat-tat of gunfire. The cars in the fore attempted to turn around.

Mrs. Borevitch hugged Mrs. MacDowell as the bullets shattered the windshield of their truck. The deputies ran by: cursing, clubbing, firing. Two hundred and fifty men and women were battered, beaten half unconscious. In the cornfields lay dozens of miners struck down by machine gun bullets. To this day half a dozen miners are missing; their fate is unknown.

Standing in the fore of the deputies was a bearded giant, clad in overalls, a revolver in one hand, a baseball bat in the other.

A little Italian miner from Benld shouted as he ran, pointing, "That's Fontecchio, the bastard . . . that's Fontecchio. Beard no fool me."

The giant ran along the line of cars: seemingly searching for Italian faces. This "international organizer" of John L. Lewis is assigned to the task of subduing the Italian miners. Other gunmen of varied nationalities have similar assignments among their kin.

"Where's Allard- Where's Ansbury?" the miners four, five, ten miles back ask. "What shall we do?" The retreating fore caught up with the middle: bloody, dishevelled, bitter.

Half an hour after the battle an airplane which had hovered over Franklin County settled on a nearby field. Out climbed Ansbury and Allard. Ansbury met a group of the stragglers.

"You yellow bastards" he shouted, "Why'd you let 'em turn you back. A handful of thugs against fifty thousand of you!"

None thought at that time of charging him and the other leaders with responsibility of the stupid tactic. Of the failure to split up the long line: divide forces over half a dozen roads leading into Franklin County. Thus the deputies would have had dozens of columns to face—not one easily ambushed caravan. While the march was taking place, picket lines could have been thrown around the mines, and while the deputies were busy on the road, the miners could have been pulled out on strike.

The miners returned to their towns to dress their wounds: and plan further battle.

Mine tipples pop across the skyline of the Illinois flatlands like half-cocked jackknives. Last year they supplied the furnaces and stoves of America with forty-four million tons of bituminous coal. In the days when coal was king—an army of 120,000 coal diggers would rise shortly before sunup and straggle across the finest highways in the world to the pit shafts. Thus, from the wierd-looking strip mines at Wilmington which bare their bosoms of coal

for all passersby to see, to the largest pits in the world, Orient One and Two, in Franklin County near the Kentucky borderline.

Four hours out of Chicago in a southerly bee-line lies this crescent of coal mines stretching 300 miles across the plains to the southwestern tip of the state. Rich bituminous deposits—the Illinois yea-sayers claim four-fifths of the state lies above strata of coal—the miners became accustomed to the wage scale known as the \$6.10 a day; considerably higher than any other section in America.

The days of Mother Jones—the days of the birth and flourishing of the United Mine Workers of America—before John (Weepin' Johnnie) Walker was district president and shock-haired John L. Lewis was president—the miners of Illinois set the pace for wages and conditions.

Bacon and eggs, flapjacks and coffee—with cream—"tay" for the Scotch miners—was on the table for all. It is indeed an area of great riches in coal and one in which up to a few years ago 120,000 miners earned a living—bought their little bungalows, allowed their Petes, Andys and Johnnys lessons on the accordion. Today 45,000 miners consider themselves lucky if they can pull living expenses out of the mines—in view of the crisis and the highly mechanized state of the pits here. Particularly in Franklin County, the heaviest coal producing area in Illinois—and in the U. S. A. Here the famous Orient No. 1 and Orient No. 2 mines, said to be the largest in the world, operate with the most advanced machinery known. And here in direct ration to the productivity of the mines, flourishes the terror of the imported plug-uglies: gun-toting gangsters from Chicago: mercenaries from the Shelton gang of East St. Louis: many with Harlan County experience, most of them with more than one notch on the handle of their automatics.

Last March the miners walked out of the pits while the new wage scale was "argued": if you call it "argument" when the "lieutenants of capital within the ranks of the working-class" sit down at the table with the moguls of capital, and discuss the next cut in wages. For how else than a "lieutenant of capital" can you define this common phenomenon Weepin' Johnnie Walker: who treads the same path as Frank Farrington, former head of the U. M. W. A. who was discovered in backroom unity with the Peabody Coal Company for whom he went to work when exposed and kicked out of the union.

After three months' "negotiations", a new wage scale was reached. The basic \$6.10 a day was reduced to \$5 for the eight hour day. With miners going down in the pits once or twice a week, the cut in wages meant leveling their conditions to a status approaching Western Pennsylvania and Ohio—if not flux-stricken Harlan County, Kentucky.

"We've got to meet the competition of other states like Kentucky and West Virginia where labor hires for \$2 and \$1.50 a day" the coal operators propaganda went up and down the crescent of coal mines. The U. M. W. A. leaders took up the hue and cry. "Meet competition and keep production in Illinois . . . therefore take the cut in wages . . . even at that it's better than the other fields." They were careful to omit mention of the failure of the U. M. W. A. to work for the organization of the unorganized Kentucky, West Virginia areas.

The Illinois miners revolted. Two rank and file referendums flatly rejected the new scale. Upon foreseeing that the second vote would follow the line of the first, the officialdom of the district U. M. W. staged a clumsy robbery—in which the district vice president Fox Hughes was seen to take part—and the ballots were stolen. The national president of the U. M. W., John L. Lewis, upon whose head dying Mother Jones heaped curses, was called by Walker into action—despite the phony court orders won against him by Walker several years ago restraining him from activity in the Illinois fields.

Lewis fulfilled his task; he declared an emergency situation existed; under the constitution of the international union, he had a right to settle the strike: and he signed the agreement with the coal owners at the new rate—\$5 a day.

Rebellion over the coal fields: "To hell with the U. M. W." the slogan sounded over the thirty coal counties of Illinois which were closed up tighter than a drum. Mercupin, Springfield, Christian, Williamson, all shut down.

Mass militancy swept the fields like no movement in recent years. Picket lines marched with tens of thousands. In this spirit the successful march was pulled off upon Taylorville, in Christian

County, and the fiasco in Franklin in the face of the warnings of the company guards and state police.

In this seething cauldron of revolt the ingredients were tossed for the formation of a new union. At Gillespie, in early August, after the march on Franklin County—the Progressive Miners of America was formed by 272 delegates said to represent 34,000 miners. Fraternal delegates hitch-hiked and freighted it in from Indiana and Kentucky.

The outstanding figures at the convention were Pat Ansbury: a hearty, red-faced individual with strong political ambitions: embodying the worst demagogic characteristics of Weepin' Johnnie Walker and of John L. Lewis. He weeps during the peroration of his speeches like Walker and shakes the hands of the miners and jokes with the miners' women like Lewis. Then there was Gerry Allard, a romantic youngster with Napoleonic pretensions—expelled from the Communist Party several years ago—a rank plagiarist of political ideas who signs his articles in the Trotskyite *Militant* with the pen-name "Germinal" after Zola's novel on miners; a mouther of revolutionary talk and a doer of fascist deeds.

These facts I learned after visiting the mining towns of Gillespie, birthplace of the new union. Gillespie winds its bedraggled way across the plain approximately sixty miles from Springfield and encompasses four Superior Coal Company mines employing 2500 men. Standing before the two story stucco building of the Gillespie National Bank is a bulletin board bearing the message:

Mine No. 1—No Work.

Mine No. 2—No Work.

Mine No. 3—No Work.

Mine No. 4—No Work.

The message on this bulletin has remained unchanged the past six months since the men downed tools April 1. The night I came into town the majority of the 2500 strikers trekked by truck and Ford into Staunton to hear their leaders: Ansbury, Percy, Allard, Piseck, Frazier—an amalgam of Socialists, Musteites, Democrats, Republicans.

It is hard to forget how we sped at night down the highways from Gillespie to Staunton, twenty-five miners in a rickety truck, standing the fifteen miles, singing songs and jostling around curves, talking about the ambush of Franklin County two weeks before; when these same miners were part of the army of 35,000 determined to break the terrorism of Franklin County and halt production in the state's key county.

"Next time," a blonde chunky miner said, "We won't go with no accordion leadin' us in front. We'll go with loaded shotguns."

When we reached Staunton 2500 miners were already on hand in the square of the mining village. The local band had just finished playing "My Country 'Tis of Thee" and mayor Luker was welcoming the assemblage.

Mayor Luker spoke warmly. "As long as I'm mayor you won't find machine guns turned on defenseless men. Mercupin County has seen a lot of strikes, but who can remember bloodshed here? Not so long as I'm alive . . ." The same line the mayor of Taylorville had pulled a few weeks before, yet when the army of pickets descended on the county, they were met by state troopers, local deputies armed with machine guns, billiard cues, ball bats.

Despite Allard's statement that "we must respect the opinion of the minority—give every man a chance to talk whether he be a Socialist, a Communist, an I. W. W. or whatnot—" no Communist speakers were invited.

Committees had waited on Mayor George Luker, of Staunton urging him to speak: had invited a professor of economics from Iowa State University who extolled the glory of Gandhi: a Socialist from New York, thick rimmed glasses and khaki shirt open at the front real proletarian-like: Piseck, a "middle of the road" Musteite: in fact free speech for everybody except a representative of the National Miners Union—except a representative of the Communist Party. A true "united front" that included everybody except those who understand what "class struggle" means and what to do about it.

Allard spoke: and he quoted, without, of course, mentioning the source, from Foster's Springfield speech. (The speech had arrived in the fields that day reprinted in the *Daily Worker*. Allard evidently read the *Daily Worker* day in and day out to formulate his phrases). He spoke: "united front with all organizations", and included the National Miner's Union, but to date the invitation of the latter union for a joint conference has been rejected by the leadership of the new union. He spoke: "spread the strike into Franklin County," which last year alone dug twenty







percent of the state coal production but to date no serious effort has been made to descend on this key production center since the giant caravan was turned back due to idiotic leadership.

