NEW MASSES

DECEMBER 15, 1936 FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY

TO YOU, newsboy, patrolling your windswept corner; to you, printer, truing up your forms and wielding your make-ready magic; to you, saucy Young Communist Leaguer, vamping your history prof into glancing at these pages; to you, earnest literature agent of the International Workers' Order, laying out your magazine display; to you, writer; to you, artist; to you, reader—to all of you whose hard work and good will have made possible this silver-anniversary number of the NEW MASSES, the staff extends its fraternal greetings and its thanks. And within the staff, hats are off to Editor Bruce Minton, who had the major responsibility for assembling the contents.

Who's Who

JOSEPH FREEMAN, our chief editor, is the author of the current *An American Testament,* the autobiography of his first thirty years, part of which deals with his associations with this magazine since its early days under the *Liberator* title.

Scott Nearing has written several works on war and international relations. His name is prominently associated with the fight against the entry of the United States into the World War.

Theodore Dreiser is known to the labor movement for his active work in the fight for the civil rights of the Kentucky miners. His writings have appeared in the *Masses,* the *Liberator,* and the NEW MASSES for the past twenty-five years.

Earl Browder, presidential candidate of the Communist Party in the 1936 campaign, is well known to NEW MASSES readers for the essays which formed the basis of his present book, *What Is Communism?*

John Strachey, British correspondent of the NEW MASSES, is a member of the family which gave the world Lytton Strachey and J. St. Loe Strachey. His new book, *The Theory and Practice of Socialism,* will be reviewed next week.

Robert Forsythe, well-known Marxist satirist and humorist, is a regular contributor to our pages. He is the author of *Redder Than the Rose,* a collection of essays most of which were originally published in this magazine.

Rex Stout, formerly business manager of the monthly NEW MASSES, writes the Nero Wolfe detective stories in the *Saturday Evening Post.*

John Dos Passos, author of *The Big Money,* was one of the most consistent contributors to the monthly NEW MASSES when he was still working on *1919* and other earlier novels.

Agnes Smedley's sketch is from her forthcoming book on China to be published by Vanguard Press. She is an old contributor to the NEW MASSES, and is the author of *The Chinese Red Army Marches* and *Chinese Destinies.*

Granville Hicks, contributing editor of the NEW MASSES, was formerly its literary editor. He is now at work on a volume on British literature similar in plan to *The Great Tradition,* his critical study of American literature since the Civil War.

George Seldes is the bad boy of the American Fourth Estate, having got himself expelled from several countries for refusal to submit to censorship of his dispatches. Later he wrote *The Freedom of the Press,* a revealing study of American journalism, and *Sawdust Caesar,* a life of Mussolini.

Upton Sinclair, America's foremost muckraker and crusading novelist, is closely identified with the history of the *Masses,* the *Liberator,* and the NEW MASSES, to which he contributed regularly. His address to the recent first Congress of Western Writers was published last week.

Michael Gold, editor of the NEW MASSES since it was started as a monthly, author of *Jews Without Money,* frequent contributor to the *Masses* and the *Liberator,* former columnist for the *Daily Worker,* needs no introduction.

Sherwood Anderson, outstanding American novelist, short-story writer, and literary trail-blazer, has contributed to this magazine throughout its history.

Vincent Sheean, author of *San Felice* and *Personal History,* is an old contributor. He sent us his article, "Two Dictators," from Switzerland, where he is now living.

Albert Halper, author of *Union Square* and *The Foundry,* has contributed stories, articles, and reviews to our pages.

John Howard Lawson, dramatist and critic, has appeared frequently in the NEW MASSES. He is the author of the plays *Processional* and *Success Story,* and a new work of his goes into rehearsal this week for January production by the Theatre Union.

Albert Maltz's story "Good-by" is from a collection to be released by International Publishers this winter under the title *The Way Things Are.* His story "Man on a Road," which appeared first in our pages, has been widely reprinted in anthologies of outstanding American short stories.

Maxwell Bodenheim is the author of several novels, as well as being a well-known poet. His verses have appeared in our pages for the past fifteen years. . . . Isidor Schneider, literary editor of the NEW MASSES, is well known as poet, critic, and novelist. His latest published work is the novel *From the Kingdom of Necessity.* . . . Alfred Kreymborg, poet and humorist, was an editor of *The American Caravan,* and served in like capacity on *The New Caravan,* which will be reviewed next week. . . . Genevieve Taggard's most recent volume of verse, *Calling Western Union,* has been widely praised. She has been a regular contributor since her early poems appeared in the *Liberator,* and was the editor of *May Days: An Anthology of Masses-Liberator Verse.* . . . Richard Wright is a young Negro poet living in Chicago who has contributed frequently to our pages. . . . Sarah N. Cleghorn's poems were a feature of the early days of this magazine. A review of her autobiography, *Three Score,* by Dorothy Canfield appeared in our issue of October 6. . . . Louis Untermeyer, a frequent contributor of verse to the *Masses* and the *Liberator,* has edited numerous anthologies of poetry. . . . Langston Hughes, Negro poet and novelist, has long been identified with the NEW MASSES. . . . Edna St. Vincent Millay's poem is from a volume which Harper's will publish this winter. . . . William Rose Benét is one of the editors of the *Saturday Review of Literature.* . . . Eda Lou Walton's poetry has appeared in our pages before. She is well known for her literary criticism in the *Nation,* the New York *Times,* and the New York *Herald Tribune.*

Among the many artists represented in this issue, the following have at one time or another been editors of this magazine or its predecessors: Adolf Dehn, William Gropper, Hugo Gellert, Louis Lozowick, Maurice Becker, Boardman Robinson, Jacob Burck, and Art Young.

The Siqueiros lithograph on page 48 is from the second edition of the American Artists' School's First Annual Print Series.

George Grosz's lithograph on page 9 is reproduced from his new portfolio collection, *Interregnum,* published by the Black Sun Press.

Lynd Ward, who did the cover for this issue, is the author of *God's Man,* a novel in woodcuts.

The staff wishes to acknowledge an overflow of good material for this issue, some of which has already been printed.

VOL. XXI **December 15, 1936** NO. 12

ART WORK

Lynd Ward (cover), Aimé, A. Ajay, Maurice Becker, Ben Benn, George Biddle, Arnold Blanch, Simeon Braguin, Jacob Burck, Adolf Dehn, Donga, Mabel Dwight, Darryl Frederick, Wanda Gág, Hugo Gellert, Lydia Gibson, H. Glintenkamp, William Gropper, George Grosz, John Groth, Ned Hilton, Ellison Hoover, Eitaro Ishigaki, Scott Johnston, Joe Jones, Herb Kruckman, Russell T. Limbach, Louis Lozowick, John Mackey, Elizabeth Olds, Jose Clemente Orozco, George Picken, Walter Quirt, Gardner Rea, A. Redfield, Anton Refregier, Dan Rico, Boardman Robinson, William Sanderson, Theodore Scheel, Georges Schreiber, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Aaron Sopher, Soriano, M. Soyer, Harry Sternberg, William Steig, A. Walkowitz, Art Young.

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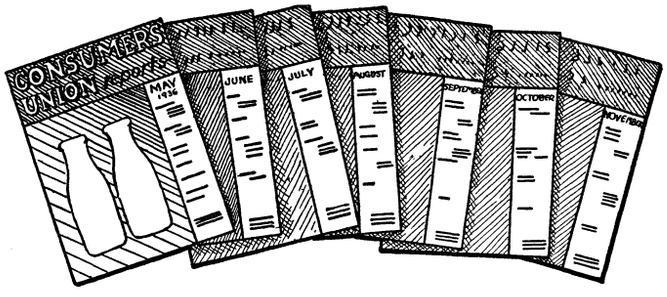

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JULY — Mechanical Refrigerators, Used Cars, Motor Oils.

AUG. — Oil Burners, Laundry Soaps, Blacklist of Drugs and Cosmetics.

SEPT. — Shoes, Tires, Rubbers, Whiskies.

OCT. — Dentifrices, Men's Shirts, Electric Shavers, Brandies, Gins.

NOV.—1937 Autos, 1937 Radios, Electric Toasters, Children's Shoes, Wines.

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Professor Colston E. Warne, of Amherst, is president of Consumers Union; Arthur Kallet, co-author of 100,000,000 *Guinea Pigs*, is director; and D. H. Palmer, physicist, is technical supervisor. Among the board of directors and sponsors are many prominent scientists, educators, journalists and labor leaders. There are now over 20,000 Consumers Union members throughout the country—a number increasing at the rate of 800 a week.