He spoke in favor of settling with the wagon-mines, small producers, thus objectively breaking the back of the strike by dividing the forces. He said, "this union is based on the class struggle—it is the fight of the working-class against the capitalist class" but his henchman Dan McGill, ex-Farrington tool, has been given instructions to lobby with William Lawlor, Republican state representative to intercede on behalf of the Committee of Five chosen to "ask" the legislature the right to enter Franklin County peaceably: to ask for a state investigation of Franklin County—the old gag of asking the boss to investigate himself. "A middle-of-the-road" union is the slogan I saw posted on the P. M. A. bulletin board at Gillespie.

With Allard at this meeting was Dan McGill, who was always parked at the cross-roads, first with Lewis then with Fishwick-Howatt, and now crony of Father McGuire, the Illinois Father Cox. Father McGuire, friend of Lewis and Walker is the priest in charge of McGill's parish. Father McGuire has been broadcasting from Harrison, Ill. advising the miners to accept the wage cut and return to the pits. In Springfield a number of Catholic miners took the floor to bid Father McGuire mind his own business in heaven and they'd mind their business on earth.

There I discovered these facts about Allard—avowed Trotskyite adherent, renegade from the Communist Party: he espoused all the slogans formulated by Foster in his Springfield speech: "Spread the Strike"—"Pull Franklin County"—"A Broad United Front"—and "Defeat the Wage Cut." But his action, and here he symbolizes social fascism, (obedience to the word and repudiation of the deed:) are those of the typical misleader, objectively leading to the destruction of the strike: to impairing the long vigil of the miners whose vitality is affected by seven months of hunger rations; leading to their ultimate giving in.

In the midst of this hurly burly of struggle, Ansbury and Allard are preparing to go as fraternal delegates to the formation of a new miners union in Nova Scotia, which sent greetings to the Gillespie convention.

## 3.

At Benld where I stayed for a few days I refused to allow my host—a little Scotch miner—to feed me and insisted we go to the grocery store for provisions. After whispered consultation with his wife in the kitchen, he hesitantly agreed. At the A. and P. store we stocked up with armloads of groceries. He walked around the store in evident enjoyment, pointing his pick from the shelves: milk, cheese, bacon, potatoes, bread—all essentials. He halted finally before the luxury of a jar of plum jelly. He turned and looked at me. "For the little gairrl"—his seven year old daughter. "Go to it" I urged. He quickly grasped the jar of jelly "for the gairrl."

On the way home, with armfuls of provender, he told me the following:

To date the Illinois miners still place hope in their new leaders—their middle of the road union. But unless the tactic of militant unionism is used: unless the direction is strengthened by broad rank and file leadership: unless the union forms a united front with the ranks of the National Miners Union whose experience in the Penn. Ohio-West Virginia coal strike of 45,000 in 1931 would be invaluable to the new union today; it is bound to failure through the tactics of the amalgamation of reformists, renegades and reactionaries. All of which is sound common sense.

It is a great chapter in the struggle of American labor: that in Southern Illinois today. The United Mine Workers is being struck a death blow by the rank and file rebellion. A. F. of L. fascism will directly feel the reverberations. In the A. F. of L. national center in Washington Mr. William Green is in session with the snarling gunmen advisers.

The rank and file of the Illinois miners is in rebellion. If they avoid the dangers of social-fascist, Musteite leadership, and strike out on a path of a clear-cut class-struggle orientation they will resist the offensive of the Stuyvesant Peabodys against their standards of life: against their very lives.

**GREETINGS U. S. S. R.!**

*The 15th anniversary of the October Revolution awakens in all workers and revolutionary intellectuals throughout the world the exultant consciousness of tremendous success attained by the Soviets. The colossal achievements of Five-Year Plan have proven once for all that the world proletariat is determined to carry out the Marxist-Leninist line; all the gloomy and malicious predictions of the decaying bourgeoisie, being belied by the splendid achievements of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R., clearly demonstrate the bankruptcy of capitalism and its deadly fear of the revolutionary upsurge the world over. Only in the Soviet Union where the socialization of production is proceeding apace, does culture display a growth unequalled in the history of mankind. Illiteracy has been liquidated, the utmost educational facilities are being extended to all workers; literature and art are undergoing a veritable renaissance; an unparalleled vitality permeates every branch of cultural effort. The dictatorship of the proletariat has proven itself in practice and not merely in theory, to be the sole efficient instrument of revolutionary change.*

*The Revolutionary Writers Federation extends its Bolshevik greetings to the proletariat of the Soviet Union. It pledges itself to defend socialism against capitalist intervention; to fight against fascism and imperialist war, and to act with Bolshevik determination for the emancipation of the working class and the cultural revolution.*

*Long live the Soviet Union! Long live the cultural revolution! Long live the World October!* The Executive Committee of the Revolutionary Writers Federation

*A period of time no greater than that embracing the adolescence of a child records both the death of tsarist Russia and the birth and lusty growth of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. In all the history of human society there have been only a few epochs comparable in significance to the epoch we are living in now.*

*As a national minority under the domination of the imperialist United States, the Negro workers realize that living at a time like this is a glorious historical privilege. We American Negro workers, artists, writers, and intellectuals hail the fifteenth anniversary of the Russian Revolution and the perfecting of a social order in which "brotherly love" will be a "reality," because all the circumstances of life will "demand" it; because historical necessity will decree it, just as historical necessity and circumstances of life make "brotherly love" impossible in a cutthroat social order under capitalism.*

*We look to the Soviet Union to continue as the vanguard of the workers' battle for liberation. We lift our strong voices in greeting to the Workers' Fatherland. We lift our clinched hands in a pledge to struggle for the liberation of our fellow workers the earth over.*

EUGENE GORDON

*The most important event in human history so far is the launching of the first workers' government. That the first attempt should have succeeded in holding on for fifteen years, is more than I should have ventured to hope for. The safety of the Soviet Union has lain so far in the greeds and rivalries of the capitalist powers. Due to that fact, the workers of Russia have a chance to build up their country. If they can manage to keep out of war for a few years more, and to continue their industrial progress at anything like the present rate, the results will be such that capitalism in the other countries will collapse of its own physical and moral decay. Socialism throughout the world will come as a matter of course.*

UPTON SINCLAIR

*I join the militant workers all over the world in greeting the 15th anniversary of the Soviet Union. The fatherland of the world proletariat is surrounded on all sides by its enemies. The capitalist rulers carry on a venomous propaganda, in which their social fascist lackeys are especially active, against the Soviet Union. But they dare not carry out their sinister plans, because they are afraid the workers of the world will turn every attempt at a war against the Soviet Union into a civil war against their capitalist bosses. The International Workers' Order, whose position as cultural director I occupy, follows the line of the class struggle. Its many thousands of members of different nationalities and races are all ready, together with the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, to fight for the defense of the fatherland of the workers throughout the world.*

KALMON MARMOR

**David Ramsey****SOVIET SCIENCE**

Science has a dual aspect. On the one hand, its development, tendencies, and applications have been determined by the practical needs of society. On the other hand, science has had a profound influence upon society, being one of the important factors in shaping its destiny. The result has been an interconnection and a constant interaction between the process of production and the whole of science that has caused the continual advance of science and the technique of production.

The consequence of this double development has made it impossible for industry to view any existing productive process as final. The changes in the technical form of a process have led to the revolutionizing of the technical base of production with consequent changes in the position of the workers. Under capitalism the technical advance that is continually going on in production has led to increased exploitation of the workers in the way of speed-ups and wage-cuts, and permanent "technological" unemployment on an increasing scale. During the "new economic era" of Coolidge and Hoover over three million American workers were permanently unemployed. Today engineers estimate that about eight million unemployed workers could never return to industry in the event that production levels of 1929 should be attained again, and predict that by 1940 at least twenty million workers will suffer from permanent unemployment. This plus the growing tendency of permanent part-time work means the pauperization of the entire American working class.

But while a new technical revolution, exceeding in scope and magnitude the Industrial Revolution, is one of the forces that under capitalism is creating chronic unemployment, the technical revolution has itself been caught within the restricting web of capitalist productive relations. While science and technology as a whole have been advancing, they have reached a point where capitalism is both unwilling and unable to utilize them on a full social scale.

The new technical revolution which is contained within the process of capitalist production can only take place fully in a society where there has occurred a revolutionary change in class structure resulting in a workers' state. The Soviet Union illustrates the fact that such an alteration in social relations will set free the new revolution in technique which will in turn accelerate scientific development. In the Soviet Union, science is an essential part of socialist construction. As a force in the building of socialism it is at the same time undergoing socialist reorganization of scientific work and the reconstruction of its philosophic foundations.

The Soviet Union is the one country in which science is applied to all sides of society. There is the planning of economic life, and the planning and systematic control of the development of culture and of science and technology. Science is rooted in and connected with the whole life of the people. Science in the Soviet Union is not torn by the capitalist antagonism between scientific progress and the refusal of vested interests to apply science to industry because they fear the loss of profits. In the Soviet Union science is the decisive influence in all spheres of life, from the planned utilization of natural resources to the planning of scientific research. Moreover, the activities of the Five-Year Plan have resulted in hundreds of thousands of workers entering actively into scientific work for the first time in history.

In pre-revolutionary Russia there was not a single modern scientific research institute worthy of the name. Research was confined to a few university laboratories working with antiquated equipment. There were a few great scientists—principally in biology and mathematics—who made important discoveries, but if these had any possible practical application they were usually exploited abroad. Scientific research was detached from every day life to an even greater extent than in the highly industrialized countries.

Since the October Revolution there has been a tremendous increase in the number of scientific workers and students, and in the number of research institutions and the quantity and caliber of their equipment and apparatus. The number of scientific institutions most of them devoted to fields unknown to czarist Russia and some to work as yet undeveloped in the advanced capitalist countries, has increased from 289 in 1917 to over 4,000 in 1932. These include the giant central research institutes such as The

Aero-Dynamical Institute, The Institute of Pure and Applied Physics (employing 300 research workers under the direction of the famous Joffé and 200 men in the workshop), The Institute of Plant Industry (also employing hundreds of research scientists under the direction of Professor Vavilov, and considered by Julian Huxley the noted English biologist, as perhaps the finest institute of pure and applied botany in the world), The Thermo-Technical Institute, The Electro-Technical Institute and others which are among the best and largest in the world. Then there are research laboratories connected with individual factories and state and collective farms, each working on problems of immediate interest to the particular factory or farm, and many fine university laboratories especially in Leningrad.

The big central institutes carry on the bulk of the fundamental research, often together with the first stages of practical application. Some are affiliated with a university, but in the main, like the ones mentioned above, they are connected directly with some government department. In the beginning of 1932 the system of scientific research institutes included 47 institutes devoted to the study of agricultural problems, 10 to transportation, 44 to education, 34 to public health and more than 100 to industry alone (this does not include subsidiary branch institutes). The total number of scientific workers engaged in research only at this time numbered over 50,000 compared to 4,240 in 1917 (this does not include the members of administrative staffs).

In 1931 more than 250 million rubles were spent on research in institutes connected with industry alone (this does not include money spent in factory laboratories). Also the Soviet annual appropriations for geological surveys are far larger than the expenditures of all capitalist European nations put together. This year some 140 million rubles are being spent on this important work.

The number of scientific workers is steadily being raised as fast as they can be recruited from universities, technical schools, and factory and collective farm schools. In 1932 there were 230,000 university students, 420,000 technical students, 350,000 students preparing in workers' faculties for admission to universities and technical schools, and over 1,000,000 students in the factory and collective farm schools.

Until the trial of Ramzin and his associates about two years ago, many specialists carried on wrecking activities and ideological sabotage. This took on various forms such as counter-revolutionary plots, faulty construction of buildings, fake geologic surveys, false statistics, etc. The exposure and conviction of the wreckers and the success of the Five-Year Plan led to a change of attitude among experts and scientists and to the reorganization and the planning of scientific work.

The Soviet Academy of Sciences which is the leading scientific institution in the Soviet Union was reorganized and strengthened as early as 1927. For many years after the revolution it had tried to remain "neutral," to maintain an attitude of "science for science's sake." But the progress of the revolution rendered this separation of science from practical life impossible. The Academy could not continue to pursue its reactionary course. The reconstruction of industry and agriculture on a planned socialist basis demanded that the Academy's work become an integral part of the building of socialism. Since its reorganization the Academy has continued to pursue scientific research of the "purest" kind, but in addition it now has an "applied" side, and a large concern for practical needs and ends.

Contrary to bourgeois statements made at that time that it was being destroyed by its reorganization, the Academy has maintained and even excelled its former high theoretical level while being closely connected with industry whose immediate problems it is helping to solve. The Institute of Plant Industry, for example, experiments with new rubber plants, new varieties of wheat that can be grown in the arctic north, and new varieties of seed that will give higher yields. The Chemical Institute produces synthetic rubber for the first time on a commercial scale. The Geological Institute discovers new sources of raw materials (doubling the known supplies of coal in the Soviet Union in a few years). The Institute for the Study of the East, investigates cultural problems in the Soviet East, latinizes alphabets and invents them when necessary.

The Academy of Sciences has connections with the Supreme Economic Council and various industrial and cultural organizations. The Academy's plans of work are drawn up by its member institutes. They are then discussed in large conferences with representatives of other institutes, representatives of industry and

workers who are also interested. In the solution of the rubber problem, to cite an example, the chemical institute, the institute of plant industry, the commissariats of heavy and light industry and agriculture, were all interested in different phases of the question such as the chemical synthesis of rubber, the development of new rubber plants, the building of rubber factories, the manufacture of rubber articles, etc.; but all the work was concentrated on freeing the Soviet Union from the burden of importing raw rubber. Finally All-Union plans for the different branches of scientific work are mapped out. The workers are drawn into active support by conferences with leading scientists where the plans of the institutes are discussed, and by lectures and reports where the progress and importance of the work are emphasized. Reports on all basic scientific problems to the Academy are delivered before large audiences of workers without any loss of scientific accuracy.

The needs of the Five-Year Plan led to general discussions in the Soviet Union as to whether it was possible to plan scientific work, to coordinate and systematize all of scientific research. The socialist planning of scientific work has not only proven as successful as the planning of industry, but has become an important principle in the acceleration of scientific creative activity. It has helped solve many important problems in difficult fields of research and has led to the tackling of hitherto untouched fields.

The plans of scientific research in industry are drawn up and worked out by the Scientific Research Department of the Supreme Economic Council with the cooperation of the research institutes and of eminent scientists in the different branches of science. This department has under its supervision all of the more important laboratories of physics, chemistry and engineering. It also has a large measure of control over the planning of industry. The biological institutes are under the commissariat of agriculture. They have direct relations with a large number of agricultural research stations on state and collective farms. Almost every state and collective farm has a series of experimental plots devoted to research, and usually run by shock brigadiers. Thus if Professor Vavilov of the Institute of Plants Industry wants a new variety of grain, vegetable, cotton or flax tested out, he sends the seeds to the proper research stations. They carry through the preliminary test work and finally begin semi-commercial growings. If successful the new variety is then grown on a large commercial scale on collective and state farms in the suitable geographic areas.

In the Soviet Union, therefore, there is not that lag between scientific discovery and technical application in industry which in capitalist countries often amounts to thirty years. Scientific discovery in the Soviet Union is never sacrificed to the fear of en-

dangering private profit.

The planning of science extends to all phases of scientific work and includes: (1) The determination of large budgets for scientific work; (2) The planning of scientific research including general and special projects and problems; (3) The construction of new research institutes devoted to old and new fields of work; (4) The proper geographic distribution of research institutes; (5) The allocation of scientific apparatus and personnel, wages, living quarters, etc.

The results of the socialist planning of scientific work has been the organization of a research system linked up with industry and devoted to the general problem of increasing production. In place of individual inventors and scientists and unorganized research, there is collective organization of research, a higher division of scientific labor and cooperation between the various branches of science and industry. Scientific research had to be organized like a huge industrial trust operating along lines similar to factory mass production, in order to carry on socialist production.

One of the consequences of the planning of science has been to draw hundreds of thousands of workers into scientific work. The research institutes publish popular but accurate reports concerning their achievements which are read by tens of thousands. Thousands of workers are doing part-time work in scientific institutes. The trade unions assist in making known scientific discoveries and inventions. This has resulted in the opening up of great reserves of latent energies and talents in the workers. Every factory and farm school has a special scientific organization where workers are learning everything from the elements of science to higher mathematics. Invention has become a product of the creative powers of the working class, and is a mass movement numbering tens of thousands of workers. The worker-inventors have their own organ "The Inventor." They take an active part in scientific discussions and planning. Inventors get premiums and royalties on patents for fifteen years. All of this means that the creative energy of the masses is now directed toward the solution of the most essential technical problems of the day. When a technical problem is posed in a factory or there is socialist competition for inventions with definite objectives in mind, it is not uncommon for the workers' proposals and inventions to total five thousand a month in a large factory like the *Elektrozavod* in Moscow.

A leading force in reconstructing industry and in bringing about a new revolution in technique based upon the complete electrification of the Soviet Union is, therefore coming from the working class, and science and technology in turn are profiting by this collective creative activity.

## D N I E P R O S T R O Y

*(Tiger! Tiger! burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?)*

*We gather strength in the springs of the rock mountains,  
We take for ourselves and our futures the forges of Vulcan,  
We, toilers of the white fires of youth, we dare*

*And we leap! . . .  
. . . Traveling- cranes in a wide sweep  
. . . Steam-derrick whistles shrieking  
. . . Pneumatic hammers beating . . .  
And limbs of steel pour cataract emotion  
White-hot screaming through the iron forests.*

*We perfect new and more vital symmetries,  
Burning oceans of motion,  
Tigers of our passion concrete leashed  
To expend no energy on parliamentary coquettes.*

*While suns of photo-electric eyes petrify  
Barrack and bivouack, bullet and bayonet,  
Military moustache and militiamen's jacket,  
Stone-stiff archaics in history's album,  
Faded ceremonial photographs  
Of the forced marriage of oppressor and oppressed.*

*And new love burns with tigris eyes  
Billions of kilowatt hours.*

S. FUNAROFF

Grace Burnham

## THE SOVIET WORKER

Ever since the Russian revolution of November, 1917 brought a new type of government, a workers' government, into existence, workers throughout the capitalist world have wanted a look at the country where their class rules. During the years of revolution, counter-revolution and intervention, when the fate of the new government hung in the balance, visitors to the Soviet Union were rare and conditions were such as to reveal only the suffering and heroism of a people determined to run their own country in the way they saw fit.

By 1926, however, the country was well on the way to a new era. The ravages of famine and intervention, of civil war and the economic blockade had been overcome. "The year 1926", writes Joseph Freeman, in his new book, *The Soviet Worker*,\* "marked the end of the period of economic rehabilitation. Soviet Russia had overcome the ruins of war and civil war. In that year industrial production, 40% higher than in 1925, had almost reached the pre-war level." It was toward the end of 1926 that Freeman and I happened to be in a small party travelling through some of the industrial areas of the Ukraine and Georgia. In some of the places we visited we were the first Americans ever seen by the Russian workers. They told us eagerly of their struggles, of the hardships they endured under the Czar, of their hopes and plans for a new workers' state. I recall particularly the fiery energy of the young coal miners, where a safety station had just been completed and where, after our scramble through the diagonal passageways, hundreds of feet below the ground at eleven o'clock at night, these boys, who were to go back on the job at eight the next morning, insisted on showing us the safety station and putting us on the train at three in the morning.

I recall the serious conviction of a group of old salt miners who showed us the new machinery to replace the old hand methods of loading the salt, their faces lighted up with the torches which guided us in the great chamber hollowed out year by year, which was now used as a meeting hall and dining room. I recall the face of an old peasant, full-bearded and brown from his fifty years of back-breaking toil, whom we met in a sanitarium in the Caucasus. He was being treated for rheumatism by a nurse who was using a new type of violet ray lamp.

"Just imagine," said this peasant to us, "this is the first vacation I have ever had! And they bring me here free and I have a nurse to take care of me!" Under the Czar he would have been kicked out of his shack to live or die as best he could.