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NEW MASSES

DECEMBER 15, 1936

William Gropper

"I said, I've seen your face before, but can't place it."

Old Fervor and New Discipline

The paths of the past and the present join to mark out the roadway of this journal's future

By Joseph Freeman

NO RADICAL or liberal who grew up in pre-war America will ever forget the sheer excitement of the old *Masses*. The statement of policy on its masthead, drafted by John Reed, boldly proclaimed that it was a revolutionary and not a reform magazine. It boasted of being frank, arrogant, impertinent, searching for the true causes.

This dashing enunciation of policy was borne out by the contents. Editorials propagated the socialist creed; articles exposed the evils of capitalism; the news of the month appeared in a new light when analyzed by radical reporters; and the drawings, strong in conception, original in execution, were so many satirical bombs hurled at the crimes of the rich and powerful against the poor and oppressed. The most talented men and women in America were writing and drawing for the *Masses,* stirring the imagination of young people from New York to San Francisco. The magazine published love poetry, light drawings laughing at the clichés of the moment; expositions of Freud's sex theories; analyses of the new American literature then being fashioned by Dreiser, Anderson, Frank, and Sandburg. But all these spiritual forces were clustered around a central idea, the idea that capitalism had monstrously outlived its usefulness, that socialism alone could open new ways of life for America, for the world.

The motive power of the old *Masses* was the revolutionary movement in the United States. There were, indeed, two movements in the first decade of our century, one represented by the Socialist Party, the other by the I.W.W. Both groups were primarily interested in the industrial worker; they advocated, supported, and organized strikes; they fought for higher wages and shorter hours. But the Socialist Party, as distinguished from the I.W.W., had a special appeal for the more discontented sections of the middle class, upon whom the trusts were mercilessly cracking down. Had there been a third or reformist party in the United States, these people would have joined it; in its absence, they entered the Socialist Party and in the long run made it reformist. The party then included orthodox Marxists, revisionists, Fabians, and middle-class liberals for whom the word "socialism" concealed, from themselves chiefly, the ideals of the muckrakers. It contained people who despised political action to the point of syndicalism, and people who cared more for election campaigns than for strikes. There were in it advocates of sabotage and disciples of non-resistance, ministers of the gospel and militant atheists.

All these diverse moods, sentiments, and programs found expression in the pages of the *Masses,* then the sole cultural voice of American radicalism. Founded at the close of 1911, the magazine flowered in the following year—the Lyric Year, Floyd Dell aptly called it. For it was in 1912, when Debs polled nearly a million votes, that pre-war American radicalism reached its peak. It was the year when the names of Joe Ettor and Arturo Giovannitti, leaders of the Lawrence textile strike, became household words, and when Emma Goldman could pack meeting halls in any city with lectures on anarchism, free love, and Shakespeare.

With this social ferment stirring America, the Lyric Year saw also the awakening of the intelligentsia, middle-class and proletarian, in art and literature. American poetry was entering upon its renaissance with the foundation of Harriet Monroe's magazine in Chicago; the Irish Players and Maurice

Brown were instigating the new American theater; Marcel Duchamps's *Nude Descending a Staircase* aroused the rebel sons and daughters to the meeting of modern art; the emancipated sex theories of Edward Carpenter, Havelock Ellis, and August Forel had emigrated to our shores and followed close on the heels of the men and women fighting for woman suffrage; and gay clothing, colored neckties, bobbed-haired and smoking women flaunted the victory of the younger generation of that day over the prostrate body of puritanism.

FOR the next five years this "new" spirit was to dominate American life, and its most effective and moving voice was to be the *Masses*. John Reed's powerful reporting gave us the truest pictures of the great Paterson strike, the Mexican revolution, the European war; Floyd Dell brilliantly explained to us the new American and European novelists, poets, and playwrights; Arturo Giovannitti wrote revolutionary poetry the like of which America had never seen before; Bob Minor, Art Young, and Boardman Robinson drew cartoons which moved to deep laughter and strong indignation and a desire to fight for a socialist world; and Alexander Trachtenberg brought us every month news of the socialist movement throughout the world.

America's entrance into the war emphasized the cleavage in the *Masses,* as it did in the labor movement. Most radical papers were suppressed and the magazine automatically became the chief organ of socialist and anti-war forces in this country. The editorials propagated the Wilson myth, but the publication as a whole attacked the war. The editors were arrested under the espionage act, under which Eugene Debs, Charles E. Ruthenberg, and Earl Browder were sent to prison. On the witness stand, Eastman explained that he no longer held the sentiments expressed in his anti-war editorial, and the jury disagreed. By the time the second *Masses* trial was held, war passions had cooled off and the editors were acquitted. Meantime, the suppressed magazine was appearing under a new name, the *Liberator*, and again it was the vanguard of the most advanced men and women in America. For once more a great historical event came to give it character and direction. John Reed's classic about the Bolshevik revolution first appeared in its pages; Bob Minor and Albert Rhys Williams wrote lyrical reports from Moscow; Giovannitti's dithyrambic verses sang of the socialist fatherland as well as of the murder of Karl Liebknecht in Germany and Frank Little in America.

The *Masses* and the *Liberator* educated a generation of Americans in modern ideas. It gave us our first true picture of our own country; the first true picture of the Bolshevik revolution, the first glimpse into the new art and literature. Thousands of young men and women all over the country were molded by this extraordinary magazine, and the most gifted of them contributed to its pages. There is hardly a name distinguished in American art and literature today which did not appear in the *Masses* or the *Liberator.*

So thoroughly did the latter reflect the American scene that when I joined its staff it was as different from the old *Masses* as the fall of 1921 was different from the fall of 1911. Post-war prosperity had drawn many of the original contributors away from the revolutionary movement. They found comfortable posts with bourgeois publications, and salved their consciences by criticizing the Soviet Union. Few of these had the insight or the courage to say simply, "I am a tired radical"; instead they said, "Lenin has abandoned socialism." To prove their contention they pointed to the New Economic Policy. Floyd Dell, still at his post, ridiculed these arguments, reaffirmed his faith in socialism; Max Eastman, still half-attached to the Communist idea, proved that socialism could be built in one country, and that its success in the U.S.S.R. alone would be the most effective propaganda for the idea everywhere else.

But the founding fathers were leaving the magazine. Bob Minor abandoned his mighty cartoons for revolutionary politics; Floyd Dell went off to write novels; John Reed was dead; Giovannitti was in the trade unions. But like all truly creative men, these had left a fruitful heritage which Michael Gold, William Gropper, Hugo Gellert, and others now carried on, once more upon the basis of a vital surge among the American workers. For what the Socialist Party and the I.W.W. had been to the old *Masses,* the Communist Party was to the *Liberator.* The writers reported the class conflict; the artists portrayed it, and new ones were coming all the time: John Dos Passos, Genevieve Taggard, Reginald Marsh, and many, many others.

The magazine, however, encountered difficulties. Some of its supporters were now drifting away from the revolutionary movement, and the magazine was suspended for two years. Its revival in the spring of 1926 as the NEW MASSES reflected at once an awakening of the American labor movement

Maurice Becker

Maurice Becker

Maurice Becker

and the effect of that awakening upon the intellectuals. That was the year that John Dos Passos, John Howard Lawson, Mary Heaton Vorse, Genevieve Taggard, William Gropper, Michael Gold, Hugo Gellert, and others formed the Proletarian Artists' & Writers' League. And, *mirabile dictu!* the league was endorsed by men of as diverse views as Van Wyck Brooks, William Ellery Leonard, William F. Dunne, Horace Kallen, Samuel Ornitz, Upton Sinclair, Floyd Dell, and William Allen White. This, above all, was the year of the great Passaic strike, which was attracting world-wide attention because it was the first one in American history under Communist leadership. Committees of writers went down to Passaic to aid the strike; the NEW MASSES reported the strike fully; and the intelligentsia as a whole was feeling the invigorating effects of a new American revolutionary movement that was talking about the united front and urging a nation-wide farmer-labor party at this time.