Since 1926, thousands of American workers, as well as workers of England and Germany, Italy and France, have visited the Soviet Union, either as workers to help with their technical skill to build the worker's state, as delegates to report back what they had seen, or just as visitors anxious to see and learn for themselves. But such visits are possible, after all, for only a handful. *The Soviet Worker* combines in one volume a carefully made survey of the condition of the Russian proletariat, under Czarism, during and after the revolution, today. It is a survey which proves its every point by facts and figures. As a result of the piling up of facts it leaves one with the same conviction of the strength and assured future of the Soviet program which one gets emotionally from talking to the glowing youth of the U.S.S.R. or to the old grandmothers learning to read and write; or from the tremendous moving pictures which have been shown in America such as *Potemkin*, *China Express* and *The Road to Life*.

"In line with the growth of national economy," writes Freeman in his chapter on *Planned Economy*, "the total number of wage earners increased rapidly from 10,900,000 in the year 1927 to 18,700,000 in 1931." And again, "The extensive system of unemployment benefits, established on the basis of the Labor Code, was abandoned in the autumn of 1930 because of the complete elimination of unemployment in the Soviet Union." There is no denying these facts. We who know that there are 15,000,000 or more unemployed under the planless economy of American capitalism look with envy on the only country where "the extensive system of unemployment benefits was abandoned . . . because of the complete elimination of unemployment."

So, chapter by chapter, the lies and misinformation fed to us

\* *The Soviet Worker*, by Joseph Freeman. International Publishers. \$1.50.

by our own capitalist press, are patiently explained and refuted, while new facts are presented, laying before us the entire system of socialist construction section by section.

In the chapter on *The Development of Soviet Economy* and the following chapter on *Planned Economy* the reader will find an explanation of the gradual evolution of socialized economy under War Communism, the First Five Year Plan just being completed, and the Second Five Year Plan. "The Five Year Plan was not intended to be a narrow plan of economic growth," writes Freeman. "It went far beyond the economic plans suggested in other countries which seek no more than the regulation of production and the elimination of fluctuations. Soviet planning seeks to reconstruct the whole of national economy and to change the basis of social relations."

And the plan was accomplished. "According to statistics published by the League of Nations and the German Economic Research Institute, the volume of industrial production in the Soviet Union increased 86% from 1928 to 1931, while the volume of production in the rest of the world declined 29% in the same period." And again, "The rapid development of Soviet Economy under the Five Year Plan combined with the sharp decline in industrial production in other countries has raised the Soviet Union to second place among the countries of the world both as regards to national income and the volume of industrial output . . . By coordinating its natural resources and labor power on a planned basis, it has been able to pass far beyond the prewar level of its national economy and to rise to second place among the countries of the world in industrial production *without the aid of foreign loans and only a moderate amount of commercial credit.*" (italic ours). "The second Five Year Plan, in the words of Premier Molotov, aims 'to eliminate completely the causes giving rise to class distinctions . . . to transform the whole working population into conscious active builders of a classless society'."

The chapters on the *Trade Unions*, on *Socialized Wages* and finally the last chapter on *The Conquest of Culture* give the reader an insight as to how this will be accomplished. Already there exists a complete system of social insurance against sickness and accidents. Old age pensions are in operation in some of the industries and it is planned to extend this benefit to all workers. Hours have been reduced to seven a day and six in some of the more hazardous industries. Vacations with pay at rest homes owned by the unions or the state, and complete responsibility of the state for the welfare of mother and child, are some of the additions to the actual money wage which for workers in industry rose 136% between 1927 and 1931.

In the field of education great strides have been made. "Czarism kept the masses at a low level of development where before the war 72% of the rural population and 41% of the urban population was illiterate." Now "appropriations for social and cultural activities in the financial plan are more than four times the amount spent for defense. Educational and cultural expenditures constitute more than 18% of the financial plan." By 1931 75% of the population were literate and by the completion of the Second Five Year Plan illiteracy is expected to be completely wiped out.

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Books on the Soviet Union come out almost faster than any one can count them. I have never met any one who had undertaken the herculean job of reading them all. The oldest and tritest jokes about the migrations to the Soviet Union deal with the professors of journalists who did a book after ten days in the Grand Hotel at Moscow. And such great minds as Ivy Lee, Rockefeller public relations counsel, did precisely this, using whole pages of Bolshevik publicity to lard out his skimpy pages of smug advice and impressions.

Dozens of these volumes have been utterly worthless, which of course does not mean they did not sell. Others were extremely subjective, the normal precepts and economic prejudices of the authors tending to becloud the whole scene they were trying to depict. Perhaps the most useful volumes to date have been those of various delegations of workers to the Soviet Union who have in their own words attempted to describe what they saw. But these have usually been too brief and fragmentary and have told us little of the background of the Russian workers. They have failed to give anything like a rounded picture.

After reading all of these sketchy accounts one has wanted something more extensive, more meaty, more quotable. Workers

coming to the Labor Research Association, gathering material for speeches and reports before their clubs and unions, have often gone away partially satisfied with the sort of thing the L. R. A. was able to give them, even from its comparatively copious files and reference volumes.

In this book by Joseph Freeman we have the book both for reference and for casual reading. It answers countless questions about the Soviet Union that we have not, heretofore, been able to handle adequately.

It is not a book of color or personal experience, although the author has seen enough life in the Soviet Union to write a travel book that would eclipse the best of them in that category. It is, I believe, one of the least subjective books about the Soviet Union, and Communist theories and practices, that has appeared in English. But by not permitting enthusiasms for the Soviet regime to break through too glaringly at any point, Freeman has produced a volume that beats them all. Interested college professors in courses in "contemporary civilization" can assign this book to their sophomores and safely explain to the banker college trustees that the work is as coldly factual as any of the current "readings" in economic science. And if the professors do not assign this book it will be only out of timidity.

Another group of persons who should welcome this book are the returning lecturers on the Soviet Union. Most of them have covered the ground much too fast to bring home anything deeper than car window notes. Here is a book they can read on the way over, reread on the way back, and be perfectly sure they will be standing on solid ground when they quote Freeman in answer to any of the 1,057 varieties of foolish or catchy questions asked about the Soviet Union now being asked by audiences all over the country. Indeed, this book should be sold at the door of all such lectures, for it will answer just about any of these questions which the professional speaker, immersed in his own tale of travel, may find it most difficult to answer.

Take one of the most typical queries—the one on "forced labor". The author does not set out to answer this by invective or indignant denial. He simply shows by quoting one reliable and non-biased authority after another that there is no such thing in the Soviet Union. He annihilates the yarns of the Duchess of Atholl, M.P., issued under the learned imprint of the Columbia University Press. To confound the professional anti-soviet propagandists on

this point Freeman marshalls the authoritative opinions of the League of Nations, the British Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, the impressive report of the Committee of the Timber Trade Federation of the United Kingdom, the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, the correspondent of the *New York Times*, General William N. Haskell, formerly head of the A.R.A., Congressman Henry T. Rainey of Illinois, H. R. Knickerbocker, correspondent of the *New York Evening Post*, a statement signed by twenty American and Canadian engineers and specialists, Mr. Arnold Rukeyser, American engineer, Mr. Charles A. Gill, superintendent of motive power of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, a statement by a group of German specialists including the well-known German architect, Ernst May, and a number of others—all of whom had been in the Soviet Union and testify as to what they had seen with their own eyes, and all declaring emphatically that Russian labor is *not* forced labor; that in fact it is the freest labor in the world.

And Freeman with great restraint does not even at this point go out of his way—as well he might—to take a dig at the unspeakable liars, forgers and general disseminators of the Russian "forced labor" myth, the voluble publicity hound, Matthew Woll and his fellow officials of the top leadership of the American Federation of Labor and their friends in the National Civic Federation. He merely states without passion:

"In the light of actual labor conditions in the Soviet Union, it is no wonder that Soviet workers either laugh heartily or react indignantly to the utterances of their self-appointed 'protectors', such prominent champions of the interests of Labor as the Duchess of Atholl and the owners of the anthracite and manganese mines in this country."

The "forced" labor myth is also convincingly and definitely answered by the author's figures for labor turnover which has reached serious proportions.

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And finally, "It is not only gigantic factories and powerful machines that are being created here," Freeman quotes Romain Rolland as writing in his impressions of the Soviet Union, "but—and this I regard as the highest and finest achievement of all—millions of new people are being created, a whole generation of fearless, strong, healthy disinterested people, inspired by a burning faith in the new world."

## THE 2nd FIVE YEAR PLAN FOR ARTS

The gigantic growth of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R., the success of the First Five Year Plan, the decision for the liquidation of the survivals of capitalist elements and the building of the classless society, predetermine the further growth of the Cultural Revolution. Already now half the population of the U.S.S.R., 80 millions, of all ages, all races, all nations, are at the desks studying.

In 1937 we will see the following: the meaning of the word "illiterate" will not be changed, for by the end of the Second Five Year Plan there will not remain a single person in the U.S.S.R. with an education less than 4-standard school. The word "illiterate" will mean a person without higher education.

Not only the quantity of knowledge in our country, but also the quality of knowledge will change. Needless to say, a country that has grown intellectually presents greater demands to art.

In addition to coal, oil, metal, transport, the State Planning Commission also plans Culture. The State Planning Commission plans the organized development of Culture. And so we have a Five Year Plan for culture.

In the Second Five Year Plan art receives a new geography. Art will be distributed throughout the country. Theatres will spring up in the State farms, factories and mines. This means that there will no longer be the situation in which the capital is crowded with theatres, and the provinces have no theatres. Generally speaking, the "term" province is out-of-date. And actually, what kind of province is Magnitogorsk, or Dnieprostroy, or "Gigant," the powerful industrial or agrarian centres, the concentration points of new technique, of new ideas, new people.

The capital has spread throughout the country. In the Second Five Year Plan there will not be a single district centre without theatres. "Houses of Socialist Culture," with a theatre stage, with rooms for the amateur art circles, will be founded in all the vil-

lages of the Soviet Union. Moreover, in most villages Shapito—circuses, variety theatres and cinemas.

The largest new construction works and industrial centres—Nijhny Novgorod Automobile Plant, Donbass, Magnitogorsk, Grozny, and others, will receive Eastern Operatic Theatres. Amateur art will develop immense, in the form of the Theatres of Working Youth, art circles, agit-brigades. A special organization will be set up in each district to direct the amateur circles.

The theatre acquires new form, uniting all forms of art; the theatre will also unite these territorially. This will be the theatre-combine, a grand erection, containing in its walls a theatre, cinema, exhibitions, clubs, theatrical studio. Such universal art purveyors will be erected in all the newly constructed industrial centres.

All this will require a tremendous amount of musical instruments. The country wants to play. Multiply all instruments by the size of the country. In the Second Five Year Plan 80,000 pianos and grand pianos will be produced, 50,000 brass instruments, 6 million portable gramophones, and 500,000 musical instruments used by the various nationalities.

The cinema will be developed tremendously. It will finally be come a means of education as widespread as the book. Science will be transferred to films. The screen will rule everywhere—in the club, school, in the factory department. There will be no omissions—all schools, all clubs, all departments. You will not be able to avoid the cinema. Every thousand inhabitants of the U.S.S.R. will have a cinema (every three thousand a library), the cinema will find you in your institution, in the street, in your house.

Chemistry, physics, turbine, turbine parts, turbine details, all will appear on the screen. Of every 100 films 60 will be talkies. The new factory will turn out 150 million metres of film a year.

A. NIJHNY

**MICHAEL GOLD****FORCED LABOR IN AMERICA**

Last year the rats made a new attack on the Soviet Union. This time the Czarist and Socialist press rang with the charge of "forced labor." The liars and war-makers waxed bitter. Among the great hearts to palpitate and bleed for the rights of "oppressed" workers were J. P. Morgan, the Pope, Abe Cahan and the Grand Duchess Marie.

None of these people had ever lifted a finger for the rights of workers. It was only the desire to destroy the first workers' state that placed them in this curious false and novel position.

We can be sure none of them will now move to end the horrible forced labor which exists in the United States, and which is exposed in John L. Spivak's document-novel, *Georgia Nigger*. If anything, they will do all in their power to defame and suppress this book. And they have.

The Soviet workers own and run the industries of their country, and are therefore the proudest and freest workers in the world. They are protected against all the contingencies of life; they have security; they are insured against accidents, unemployment, child-birth, sickness, and old age. They are building their own great industries; they are creating their new culture.

In the United States today a breadline stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Twelve million workers are unemployed and starving. Wage cuts are driving the employed workers into a coolie status. It is called a "depression," but it is really the periodical Spartan slaughter of the helots. It is normal; it is the regular cycle of capitalism; but this time it looks like the final breakdown.

Whatever the white workers have had to suffer under American capitalism, has been meted doubly to the black workers. It did not take a depression to bring hunger and degradation to the Negro worker. It has been their normal lot.

John Spivak, in *Georgia Nigger* gives us a vivid, first-hand account of the slavery in which southern proletarian Negroes live. There have been other books recently to describe the horrors of southern chain-gangs, the general brutalities practised on America's "untouchables." Spivak's book is different and important in that it traces the economic causes of this Negro oppression.

It was an historical accident that brought the Negro race to America. The new continent needed plenty of cheap labor. Cotton was produced on a primitive basis that lent itself to slave labor. The demand for this slave labor was soon satisfied by a supply of African slaves furnished to southern aristocrats by godly New England Puritans. But the Indians might have served as well, had they not fought so hard. Or South Americans, Hindus, Chinese, might have served, had not Africa been so disorganized and available.

Race prejudice did not cause black slavery. It was economic greed. The race prejudice was developed later by the southern preachers and intellectuals as a defense-mechanism. And it is not race prejudice alone that keeps the Negro in southern slavery today. It is still the need of capitalists for the cheapest possible labor.

The story of Spivak's *Georgia Nigger* is briefly as follows: David is an ordinary, good-natured boy, the husky young son of a poor Negro share-cropper. He had gotten into some minor scrape and been arrested and put on the chain gang. He spent long months in that hell because he hadn't the \$25 fine money to pay. When he finally was released he went joyfully home to his daddy, back to work on their leased patch.

But the next Saturday night he happened to go to town. This was a mistake. James Deering, the biggest white planter in the community was there, too. "Mr. Jim Deering was a power, an important figure in county politics, a wealthy man with three or four thousand acres of cotton and corn, pecan groves and peanut farms. He was also a director in the Southern Cotton Bank where the whites kept their money." And now he stood on the town hall steps with Sheriff Dan Nichols, whom he had put into office, and

watched the "niggers" at their Saturday night shopping and social life.

The planter had his troubles. His crops were coming on, and he was short of labor. "That's a likely-looking nigger," said Deering, nodding toward one crossing the street. "That's a Clayton nigger," the sheriff protested quickly.

"I don't give a good god damn whose nigger he is," answered the planter. "I want at least four."

The boy David happened to stumble on and watch a crap game in the street. There was a fight; he ran away. He was arrested with four others and hauled before the sheriff, on the charge of gambling, fighting, and resisting the law. No lawyer defended him. The sheriff informed the frightened innocent boys they would have to wait four months in jail until court sat, then they would be sure to get six months—a year's imprisonment in all.

The planter stepped in very opportunely. He pleaded for the boys with the sheriff, as suavely as any liberal friend of the Negro race. If the sheriff would let them off with a twenty-five dollar fine, he offered to pay the fines. In return they could come to work at his plantation at the rate of thirty dollars a month. "In five or six weeks you will have worked off the fine and be free instead of still waiting in jail for your trials."

The Negroes reluctantly accepted; they had heard of Mr. Deering. When they reached the farm their worst suspicions were confirmed. They found themselves in a stockade guarded by men with shotguns. It was illegal to run away; they owed the planter money. They were his slaves.

The Negroes lived here in vile barracks, on putrid food, prisoners under the gun. They were never permitted in town. They were always in debt to the planter. One Negro dared complain against the falsified accounts presented him of his purchases at the planter's commissary. Not only was he charged with goods and food he had never bought, but there was a twenty percent interest charge added to this balance. He had worked two years, and his wife had worked, but he was two hundred dollars in debt.

He protested mildly, was shot down, and buried in the swamp.

Others were whipped, beaten, tortured; several went mad with heat, persecution and slavery; they tried to escape, were shot and buried in the swamp.

David escaped; his father secured the help of a friendly white man, and bought David out. Then the old father gave David all his money, and sent him up north to get out of this county, where the boy had had so much misfortune. The boy was picked up on the streets of a nearby city where he was waiting for a bus. The local Sheriff needed fifty Negroes to build a contract road. So David went on another chain gang. He tried to escape, was half-killed and fetched back.

At the end of the story the feeling grows painful and enormous; the boy is doomed to remain in this awful slavery for the rest of his life, until some guard beats or shoots him to a merciful end.

David's slave grandfather had brought \$1800 in the open market. No man throws \$1800 into a swamp in a fit of anger, but Mister Deering did that with his "niggers," they cost him only five, ten or twenty dollars, the fines he rigged with the sheriff to get them out of jail or off the chain gang.

"Cheap niggers—the south was full of them, ploughing the soil, chopping cotton, picking cotton, ginning cotton."

In a few hundred pages John Spivak has crowded the most amazing details of this new Negro slavery. His facts are authentic. Spivak is one of America's crack reporters, an audacious product of the Hearst-Macfadden school. He has recently developed a social consciousness by one of those accidents of the period which are really history in one of its many disguises. And Spivak spent two years gathering the evidence for his book, *Georgia Nigger*. Appended to the book are photographs he took of various tortures practised in the prison camps. There are photostats of whipping orders and fake death certificates from the official files. How a

\* *Georgia Nigger*, by John L. Spivak, Harcourt, Brace. 1932. \$2.50 \$2.50.



"SAY, CHIEF, THERE'S ANOTHER CROWD OF WORKERS OUTSIDE YELLING FOR EDITH BERKMAN."—by Phil Bard

northern reporter ever collected such intimate materials in the feudal south is one of those mysteries known only to an irrepresible reporter.

The book however has a basic fault; it should not have been fictionized. A matter-of-fact eye-witness report of these horrors would have been sufficient. The simple account of Spivak's effort to collect the materials would have made a thrilling adventure yarn. Twice he had a gun stuck in his stomach; there were plenty of other doings.

Yet out of this document-novel one can gather enough facts to make the blood boil with rage against the class that rules America. All the tortures of the Spanish Inquisition are practised on the Negroes picked up for the chain gangs. Most of them have committed no crimes; they are arrested on faked vagrancy charges, mostly. Their real crime is in being poor and friendless. Their muscles are needed to build roads and plant cotton for nothing. And these miserables are put on the rack or in the stocks if they ask for a drink of water.

"The huge Negro moved restlessly. His legs hurt. A steel spike resembling an ordinary pick extended ten inches in front and behind each ankle. The twenty-pound weight had rubbed against his feet until one leg had become infected. Shackle poison the convicts called it. He had asked for a doctor and the guard's fist had crashed against his mouth." Sometimes a convict's leg had to be cut off if the poison got too bad. Twenty ponds of steel bayonets riveted about the ankles, so that a poor boy can't walk,

or sleep—all because "Chickasaw county wanted to finish a road cheap for a white planter."

There are no hospitals for these men. A county doctor calls occasionally, but it is to sign fake death certificates. He testifies that men who have been whipped to death have died of apoplexy or heart disease. One certificate Spivak tells about read: "Cause of death, he just died."

The convicts are hauled about in a cage, such as the ones used in menageries. They eat, sleep, defecate in it, the rain beats in, the lice and crabs devour them. The guards are sadistic morons earning \$1.25 a day and feeling that this lazy power is better than sweating in the fields. Spivak reports a camp in Mississippi where the guards liked to shoot into a gang of Negroes to see how fast they could run with chains on their legs.

Men faint in the stocks, or on the rack. Then there is the dreaded sweatbox. It is simply a pine coffin into which the convict is locked, one little air-hole exposed to the tropic sun. Here he remains for a day or two, handcuffed and chained, without water. The flies and mosquitoes eat him, his bladder and bowels excrete along his thighs, the stifling air finally gives him his release into unconsciousness.