"The keeper calls them Brisbane and Hearst." Adolf Dehn

Under these conditions, the NEW MASSES was able to start on the broadest basis. Communists, Socialists, and trade-unionists wrote for it about the industrial conflict, about American politics, about the international situation; writers and artists of the most diverse schools contributed stories, poems, and drawings whose common denominators were antagonism to capitalism, enthusiasm for the Soviet Union, and the desire for a new American literature. Proletarian literature, which the socialists had taken for granted in 1901, which Mike Gold urged in 1919, now became a frequent topic of discussion in the pages of the magazine. Pupils of the old *Masses,* the editors of the new were adapting to post-war America the tradition of teaching a developing generation the meaning of class conflict, inspiring them with the great idea of socialism. And once more, from every part of the country, came the young, the gifted, the enthusiastic, with their drawings, poems, and stories; and from every state in the union came the echoing voices of readers stirred by their message.

AGAIN a lyric period was interrupted by vast economic factors. The prosperity of the Coolidge-Harding years drew away middle-class intellectuals from the revolutionary movement. The magazine was now run by a handful of writers and artists devoted to the Communist idea. People began to say the magazine was "sectarian." That was their excuse for abandoning it—just as in 1921 they justified themselves by contending that Lenin had "abandoned" socialism. What had really happened was obvious enough even then. Prosperity had blinded many intellectuals, as it had blinded the American people, to the real nature of capitalism. Sectarianism at this time meant that the writers and artists who remained in the revolutionary movement had to make their position more clear than ever, the attacks upon capitalism had to be unequivocally sharp, the differentiation from liberalism had to be unmistakable. And it was during this period, when the magazine was penniless, when the editors worked without help, sleep, or pay, that the pupils of the old *Masses,* now maturing, developed still younger artists and writers. This time historic conditions were different; the Communist idea demanded more deliberate organization, more purposeful and coördinated action.

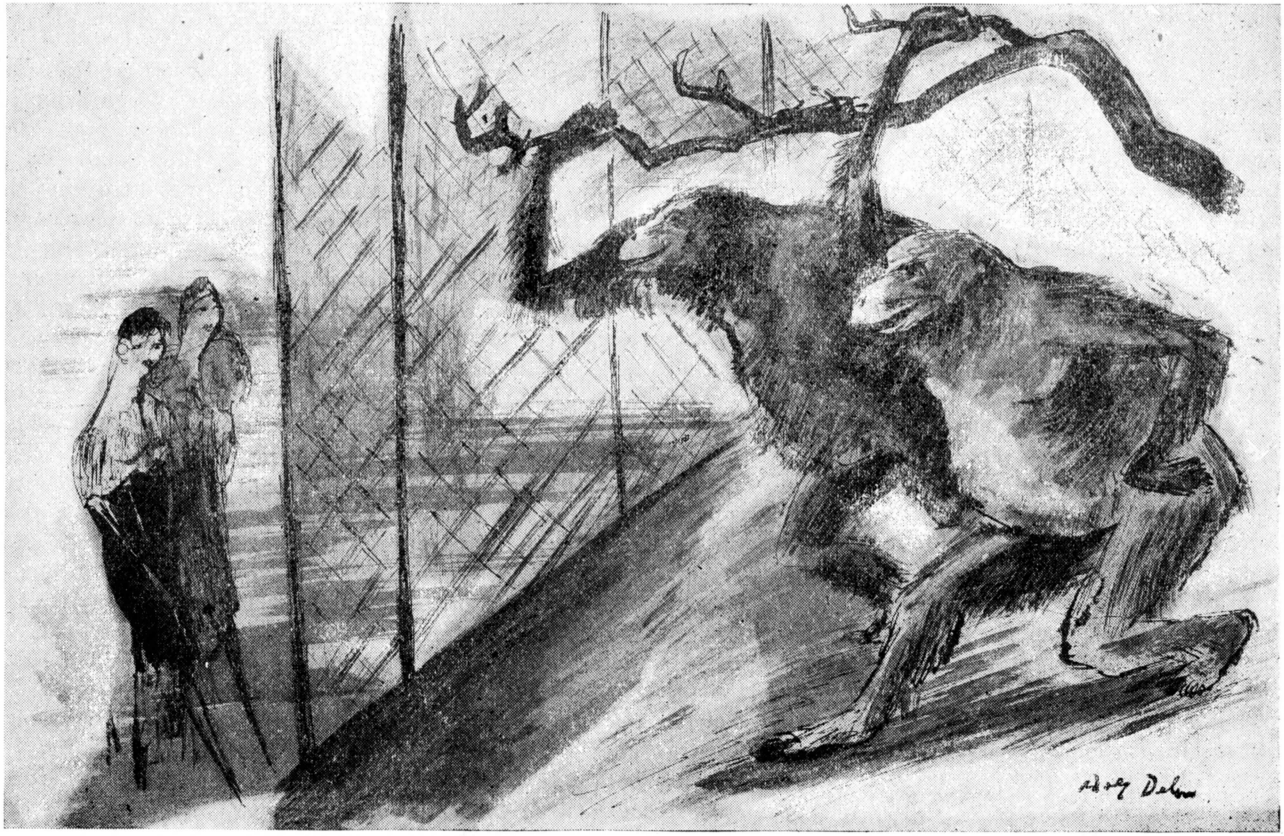
This became apparent in 1930, when the overwhelming economic crisis, unexpected by everyone save the Marxists, irrevocably smashed the illusions fostered by the Big Money. Manuscripts and drawings came pouring in to the NEW MASSES from every part of the country from men and women startled by the unemployment of millions, by their own fall from security. Artists and writers began to crowd our offices to ask questions, to talk things over. They liked the "sectarianism" of the NEW MASSES because that made the issues clear to them. Out of these informal gatherings grew the John Reed clubs, the Theatre Union, *Partisan Review,* and the various other left-wing cultural organizations which stirred and informed new creative forces in America. These developed by leaps and bounds as the crisis, which big business said would be brief, dragged through the years.

By the fall of 1933 it became obvious that the NEW MASSES had grown too small for the new America unfolding around us. The magazine had been a monthly since 1911; now things were happening too fast, and they were far too important for such slow coverage. Germany had gone Nazi, the Soviet Union was laying the foundations for socialism so rapidly and successfully that the world was startled, divided between enthusiasm and fear; Japan was making war upon China; unemployment, crawling across America like a monster, was goading men and women into hunger marches, farmers' revolts, tremendous strikes. And writers and artists who until now had simply argued about revolutionary culture over their needle beer, were ready, out of their own bitter experience, to create it. With the crisis maturing America, a monthly was too small a medium.

IN January 1934 the weekly NEW MASSES appeared. Its roots were in the tradition of the old *Masses,* the *Liberator,* the NEW MASSES monthly; but its face was set toward a new period in American life. Everywhere Americans were awakening to a fuller realization of their position. Class conflict in San Francisco, Terre Haute, Minneapolis, Chicago, were arousing the workers to organization and action; farmers, dispossessed from their land, were entering agricultural groups and farmer-labor groups; professionals, for the first time in the history of this country,

"The keeper calls them Brisbane and Hearst."

Adolf Dehn



"The keeper calls them Brisbane and Hearst."

Adolf Dehn

were organizing in powerful trade unions; and the Communist Party, always responsive to historic changes, was entering upon a more mature stage of its development.

Above all, progressive Americans in every part of the country were beginning to understand the dangers of fascism. They had been shocked by Hitler's tyranny in Germany; they now learned from John L. Spivak in the NEW MASSES that fascism and anti-Semitism were spreading in the United States. They had been puzzled by the N.R.A., and the NEW MASSES was the first weekly reaching a large middle-class audience which explained it. The South, hitherto *terra incognita* for many Americans, was opened for us by Erskine Caldwell. Communism, a movement maligned and distorted by its foes, was expounded in lucid terms by Earl Browder, who showed its real relation to the American tradition. Josephine Herbst brought back brilliant reports from Cuba, Joe North from Terre Haute, Bruce Minton from the West Coast. From a Europe moving rapidly toward war, John Strachey and Ilya Ehrenbourg sent memorable dispatches, and from the Soviet Union, where that socialism which in 1911 was only a dream, already functioned, Joshua Kunitz sent exciting reports. Marxist literary criticism in America, which Floyd Dell, Michael Gold, and others had stimulated, grew and developed in the hands of Granville Hicks, Isidor Schneider, Robert Forsythe, Philip Rahv, William Phillips, Alan Calmer, and their contemporaries.

At the beginning of the economic crisis, the NEW MASSES stirred and crystallized certain forces which later transcended their origin in scope and in depth.