"Mist' Deerin' has a lot o' cotton he wants picked."

This is on the chain gang, the feeder for the plantation owners who need slave labor. The chain gang has become a scandal, even among liberals. What they will never protest against, however, is the profit system that makes it possible for liberals to eat



"SAY, CHIEF, THERE'S ANOTHER CROWD OF WORKERS OUTSIDE YELLING FOR EDITH BERKMAN."—by Phil Bard





"SAY, CHIEF, THERE'S ANOTHER CROWD OF WORKERS OUTSIDE YELLING FOR EDITH BERKMAN."—by Phil Bard

and sleep comfortably, and that also keeps Negroes in peonage.

To repeat, this is not a race oppression, but one of the battle-fields of the class war. The white workers of the south are treated almost exactly the same by the same masters, as was shown in the recent coal and textile strikes.

It is Spivak's virtue that he traces some of the economic roots of this Negro suppression. He portrays the various types of landlords: "Shay Pearson who encroached on Negro farmers' lands, then hailed them to court and took their property, and made share croppers of them. David's father was one of his victims. He was caught in a legal web from which there was no escape. He signed the usual cropper contract. It meant that in exchange for a monthly advance of twelve dollars between February and August, the planter received half of his crop after all advances and interest had been deducted. The interest usually was between fifteen and seventy per cent; and with the Pearson book-keeping system, a nigger never got out of debt. Dee knew also that the Georgia law provided that as long as he owed the planter one dollar he could not leave the Pearson farm without facing arrest and the chain gang for swindling. So he became Shay Pearson's nigger."

Mister Deering, as has been detailed, preferred another method of enslavement. He was the planter who bought Negroes off the chain gang, paid five and ten dollars a nigger. In his stockades the prisoners soon learned to wish for the lesser evil of the chain gang; here they were caught for life.

Spivak has written not a great book, but a crude and rather badly-handled fiction account of a great American crime. He deserves praise for his daring research, his pioneering in a new social field that has had few reporters. If he had done a job of straight reporting, he could have equalled such famous exposures as Sir Roger Casement's story of the Congo. Nevertheless, he has been effective enough to have provoked the fear and silence of most of the liberal book-reviewers. They cannot offend their southern clientele, for a review of this book would force them to take a stand. If they write of it as being authentic, they are committing themselves to an attack on the whole landlord system of the south. They will praise a Paul Robeson or otherwise patronize Negro artists and Bohemians. It is a harmless and amusing curl. But to attack white economic and race supremacy in the south is more of a man's job. None of them will risk it. It is a Communist job.

The landlord system exposed by John Spivak will only be dislodged by a militant Communist movement. Spivak gives no indication that this is already under way; his book ends in hopelessness and defeat; yet the signs are on the sky; the black and white workers of the south are now uniting under the red flag of Marx and Lenin. They will end forced labor in America, and build a new world of proletarian liberty and justice.

## Greetings U. S. S. R.

*The establishment of a civilization unhampered by private acquisitiveness and exploitation is the foundation for a culture greater than the world has ever known, a socialist culture reflecting the whole of humanity. As a source of inspiration and guidance for a similar accomplishment thruout the world, we greet the Soviet Union on the Fifteenth Anniversary of the November Revolution.*

*We, the editors of the "Student Review," official organ of the National Student League and spokesman for the revolutionary student movement in America, congratulate the Soviet Union on its splendid educational system which has divorced the fear of unemployment from education. We students, subject in our schools to various forms of imperialist war preparations, greet you for your steadfast peace policy.*

*We declare ourselves for the defense of the Soviet Union, against any attacks of the imperialists, against any attacks upon the revolutionary and cultural heritage of the workers of the world.*  
The Editors, STUDENT REVIEW

*We greet the 15th Anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution and the fifteenth year of the building of socialism. Throughout the United States the intellectuals and workers are joining forces for the building of a revolutionary culture which will destroy the capitalist culture and establish the workers' cultural heritage.*

*In this work along the cultural front we are strengthened by the tremendous achievements of the Soviet workers and peasants along*

**Robert Gessner**

## OLYMPIAD OF ARTS

On that night all Russia was in the central Park of Culture and Rest, filling the gardens along the river, overflowing from cinemas, theatres, libraries, refreshment booths, halls, schools, gymnasiums into the green acres beside the slow river and spreading outward toward the dark Lenin woods.

Lumberjack faces from Karelia, oil-washed faces from Baku, city faces from Kiev and Nizhni-Novgorod, clean factory faces from Viborg, Kharkov tractor faces, digger faces from Magnitogorsk, office faces from Moscow and Leningrad, German faces from the meadows of the Volga, biblical faces from Samarkand, slant-eyed Kalmouks from the Steppes. Armenians, Georgians, Turkmenistans, Muslims, Bohkarans, Siberians, Kazans, Crimeans, Mongolians, Kazakstans . . . Races, tribes, nations, people . . . The faces of the world.

They were the All-Union Olympiad of Arts. They were artisans and artists and men and women. They were delegates to the world's first cultural olympic.

All evening long the brigades streamed past the stage, giving the salute and receiving it, and filling up the amphitheatre to capacity and above capacity and as a cup miraculously fills over its brim without spilling they came and were still coming and it seemed ever coming.

A red-and-yellow banner blanketed the stage, blazing with picturesque hieroglyphics: "To the All-Union Olympiad of Arts, Greetings."

The enormous banner floated down, disclosing a mass of glistening silver that gradually took the multi-varied shapes of an orchestra, and behind them, tier upon tier, sat the great face of a gigantic chorus. It shouted its song of welcome, the horns blaring in harmony. The amphitheatre hurled the words back. The earth shook.

I remembered that somewhere in America that summer hundreds of athletes had assembled to determine who could throw iron and wood the farthest and move the fastest and jump the highest and longest. I remembered that thousands had been cash customers privileged to sit in the sun in shirtsleeves and watch and drink pop.

Suddenly the bowl overflowed and the dark sky disappeared. The cultural delegates were marching out from the hub of the Central Park of Culture and Rest into the darkness of old Russia, illuminating as they marched. I saw old Russia, backward and medieval, its masses steeped in superstition—brutal, lazy, crude old Russia—melting before the avalanches of dazzling light . . .

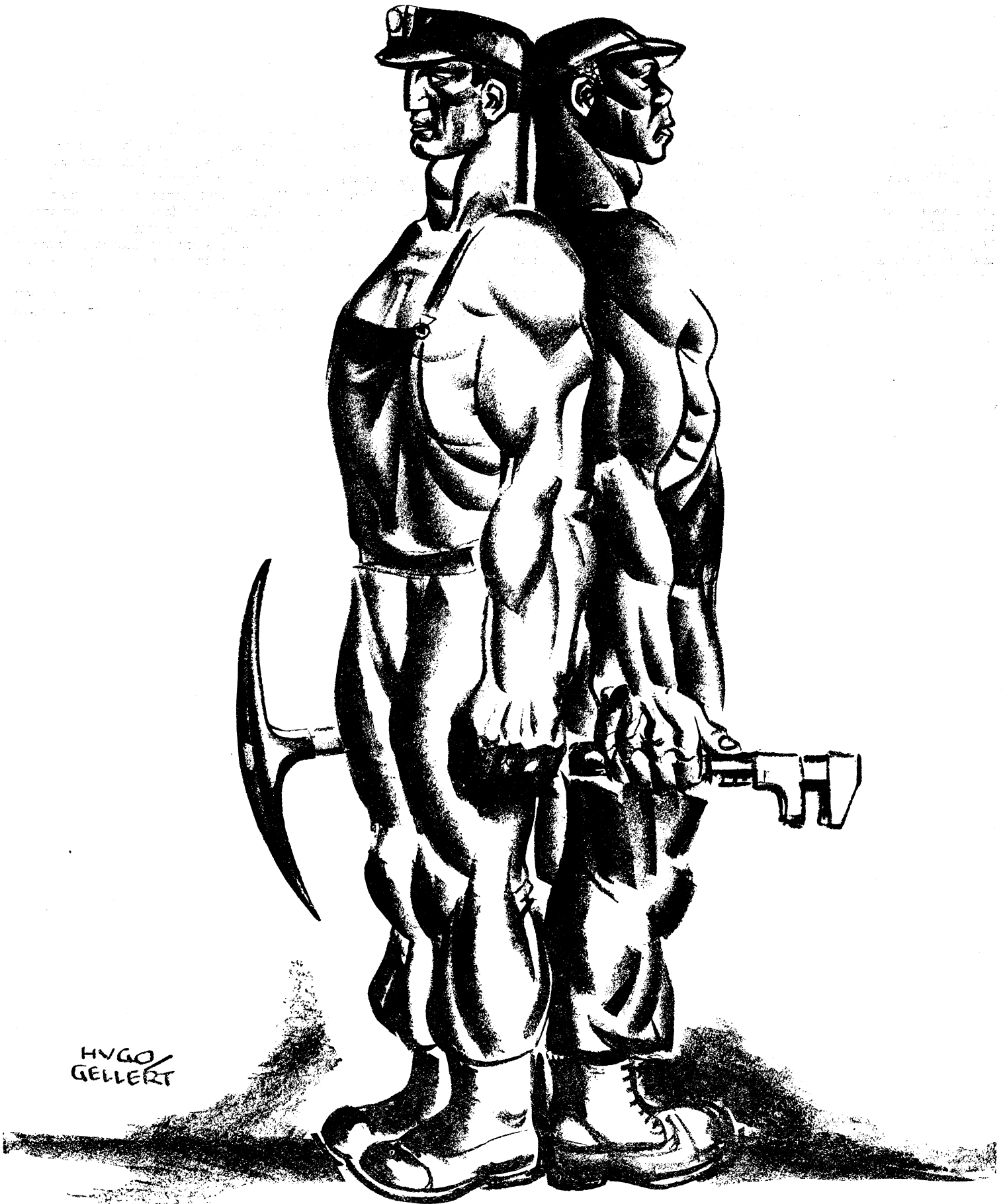
Stretching from the Baltic to the Bering, from the Caspian to the Japanese Seas, from the frigid Arctic to torid Turkestan lies this new continent of culture. One-sixth of the earth's surface with 160 millions speaking over 150 tongues. It is a world within a world. It is the new world, wherein are being born and nurtured a new people. They are the pioneers, doing the world's work in laboratory, experimental school, collectivized farm, factory, home, and street. They are marching forth with new minds in new bodies, unconditioned to the decayed standards of property and wealth and life. They are marching under banners of scientific government that preserves and perpetuates their diversified tribal cultures. They are destined to redeem mankind with a new and greater Renaissance.