The NEW MASSES today maintains unbroken its twenty-five-year-old tradition of gathering together, informing, and inspiring the most advanced men and women of our country. It continues, under new conditions, the fight against capitalism, and for socialism. It has retained the loyalty and the genius of its earlier artists and writers like Art Young and Mike Gold, and has attracted new, gifted writers and artists from every part of the world. Above all, it retains a devoted body of readers, sensitive to errors, appreciative of good work, politically alert. This we have been able to gauge by the extraordinary response to our campaigns against fascist organizations, against the Tydings-McCormack bill, on behalf of Angelo Herndon, the Scottsboro boys, Spain, and the Soviet Union.

This is a rich heritage of service to the American labor movement, to all the forces of progress in politics, art, and literature. But it is a heritage which imposes a great obligation. To those of us who have been connected with the magazine for many years, the significance of contemporary events comes with peculiar sharpness. The Greenwich Village of orange candles, batik waists, and sandals is gone; the artist today is also a conscious citizen. At his best he is a revolutionary fighter; he goes to aid the miners in Kentucky; he travels thousands of miles to Brazil to plead for Prestes and the Ewerts; he assists the marble strikers, like Rockwell Kent; he accompanies Earl Browder to a Terre Haute prison cell, like Waldo Frank; he commands an aviation corps in Spain, like André Malraux, or a company of loyalist *milicianos,* like Ludwig Renn. He is a trade-union organizer in his craft, like John Howard Lawson or Stuart Davis; he works among farmers, like Jo Herbst; he labors for the emancipation of his oppressed people, like Loren Miller. The NEW MASSES is the magazine of these writers and artists.

Many of us remember vividly the anti-Red drives of the Palmer days, but that was child's play compared with the forces of fascism developing in this country, with the sinister aims of those who ape Hitler and Mussolini. Millions of Americans have realized this danger. They have realized, too, the inseparable connection between fascism and war. They see Spain fighting for its democratic life against fascist hordes supported by Italy and Germany; they see Japan making common cause with Hitler and Mussolini for a war against the Soviet Union. And they see everywhere, standing up to combat these forces of evil and darkness, a People's Front determined to defend elementary liberties. They are ready to do this themselves in the United States. The NEW MASSES is their magazine, too.

MORE READERS are coming to us, more artists, more writers—all ready to fashion an instrument which can effectively aid in the struggle against war and fascism, which can help in the formation of an American People's Front, which can further develop an American art and literature inspired by the struggles of the working class and its allies for the advancement of mankind. These are some of the tasks of the NEW MASSES today. Proud of its past, it buckles down to its job in the present, to the responsibilities imposed by this momentous period in the world's history. The old *Masses*, product of a more peaceful era, was noted for its easy-going humor. The NEW MASSES, product of the post-war period, has its humor, too, but is concerned primarily with the seriousness of the world-wide struggle. Fascism cannot be laughed out of existence; it must be fought; and into this fight, in which millions take part, our writers, artists, and readers want to pour all their passion and energy.

Gardner Rea

"He's probably going to lay a cornerstone."

"Like the Good Deed"

In this naughty world, says a famous American writer, the candle of truth not only has shed light, but has shown up the bad eggs

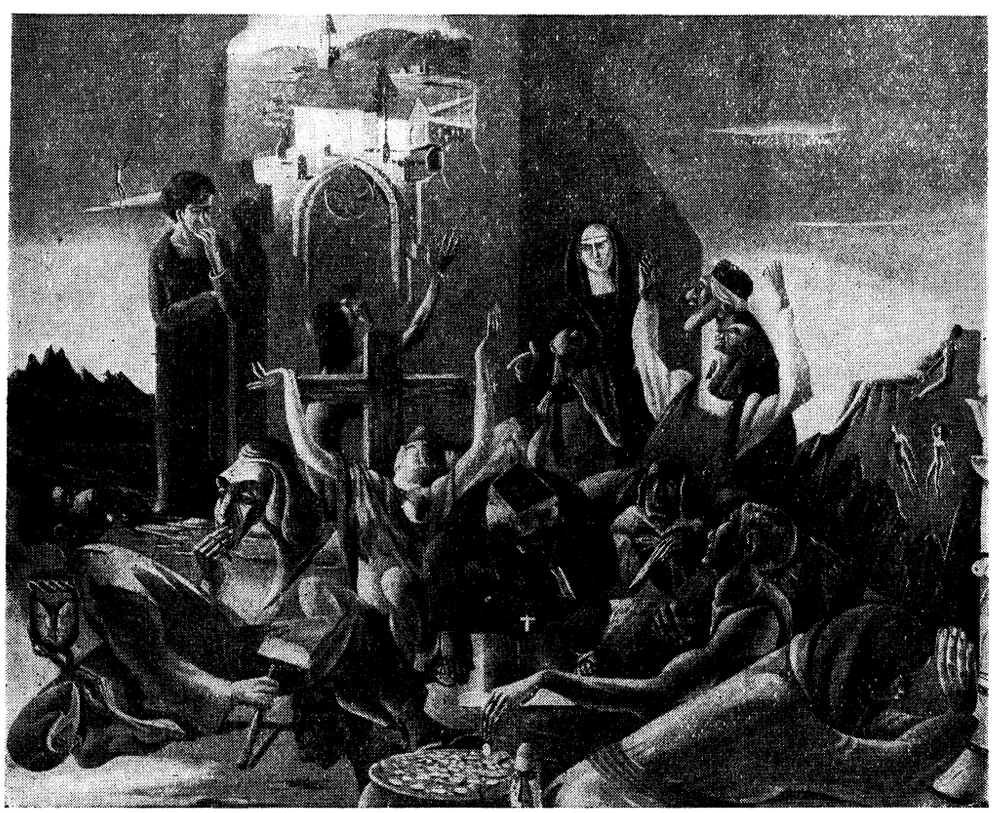
By Theodore Dreiser

I WAS one of the readers of the original *Masses*. In that day, social injustice was as prominent as it ever was before, or has been since. What stood out then were the oppressive actions of the czarist government, the medieval and brutal nature of the Turkish government, the European plottings in connection with China, the suppression of the rights of the Hindus by the English, the Belgian atrocities in the Congo, the murder accompanied by robbery of the Boer Republic, and the imperial dreams of our own trusts and corporations. These were all live, vigorous reasons for the existence and demands of the Socialists and the Anarchists and our own well-dressed and spiritually minded brood of liberals of that day. But our liberals, in contrast to the radicals, of whom we had few, were sure that our public conscience could be stirred to the point of coalescence for corrective action by talk and education—dear old cultural advance. England, Russia, Turkey, and Belgium were European problems—good for magazine articles. But our own rugged magnates were to be "awakened" to a consciousness of their iniquities by, insofar as I could see, the "neighborhood house" of blessed memory and the visiting nurse. What an answer to the dreams of a worth-while social reformation!

Coming into being at that time, and with due regard to the import of Marx, Herr Most, the Russian nihilists of that day, Emma Goldman, Berkman, and a few other socially outraged spirits, the *Masses* proceeded to puncture the illusions of the liberals as to their own significance here. From its office windows in Union Square, it regularly (weekly, I think, for a time) dumped pails of irritating irony on the umbrella-less heads of the spotless and unprotected liberals. And always they were direct hits. From the very first, the *Masses* seemed to pierce and irradiate the piddling and meaningless dilletantism of, for instance, such people as Richard Watson Gilder, the editor of the *Century*, riding down in his carriage to one or another of the numerous settlement houses to deliver a few kindly intellectual pats upon the grateful backs of those silk-gloved reformers in their *opéra bouffe* war for equity; or such a person as J. G. Phelps-Stokes, who seemed to think that the problem could be solved by intermarriage between the rich and poor. I myself, as an interested editor of that period, met up with, now and then, gentlemen in charge of the New York Associated Charities, the Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, the East Side Milk Fund, etc., and found them riding here and there on occasion to explain to comfortable and socially ambitious contributors the importance of their services. More: from time to time, I attended various meetings of selected intellectual groups in polite reformative households, and hearkened to the instructions they were pleased to give as to method and procedure in saving society. In view of today, isn't that a loud haw-haw? But then, not to look solemn and believing and grateful was to write yourself down as not only mentally, but worse, socially, inadequate.

PARDON ME while I step out for a breath of fresh air. Well, as I say, these reformers are now more or less buried alive, and there are no voices from the grave. The great war, Russia, the rise of Japan, the rise of Italy, that fiasco, the League of Nations, which was well in line with the old style of reform (open covenants openly arrived at—tra-la) has just about blown them all away. League or no league, Mr. Hitler proceeds to murder the Jews; Mr. Mussolini takes what he pleases of neighboring territories; the Japanese "peacefully penetrate" Manchuria, just as England before her "peacefully penetrated" India, and China now wails for help in her hour of murder without attention. Nonetheless, as you see, the air is thick with verbal goodwill—plans for progress and peace, while the only country that has done anything about social equity and democratic progress, Russia, has done it with few words but with ways and means that make the refined liberals and lady settlement-house workers of our pre-war days shrink and wither.

Through it all the *Masses* has endured, and has usually said its violent say, regardless of the rage and the hatred of our legalized captains of robbery, and also regardless of the fact that it has not paid. In fact, it has always thrilled me to know that it has been the child of sacrifice and victor-less courage. Like the good deed of Shakespeare's line, it shines in a naughty world. Personally, I feel that it, as not only the original journalistic voice of American radicalism, but as the American representative of the principles of equity that have animated reformers all over the world, has had a distinguished part in bringing Americans to look with tolerance if not sympathy on the idea of equity.



Opium of the People

Painting by Walter Quirt

Opium of the People

Painting by Walter Quirt

Opium of the People

Painting by Walter Quirt

Not Victory Alone

The general secretary of the Communist Party sees in our history a paralleling of the advances and setbacks of the working class

By Earl Browder

IN history twenty-five years is but as a moment. But in the life of the individual it is a long time. And the twenty-five years of the life of the NEW MASSES and its predecessors has been a period especially full of change, of revolutionary transformation, in all the world. This process of change has been recorded in many of its most important aspects in the NEW MASSES; more important still, the NEW MASSES has been one of the important instruments of bringing about these changes in America.

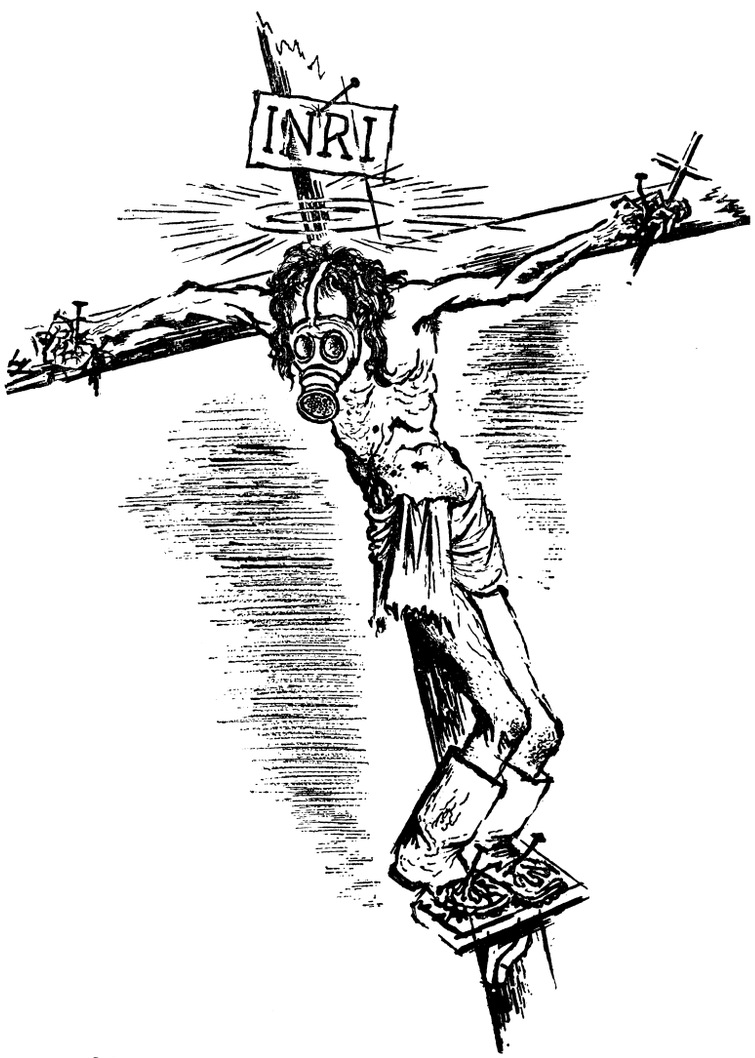
The NEW MASSES today has not grown old. In fact it has a more youthful spirit than the original *Masses*. About the *Masses* in its first years there was not only the beginnings of a new and revolutionary cultural life, which is continued on a higher plane by the NEW MASSES. There was also, along with it, a heavy baggage from the old and decaying cultural world of the bourgeoisie, a baggage heavy with the perfumes of a pseudo-bohemianism that long passed as radicalism in some circles. That baggage of the past had to be thrown overboard before the revolutionary culture could strike deep root in the current life and come to sufficient maturity to be able to recapture the legacy of real cultural values of the past, which are in danger of complete destruction from the raging forces of dying capitalism.

The history of the NEW MASSES is the record of how the best and most vital spirits in American cultural life have come to join forces with the working class, to merge themselves in it, for the preparation of the rebuilding of America on the basis of socialism.

In its beginning the old *Masses* was but a feeble lamp, for its currents, developed from local and scanty sources, were without theory, without knowledge of how to tap the great reservoirs of accumulated revolutionary wisdom and of the life-giving energies of the broad masses. But even such a feeble light, shining in the darkness that was then America, brought new hope and inspiration to thousands, made possible the education of those new people whose efforts have, in the intervening years, finally made Marxism-Leninism, that theory and practice of the proletarian revolution, the most vital influence felt today throughout the broadest reaches of the cultural life of the entire country.

The record of this twenty-five years is not one of a triumphal march from victory to victory. It was a struggle, there were many casualties, there were times of retreat, of defeats, of new efforts. Finally there emerged the weekly NEW MASSES, which in its short three years has hammered out a permanent place for itself, has become an indispensable weapon for tens of thousands of the most advanced minds of America in the struggle for a better life.

Throughout its history two closely interrelated influences have controlled its development. First was the revolutionary labor movement of America, and the aspiration of the best American intellectuals toward fusion with that movement. Second was the world-shaping victory of the Russian workers in 1917, and the subsequent building of the first socialist society in history. It is because these influences were decisive, in the development of the old *Masses,* the *Liberator,* and the NEW MASSES, that, despite all weaknesses and setbacks, there was on the whole a continuous development upward that finally produced the present magazine.



Silence! Lithograph by George Grosz

The NEW MASSES today is as much an improvement over the old as a V-8 Ford is over the pre-war type. But to say that is not to mean that it is already a finished product, that it meets all our needs, that we can be satisfied. Far from it. It seems to me that now, as never before, we must become critical of what we are accomplishing in the NEW MASSES, must demand ever more from it. We must be conscious of its lack of full maturity, a certain persistence of amateurishness, remnants of sectarianism and doctrinaire approach to its tasks, a recurring tendency to turn inward instead of plunging boldly into the deepest currents of our stormy life, an insufficiently determined struggle to win over to our side every honest and healthy person with serious interests in the cultural field, and a full faith that this can be done. We will never be satisfied with the NEW MASSES until all such criticisms of its work are no longer valid.

In greeting the NEW MASSES on its twenty-fifth birthday, I know that I am speaking for every member of the Communist Party when I congratulate it on its great achievements, and wish it a long life of constantly increasing influence and ever higher standards. While the NEW MASSES is not an official spokesman of the Communist Party, it has been a true interpreter of Communist thought in its special field, worthy of the support of all Communists. May your next twenty-five years witness socialism firmly established in America and throughout the world.