*all fronts. In order that their work may go on unhindered by capitalist obstruction we pledge the support and defense of the Soviet Union, and our full fight against imperialist war. We know that the successes in the USSR assure the World October!*

National Executive Board, John Reed Clubs of the U.S.A.

*The new world is come, and not to Russia alone. Soviet Russia is only the beginning. The Russians are nothing but the first, the leading people, the mass-hero of the world revolution. They have found and struck out upon the way to do what all peoples have always wished and meant to do. They did it. That's their discovery—action.*

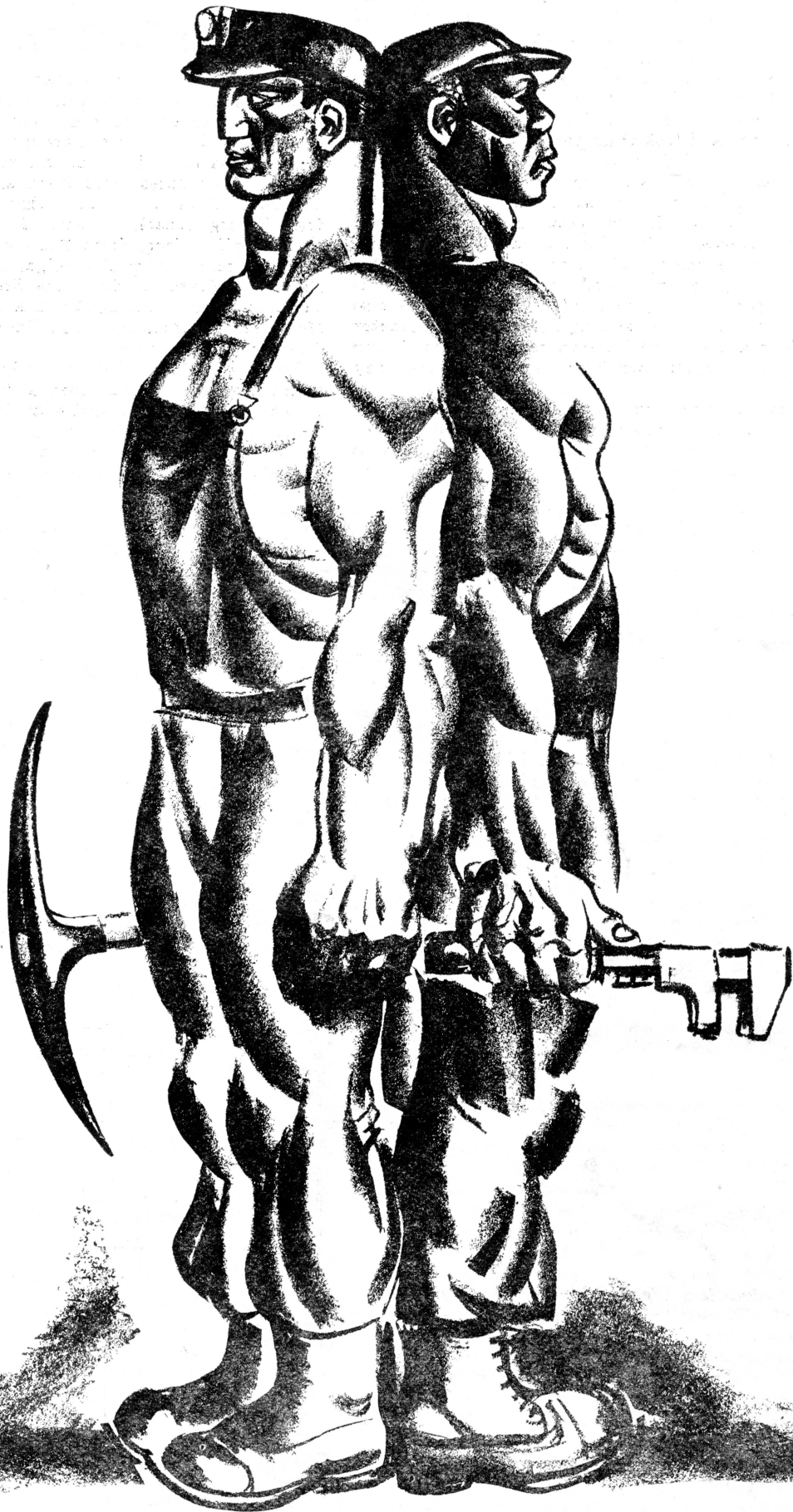
*Now we who have dreamed dreams, we whose beds are breaking beneath us, we also are waking to action, to do indeed the impossible like our mass leader.*  
LINCOLN STEFFENS



HUGO  
GELLERT

by Hugo Gellert

"LABOR WITH A WHITE SKIN CANNOT EMANCIPATE ITSELF WHEN LABOR WITH A BLACK SKIN IS BRANDED."  
—Karl Marx.



HUGO  
GELLERT

by Hugo Gellert

"LABOR WITH A WHITE SKIN CANNOT EMANCIPATE ITSELF WHEN LABOR WITH A BLACK SKIN IS BRANDED."  
—Karl Marx.

Moe Bragin

## SOVIET FARMS

One of the most important and most difficult tasks of the proletarian revolution in Russia has been the socialist reconstruction of agriculture. Obviously, all wheels set in motion by the proletariat under the leadership of the Communist Party would be scotched sooner or later if the peasantry kept dragging behind. Hence the first Five-Year Plan formulated directives to change the Soviet Union from a country of small individual farmers into one of large-scale mechanized agriculture. State farms are spreading all over Russia. More than sixty percent of the peasants have joined the collectives. The antagonism between country and town on which capitalism fattened like a hoglouse is being broken down. The kulak is under heel. Even where he appears victorious his victory is short-lived; the Communist Party redoubles its efforts with the help of the poor and middle farmers, and the kulaks have no more chance than a handful of shrill grasshoppers before a plunging tractor. And in 1933 with the inauguration of the second Five-Year Plan, the kulak will be completely liquidated, one hundred percent collectivization accomplished, and Soviet Russia will enter the first phase of the classless socialist society.

*Trud*, *Kolkhozniki*, and *One of the 25,000* dramatize the march of the Russian peasants towards the objectives laid out in the two great plans. Toward Socialism. *Trud* is the description by a peasant woman of the triumph in her village over the kulak, illiteracy, fatalism, poverty. *Kolkhozniki* gives first-hand accounts of their deeds written and dictated by members of the collective that won the red flag for the best 1931 sowing record in the North Caucasus. And in the third brochure a Bolshevik factory worker goes to Turkestan as one of the 25,000 shock brigaders. He is murdered by the bai, rich farmers, one night on his way back from inspecting a collective.

*Trud* is an ecstatic lyric sung by Dunka Pazukhina, widow of a Red Army Soldier. She tells how her native village turned collective and how the kulaks hounded the collectivists night and day. "We worked like lightning and didn't notice any one. 'Laugh if you like, you blockheads! You can't harm us now', we said to them. We had threshed all our oats in three days. Then we went to help the other people. That's how we set an example in initiative!" Sweat, grime, tears are abundant in this account by a simple peasant woman. Married off at the age of fifteen, ground down by poverty, forced to sell her son to a kulak, she is, nevertheless, one of the first to begin the fight for the collective. She tells how the first tractor is brought to the village and how the women fondle it like a new-born child. She gives unforgettable pictures of the first time she speaks before the peasants and how they listen to her with shining faces; of her clumsy attempts at learning to read and write, and the tears falling down on her work-scarred fist; of how she drags herself home from work, her body black and blue. Her words reveal a sweet wholesome personality, dignified, modest, bursting from the terrible husk the old brutal society had bound about it. The beauty of *Trud* lies in this—that Dunka's short breathless story is typical of what is happening to millions of other peasant women who are making Russia a light on a high hill.

*One of the 25,000* describes a shock brigadier in action. It consists chiefly of a group of letters written by Gregory Indjevatkin who is sent from a Moscow factory to be vice-director of the machine and tractor station in the Bazar-Kurgan District in Tukestan. He finds chaos and incompetence at his new post. The chairman of the village soviet is a Kirhizian who is ignorant and illiterate. The local communists are inefficient. There is no Party or Y.C.L. nucleus. The cooperative store sells perfume and face powder but no food. The dekhans, the poor peasants, driven into the collectives by blockheads "dizzy with success" back out and the collectives collapse before Gregory's eyes. And his wife in Moscow writes letters reproaching him for running away from her. All this does not dishearten him. He works hard and is

elected to two village soviets. He sees to it that the sowing campaign is fulfilled. He helps organize a Party nucleus, a Mestcom, a Committee of Agricultural Laborers, a library; he arranges Socialist competition with another machine tractor station. His wife's reproaches hurt him but he writes: "I am a member of the Bolshevik Party, and I have firmly resolved to perform the task laid upon me. Only after that is done will I return." He makes no complaints and courageously meets the kulaks' attacks and the siege of four days. And then the sudden telegram announcing his murder on the dark road. No whining, no tears for the fallen comrade. On the contrary, resolutions from Moscow to send hundreds to take his place. The work must go on. And so the powerful stream sweeps on, crushing the kulaks and priests and fertilizing the broad Russian land for a classless society.