The Zero Hour

The Spanish war has brought Europe to the brink of international conflict, says the author, who examines the relationship of forces

By John Strachey

Eitaro Ishigaki

WITH every week that passes, the Spanish civil war tends more toward becoming an international war. It has become an international struggle of an extremely complex character, and in this it foreshadows the character of the coming world-wide struggle; for the Spanish war is neither simply a class war cutting across all interstate divisions nor obviously is it an inter-imperialist war such as the war of 1914-18. It is an extremely complex mixture of the two. First of all, the fascist states have poured help in the form of munitions, pilots, and trained military technicians of every kind into the camp of the Spanish rebels. They have now been answered by important contingents of men and material coming to the aid of the Spanish government. This help has not come from any one nation. The men of the international brigades now in Spain come from every country in Europe. They consist of Communists, Socialists, democrats, and anti-fascists of every kind. They have received the powerful backing of the Soviet Union. Some of them come secretly from those very fascist states, Italy and Germany, which as states are still actively helping the rebels. The two western capitalist democracies of Britain and France are sharply divided within themselves. In France the balance of class forces has proved insufficiently decisive to enable the French people to force their government to help Spanish democracy. I have no words to express my feelings of condemnation and loathing for the policy of the Blum government. Monsieur Blum and his colleagues have betrayed every democrat and anti-fascist in the whole world. They will stand forever pilloried as the men who did not dare to support a cause which they knew to be right and of which the triumph was essential to their own self-preservation. It is the worst thing that has happened in the world since the long-drawn-out treachery of the German Social Democracy. However, the last word has not been said in France. In Britain the Left is far weaker (not that this is the slightest excuse for the British labor leadership's failure even to attempt to force its government out of a secret support of the Spanish rebels), but the democratic forces are just strong enough to prevent Britain giving active open support to the Spanish rebels. Moreover, it has now become clear to some sections, at any rate, of the British governing class that Britain's imperialist interests are acutely endangered by the prospect of a fascist victory; hence their class passions have had to be to some extent controlled. In the last few days the hesitations of the British governing class have become pronounced. Franco has been checked, perhaps decisively. The first impulse of the British government was to save him at all costs. Meanwhile, however, the German-Japanese pact was announced. This move represented so acute a challenge to British imperial interests that the wholeheartedly pro-fascist forces in the government were somewhat taken aback. The hand of Mr. Winston Churchill and those who on the whole put British imperial interests above direct class interests was perceptibly strengthened.

Now is the supreme opportunity for a drive on the part of the labor and democratic forces of Britain for the support of Spanish democracy. It is only too clear that no such drive will come, however, from the leaders of the Labor Party. It can only come from more or less improvised forces further to the Left.

What will be the outcome of this extraordinarily complex balance of forces both within and between the states of Europe, focused as they are on the Spanish civil war? Will the war spread immediately till it engulfs all Europe? This is quite possible, but in my view, on the whole, unlikely. I do not think that the fascist world offensive can yet develop into a large-scale European war. For this, no thanks to the western democracies. The pusillanimity of the Blum government and the treachery to democracy of the British government have cleared the way for the fascist drive to a terrifying extent. But one great obstacle stands in the way. It is the ever-growing and now most formidable strength of the Soviet Union. Already that mighty community organized upon a basis never known before in the history of the world begins to exert an over-riding influence on all Europe. How childish, how absurd (if they were not unspeakably base and disgusting) now seem the cries of Trotsky and his adherents. Now at length surely everyone can see that the Soviet Union, far from having abandoned the cause of the workers of all the world, is exerting a truly colossal influence on their behalf. Surely everyone can now see that the preservation of the Soviet Union and the destruction of the fascist tyrannies are not two causes, that there is no question of putting the interests of one before the other. They are the same cause. Anything which contributes to the one contributes to the other. The action of the Soviet Union in the Spanish civil war should be the final assurance to every class-conscious worker in the world that he may depend to the last upon the mighty force represented by the Soviet Union. The alliance between the forces of progress, democracy, and the working class all over the world with the Soviet Union is now unshakable and undeniable. We face enormous conflicts, but we can face them with perfect confidence in ultimate victory.

Eitaro Ishigaki

Art Young

THE MONSTER'S INSTINCT

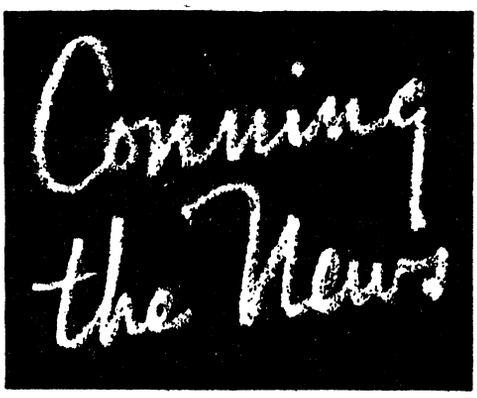
Favor a few of the hated ones and use them

THOUGH the tocsins of war sounded loudly over Europe and the Far East, and fascist bombing planes continued to take their toll of Madrid's non-combatants, the marital difficulties of Britain's monarch crowded nearly everything else from public view during the week. The sequence of events which lifted the king's predilection for a society matron from Baltimore from the front pages of the tabloids to the status of a world political issue of the first magnitude began with a public expression of regret for the king's alleged lack of piety. "Some of us," admonished Bishop Blunt of Bradford, "wish he gave more positive signs of awareness of his need for God's grace." Thereupon ensued an open clash between Prime Minister Baldwin, speaking for the cabinet, and King Edward, with the official explanation that the constitutional prerogatives of cabinet and king were at the root of the matter. Actually, Baldwin voiced the passions of old guard royal circles, riled at the prospect of bestowing the queenship on a woman with two living divorced husbands.

Discounting the moral scruples of Britain's aristocracy, Harry Pollitt, Communist Party leader, declared, "They fear the political repercussions for the monarchy as an institution useful to them." The essence of the crisis, according to Pollitt, was "the desire of the government to strengthen and maintain the monarchy as a bulwark against the anti-fascist forces and the world trend toward communism." Of Britain's ruling class, the Communist leader said: "There is a crisis which they are endeavoring to conceal; this is the crisis of peace and war, brought about by the criminal pro-fascist policy of the government, the crisis in Spain, the crisis of hunger."

The possibility that the Baldwin Cabinet would resign placed the governmental reins within reach of the Labor opposition. But Clement Atlee, Labor Party leader, was not prepared to form an alternative government, though a Labor government, offering to England a more vigorous foreign policy and economic benefits for the working population, would stand every chance of receiving popular endorsement in a general election. The storm over the Simpson case was no doubt a welcome one to those British Labor Party officials who had been hard pressed of late to justify their inaction on the Spanish question. For, though labor abandoned its support of the National Government's non-intervention policy as long ago as October, its leaders have done nothing to force the lifting of the embargo on supplies to republican Spain. Even a plea addressed to the National Council of Labor by the Independent Labor Party, the Communist Party, and the British Socialist League, urging a mass campaign in behalf of Spain, had gone unanswered.

IN Berlin, Adolf Hitler was viewed as looking upon the British crisis with no little relish. Together with a delicate French parliamentary situation, the king's amorous troubles seemed to be setting the stage for one



Covering the events of the week ending December 6

of the Fuehrer's periodic betrayals of international trust. Developments in the Third Reich during the week, moreover, made it seem that desperation must drive him to some sensational move in the near future. A drastic decree was handed down providing the ax for all who smuggle money or property out of the country, an act which if passed a year ago would have separated dozens of nuns and dozens of priests from their respective heads. Another desperate measure ordered membership in the Hitler youth organizations for every German child, a step bitterly resented by Catholic and other church groups. And still another ukase gave the courts unlimited sentencing power for those who increase prices of goods or services without permission.

American State Department pressure, stimulated in turn by continuous pressure from workers and Leftist sympathizers, finally won the release of Lawrence Simpson from his Nazi dungeon. Simpson was serving time for the fantastic crime of "treason" to a government to which he never owed allegiance.

Despite their protestations of innocence concerning the German-Japanese anti-Communist accord, the Nazis failed to check British animosity aroused by the agreement. The week witnessed a further cementing of Anglo-French-Belgian friendship, climaxed by the declaration of French Foreign Minister Delbos: "All the forces of France, on land, on sea, and in the air, will spontaneously and immediately be employed for the defense of Great Britain against any unprovoked aggression." Delbos furthermore advised the Wilhelmstrasse that it might abandon its illusion that the Blum government would junk the Franco-Soviet agreement by entering into a western-European bloc that would allow the Nazis a free hand against the U.S.S.R.

Donga

Baldwin—Spoke for the old guard

Tokyo, too, found itself embarrassed by the accord, and its foreign minister felt compelled to plead with foreign correspondents not to regard the pact as a fascist alliance. But for the most part, Nippon's worries lay in the direction of China, where the week's developments further blocked her campaign of subjugation. A strike of 25,000 Chinese workers in Japanese-owned spinning mills brought on the landing of 1000 Japanese marines, who proceeded to raid headquarters of the Chinese Nationalist Party. The Nanking government immediately demanded the evacuation of the marines and the release of three leading Chinese citizens whom the soldiery had placed under arrest. Fearing to admit the stiffening of Chinese resistance, the Japanese reported that Nanking had acceded to some of their demands, but Chinese advices indicated that the demands which called for further infringement of Chinese sovereignty had been flatly and finally rejected.

French politics experienced a moment of concern when the Blum government forced a vote of confidence on its policy toward Spain. The Communists refrained from voting rather than give support to the "neutrality" policy and the arms blockade, but the government was sustained 350 to 171. While this was the first break in the ranks of the Popular Front, the Communist Party made it plain that it had no wish to create a permanent breach. On the contrary, it "keenly desires that it shall not be obliged in the future to take similar action, but that it can closely and fraternally collaborate with the government."

DESPERATION or dementia appeared to have dictated General Franco's latest battle strategy in the savage struggle for Madrid, which rounded out its fourth week. Balked by failure to make headway, the fascist high command switched its offensive from loyalist men and machines to defenseless women and children. A United Press reporter, describing "this war on women and children," wired: "The rebel pilots, after exhausting their bombs, swooped low over the housetops and spread death and terror by turning their machine guns on fleeing women and children."

The political aspect of the defense grew brighter during the week when the Syndicalists finally agreed to accept the Communist demand for a unified command and to place full faith in the government, as opposed to dispersion of energy and initiative through undisciplined committees, responsible to no central source of state power. Freezing weather brought a temporary lull on most fronts, though continuous progress was reported in the north, where Oviedo is the immediate ob-

Donga

Baldwin—Spoke for the old guard

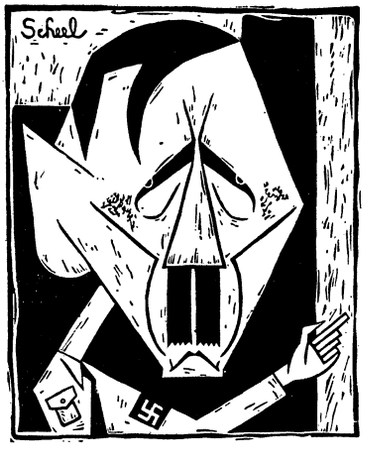
jective, and on the Aragon front, where government troops are moving towards Huesca and Saragossa.

Through British sources close to the government, it was learned that about 5000 German troops landed at Cadiz, and were immediately conveyed to Seville. The disclosure brought the issue of active intervention in terms of man-power before the London Non-Intervention Committee, which once before had rejected a ban on foreign troops.

IN far-off Buenos Aires—not quite far off enough to be free of the menace of Europe-fomented wars—President Roosevelt delivered the opening address at the Inter-American Peace Conference. "We hear the demand," he said, "that injustice and inequality be corrected by resorting to the sword and not by resorting to reason and peaceful justtice. We hear the cry that new markets can only be achieved through conquest. We read that the sanctity of agreements between nations is disregarded." And, in what was viewed by many as a hopeful note of departure from isolationist dogma, he asked, "Can we, the republics of the New World, help the Old World to avert the catastrophe which impends? Yes, I am confident that we can."

The President then offered a formula for peace endeavor which was not distinguished for concreteness. He placed a welcome emphasis, however, on two factors as requisites for peace: the maintenance of democratic governments and their readiness to act collectively against aggressors driven by "war madness and land hunger." The reaction to the speech in fascist countries testified to the deftness of Roosevelt's criticism. Neither in the Third Reich nor in Italy did newspapers consider it politic to print the complete text of his speech. In Paris and League of Nations circles, early unmitigated enthusiasm for the speech gave way to more reserved comments which stressed the need for judging it in the light of future performance. It was generally felt, however, that Roosevelt's remarks on democracy might have a restraining effect on the reactionary governments of Latin America which were eager to recognize Franco's fascist junta.

First specific proposals came from Secretary of State Hull. Chief provisions of the secretary's eight-point program called for peace education, coördination of the five Pan-American peace agreements concluded in the past, a common policy of neutrality, faithful observance of treaties, and international commercial policies looking toward common prosperity. Hull's neutrality plan, elaborated on the following day, would pledge American republics to ban arms shipments and financial loans to belligerents anywhere in the world, and would provide for mediation machinery in the Western Hemisphere. Objections were expected from Argentina on the ground that such machinery would duplicate that of the League of Nations, and from those realistic peace advocates who want legislation directed against the aggressor, as provided in the League covenant, rather than indiscriminately against all belligerents.



Theodore Scheel

Hitler—Saw another opportunity

The American press, which for weeks had been guessing and gossiping in a frenzied effort to smoke out details of the royal road to romance, burst numerous blood vessels when the Simpson story actually broke. Its intense preoccupation with the Edwardian crisis from then on tended to obscure the fact that President Roosevelt was allowing the most important phase of his New Deal to be shockingly strangled to death. Less than a week before the election Roosevelt had pledged his administration against "lessening of our efforts under W.P.A. and P.W.A. and other work-relief programs until all workers have decent jobs in private employment at decent wages." During the week his relief officials announced their intentions of dropping 425,000 workers from W.P.A. rolls by January 1. Of this huge number scheduled to be thrown out of work at the worst time of the year, 250,000 are drought-stricken farmers and the rest urban project workers. Worse than that, hinted Deputy W.P.A. Administrator Aubrey Williams, by January 20 there will be no further funds available for W.P.A.

To Washington rushed the mayors of eleven industrial cities to protest against the impending relief slash, only to be informed that orders had already gone out to regional administrators to put the cuts into effect. At the instance of New York's Mayor La Guardia, who emphasized the impossibility of the cities' taking up the additional relief burden, the municipal executives cabled President Roosevelt to countermand his subordinate's orders. No answer was forthcoming.

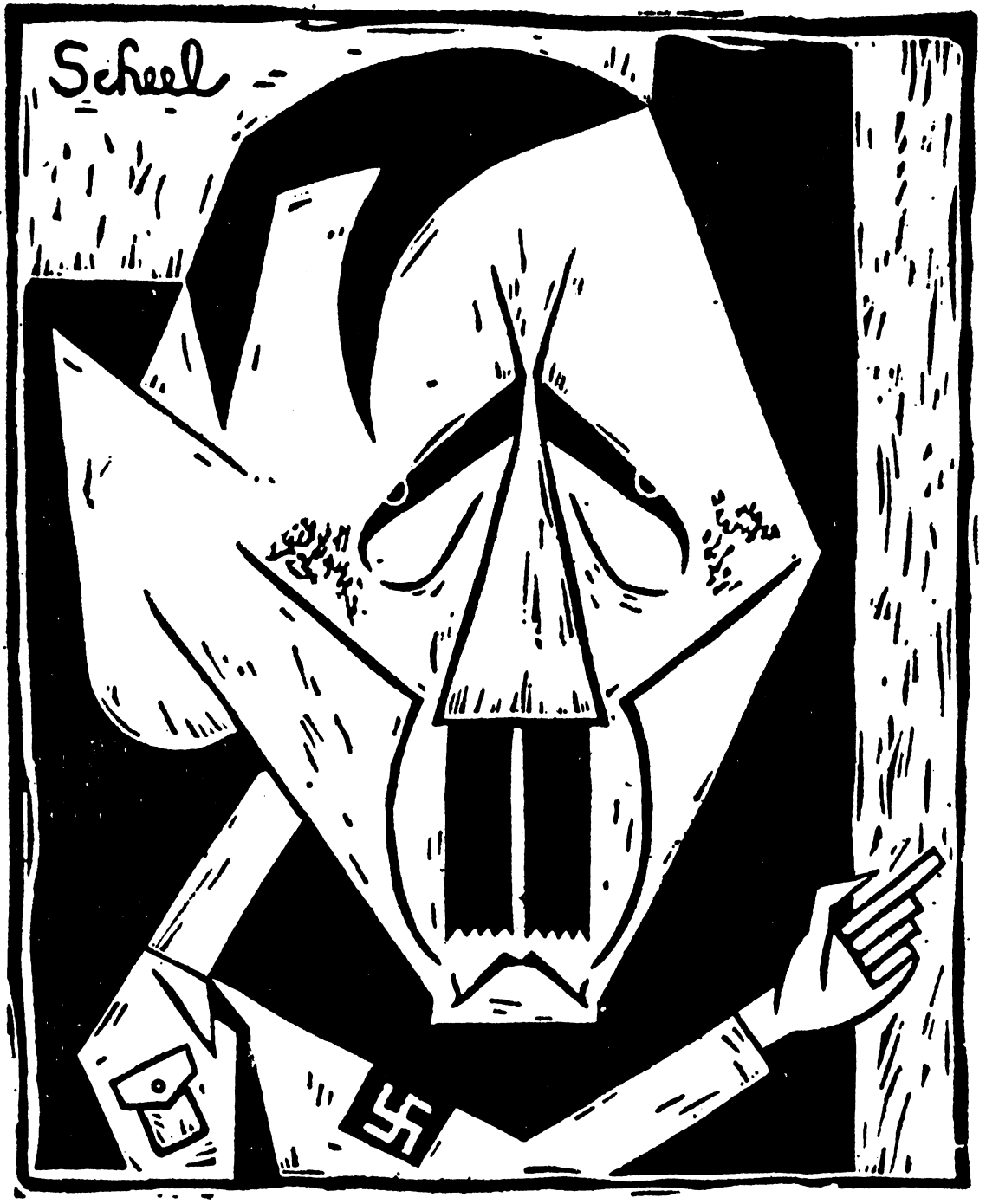
While the mayors argued, W.P.A. workers staged demonstrations of protest and laid plans for mass strike action in all parts of the country. First of these demonstrations, in Mayor La Guardia's own bailiwick, met with savage police reprisals. Staging a "stay-in" strike against the pending dismissals, 219 artists of the W.P.A. Federal Arts Project were violently ejected from the scene, many of them badly beaten. So quick and so bitter were the protests against police brutality that when the writers staged a similar demonstration, a few days later, the guardians of the law had orders to make no arrests except of those guilty of violence or the destruction of property. Police Commissioner Valentine, somewhat belatedly, objected "to the arrest of people, and particularly the 219 people who were arrested the other night because they were looking for work and at most were only trespassing." In the future, warned the commissioner, if any ejections were to be made, the building owners would have to do it. Said local W.P.A. Administrator Somervell: "That seems to me to be a new conception of law and order."