In a preface, the kolkhozniki declare that their book was not written by one man in his study. Scores of collective farmers wrote it or supplied the material and asked others to put their story in writing. So we have the miller, Mark Ilyich Lopo, 68, telling us he does not want to die because there is still so much work to do on the collective. He has not missed a single working day; collective farm life is splendid. Then Timothy Skorikov, chairman of the kolkhoz, gives the story of the 15,000 acres. He states that the gross income from grain growing is 400 rubles, an income greatly exceeding any previously obtained by poor and middle farmers. Skorikov describes the difficulties the collective overcame. Under "things we still have to do" he lists stables to be built, chicken farms to be developed, silos to be constructed. "Our horses and cows vote for silos." Red partisans, labor organizers, women squad leaders, carpenters, stone masons, mothers of large families, members of the Comsomol and the Party all have their say here. There are numerous admitted shortcomings and problems. Nothing can give better the place of the collective in the lives of these peasants than the following paragraph with its rousing last line crescendo:

"The collective farm teems with life and noise thruout the day. Silence sets in long after midnight. There is hardly a sound then. A solitary lantern burns on the watch tower. Nightingales sing in the gardens. Now and then a horse will snort or the farm baker can be heard patting his dough. In the fourth year of the Five-Year Plan we shall be making bread by machinery."

The importance of pamphlets such as these to America will grow with time. Writers, artists, intellectuals can no longer fear like Hawthorne that their souls will be lost in the furrow. Many are no longer cowering like timid hares behind the seeming clod of the farm worker. And some, the most advanced, will begin to realize that they can not remain most of their days in the study to step out to have an occasional fling for physical comradeship with the proletariat as with a buxom servant wench. They will lose the conviction that they are privileged specialists. They will be glad to be, often under a wholesome anonymity, the stenographers, collectors and collaters of all the dramatic material pounded into being by the growing struggles of the American farmer, above all, his fellow workers. For what is happening in Russia will spur on to greater battle sharecroppers, black and white, beet-workers in Colorado, hired hands in the Imperial Valley, Dakota wheat farmers, the Iowans picketing the roads, and a thousand lean homesteaders in eastern one-horse farms. This will make future conferences like the National Conference for Farmers in Washington, December 7, of even greater importance. The fighting farmers will not be discouraged by the lies about the imminent collapse of the collectives bugled thruout the capitalist press. Hundreds or more accounts will come across singing the triumph of the Soviet peasant. And as the old roots rot in the red sun, wherever earth is worked the voices of the collectivists will sound louder and louder.

An exhibition of proletarian and revolutionary paintings, prints, and drawings by artist-members of the John Reed Club will be held at the A.C.A. Gallery, 1269 Madison Avenue (at 91st Street) from November 7th to November 25th. The exhibit is entitled *Land of the Free*—this indicates its character—and includes the best proletarian and revolutionary art yet produced by the members of the Club.

The John Reed Club has arranged a series of Round-Table Discussions and Lectures for the winter. The first Round-Table will be held on November 11 (open only to members of the Club). The subject will be: *Is a Proletarian Culture Possible Under Capitalism?*

\**Collective Farm Trud*. Told by Eudoxia Pazukhina. Written by P. Tatarova. Modern Books, Ltd. 23 Theobald's Road, London, W.C. 1.

\* *Kolkhozniki. Collective Farmers on Themselves*. International Press, Moscow.

\* *One of the 25,000*. A. Isbach. Distributed by International Publishers, New York. 20c and 10c.

## Apropos Soviet Negro Film

On October tenth the New York *Times* and the New Amsterdam *News*, bourgeois Harlem newspaper, ran a Berlin communication from H. L. Moon and T. R. Preston, formerly members of the cast of *Black and White*, purporting to explain the cessation of activity on this film—a movie designed to expose the oppression of Negro workers in America and throughout the world. The dispatch declared that “The film was abandoned for fear it might offend American sensibilities and interfere with the movement . . . for the recognition of the Soviet government,” “a betrayal of 12,000,000 Negroes in America and all the darker exploited colonial peoples of the world.” The abandonment of the film is alleged to have come about through the devious intervention of Ivy Lee, counsellor for the Rockefellers, who urged Hugh Cooper, American engineer of Dnieprostroi, to seek out Stalin and have production cancelled—“the long and powerful arm of American capitalism extending into the heart of the workers’ republic.”

The facts of the case are simply that the film has been delayed because of an adequate scenario and other technical difficulties. Apart from the impossibility of Mr. Moon and Mr. Preston knowing anything first hand about allegedly secret communications between Mr. Lee, Mr. Cooper, Premier Molotov and Stalin, the charges are patently ridiculous slanders in view of the fact that Mezrabpom, producers of this film, have never hesitated to expose and cry out against class oppression and imperialism as brutally practiced by the capitalistic countries of the world. *Storm Over Asia* and *China Express* attacked American and British imperialistic policies in Asia; the *Black Sea Mutiny* exposed the activities of French capitalism in the Near East. *Siberian Patrol* the intervention of U. S. and England during the civil war, and *Sniper* calls upon the proletariat of each country to convert imperialist war into civil war against the ruling class. Very recently Mezrabpom made *Prosperity* which shows the conditions of workers in a large automobile factory during boom times. This film was produced at a time when Henry Ford, against whom it is an obvious attack, was one of Russia’s largest creditors. News has just arrived that this same organization has completed and is ready to release *The Deserter*, directed by Pudovkin, which urges the German workers to overthrow the fascist dictatorship at a time when Germany has taken the place of the United States as the largest exporter to the Soviet Union.

This list of uncompromising films aimed to arouse the workers of the world against their oppressors, is a vivid refutation of the charges that the film producers of the U.S.S.R. seek to avoid ruffling the sensibilities of the capitalist industrialists. The workers Film and Photo League of the W.I.R., affiliated with Mezrabpom Studios takes this opportunity to repudiate the slanders of Preston and Moon used by the capitalist press in the form of large-sounding and misleading calumnies against the Soviet Union.

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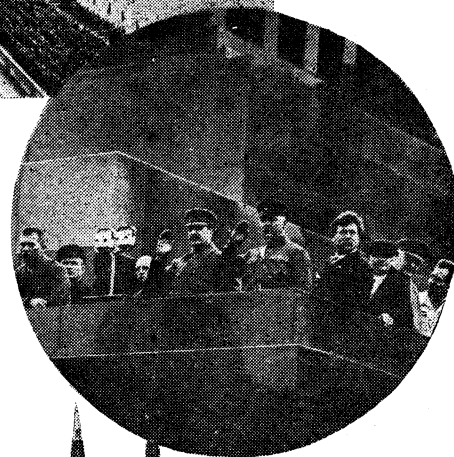
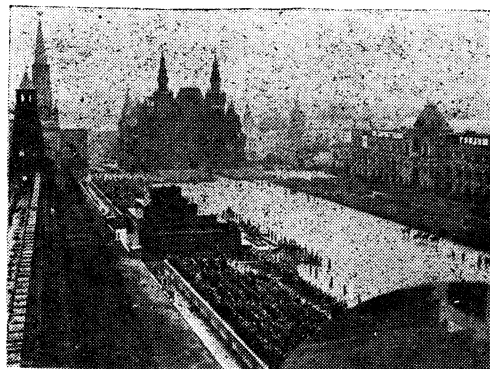


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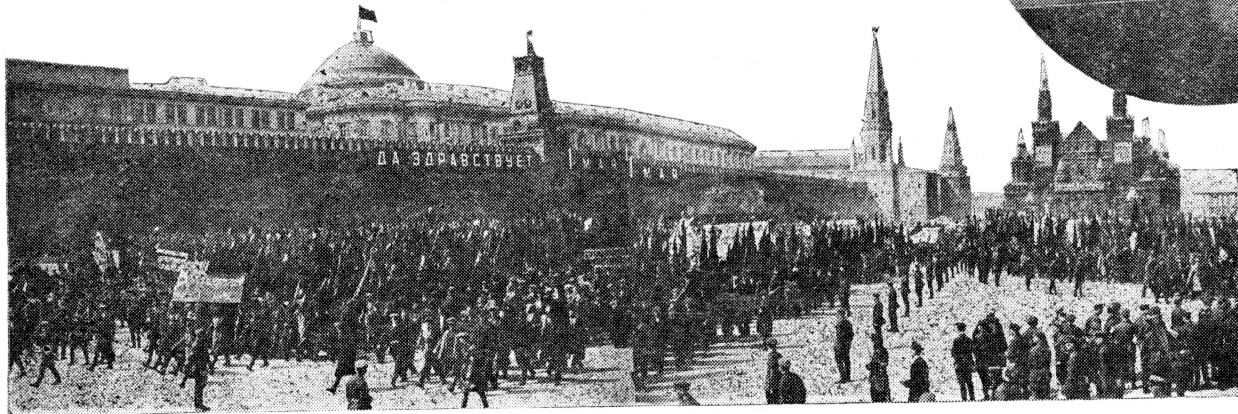
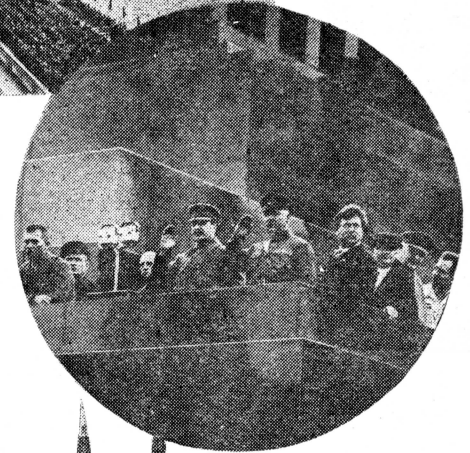
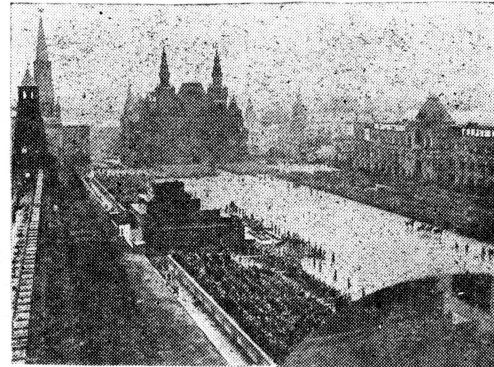
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