Most ironic development in connection with the W.P.A. situation was the disclosure by Treasury officials of a "backlog" of unallocated work-relief funds. Should Congress be slow in appropriating further funds for W.P.A., it was learned, the President has at his disposal some $87,000,000 of the current Works Progress appropriation which as yet has been assigned to no agency.

ON its own battlefield labor gained all along the line. The preceding week's success at the South Bend Bendix plant brought on a wave of sit-down strikes, two of which resulted in swift major gains for the workers. At the Detroit plant of Midland Steel, the United Automobile Workers scored a "90-percent victory" in a one-week stay-in strike that affected 100,000 workers. The strike closed the Chrysler, Plymouth, and De Soto plants, as well as two Ford shops. Workers of the Celanese Corporation of Cumberland, Md., returned to work after a twenty-day strike, with a 12½-percent wage increase under their belts. The C.I.O., which had supported the celanese workers, announced the start of an organization campaign in the rayon industry. Remarkable solidarity among glass workers stopped production of 90 percent of the country's glassware. At Ottawa, Ill., 1300 workers adopted sit-down tactics when company officials attempted to break the five-week-old strike of Pittsburgh glass workers by transferring operations to the Ottawa plant.

The national maritime strike continued to gain strength with the rallying of new forces to the support of the longshoremen and marine unions. San Francisco's Labor Council reiterated its support of the waterfront workers, who for a solid month have barred all sailings from the great Pacific port. The West Coast unions voted a special assessment to aid their brothers in the East, where the strike continued to spread with the further aid of the American Radio Telegraphists' Association.

The week's lone breach in the nation-wide maritime unity was the action of Joseph P. Ryan, president of the International Longshoremen's Association. When French workers refused to unload American scab ships on their arrival at Havre, Ryan, who has from the start fought the striking seamen, retaliated by ordering his men not to unload the French *Champlain* when it arrived at New York. Militant Harry Bridges, president of the West Coast longshoremen, told Mr. Ryan bluntly: "It is regrettable and nauseating . . . to see I.L.A. men under your orders, in some Western and Gulf ports, working ships that have already been struck by the I.L.A. and maritime unions on the Pacific and Atlantic Coasts. This is strikebreaking!"



Theodore Scheel

Hitler—Saw another opportunity

GREETINGS

Continuing, but not concluding, the chorus of felicitation begun in our November 24 issue

L. E. A. R.
League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists (Mexico)

FOR US the anniversary of the NEW MASSES offers a magnificent example which invites our emulation, and therefore our best congratulation will be to follow this vigorous example that you have set for us within the limits of the possibilities that are offered us within our own country.

MARIO PAVON FLORES — LORENZO TURRENT ROZAS
ARMÉN OHAVIAN — MIGUEL BUSTOS-CERECEDO
MAKEDONIO GARRA — CARLOS BUSTOS-CEREDEDO

THE UNION OF SOVIET WRITERS

HEARTY GREETINGS to the NEW MASSES, one of the leading revolutionary journals in the world, on its twenty-fifth anniversary. The twenty-five-year history of the NEW MASSES is a notable record of literary and artistic revolutionary development in America. We are confident that you will fulfill with ever-increasing power and success your task of uniting the most advanced and humane sections of the American people in the fight against war and fascism.—STAVSKY and APLITIN.

The preceding cablegram from the Union of Soviet Writers expresses what we wish to say, and we associate ourselves with it.

JOSHUA KUNITZ — HERMAN MICHELSON

CARL HAESSLER

THE *Masses* was the bible of the student and faculty intelligentsia at the University of Illinois just before and during the war years (Wilson's and Morgan's war of 1917-18).

During our prolonged inspection of Uncle Sam's military prisons in 1918-20 the *Liberator* was the gospel of war objectors there. It came in through the regular mail, neatly stapled into current issues of *System,* the bible of go-getters on the outside. Its cover pictures of Lincoln, Liebknecht, and Lenin were tied to brooms and carried aloft in the 1919 May Day parade behind the barbed wire. At Alcatraz, just after the executive officer bragged to some super-patriot visitors that no subversive propaganda passed the walls, he opened a solitary cell and found a "political" reading the *Liberator* by the couple of rays of light entering the airholes.

The NEW MASSES is not so irresponsibly clever as the old *Masses,* not so undiscriminatingly radical as the *Liberator,* but it has made itself a persuasive and influential interpreter of things radical to the literate middle classes of America.

THE FRENCH LEFT-WING WRITERS

IN THE NAME of the International Association of Writers and the House of Culture and *Review Commune* of Paris, greetings to that courageous magazine NEW MASSES on its twenty-fifth anniversary.

ARAGON — BLOCH — CHAMSON
CASSOU — MALRAUX — MOUSSINAC
NIZAN — VAILLANT — COUTURIER

"RUTA"

IN THE NAME of all the collaborators of *Ruta* and in my own name I send a fraternal greeting to that great magazine, NEW MASSES, which with the *Liberator* and the *Masses* has, for progressives here in Mexico, been an authoritative voice on North American life and politics. Here's to another quarter of a century forward march, comrades. Salud!—JOSÉ MANCISIDOR, *Editor.*

CLARENCE HATHAWAY

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS of service to the revolutionary movement—to the special job of convincing the middle-class intellectuals that for social and intellectual progress an alliance with the revolutionary working-class movement is essential!

I read the old *Masses* as a boy and enjoyed it; I read its successor, the *Liberator.* They did their job well. They strengthened my convictions.

But their progeny, the NEW MASSES? It improves from week to week! It is an inspiration to the old-timers. It is winning and training hundreds of new recruits.

ROGER BALDWIN

THE NEW MASSES is right on the job with vivid and authentic accounts of those class conflicts in the United States which constitute the heart of the struggle for civil liberties. It comes almost as a matter of course that those engaged in that struggle should greet a collaborator in the essential task of challenging every substantial infringement of civil rights and in keeping the road open for democratic progress.

TOM MOONEY

MY GREETINGS to your invaluable paper for the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of the birth of the *Masses,* the *Liberator,* and the NEW MASSES, all three of which I have read and followed as closely as the circumstances would permit; and believe me, I say it with all sincerity, they have played a profound part in shaping my life, as well as that of every real proletarian in America.

They have played a most important part in the struggle of the American working class, a beacon light to guide them in their daily battles, encouraging them on in the struggle, and they should receive the warm, whole-hearted, enthusiastic support of the entire working class of America.

I greet you on this twenty-fifth birthday from the depths of my heart, and send you my good wishes and cheer you on your way to a greater and more glorious victory, that will completely install those ideals which you have been striving for, as the established order of things.

Warmest comradely greetings of proletarian solidarity, and every good wish for the success of the NEW MASSES.

"NEW THEATRE" MAGAZINE

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS of the *Masses.* Twenty-five years of dramatizing our times. Twenty-five years of living theater in your pages. The NEW MASSES has been a pioneer in so many fields that it would take pages to credit your achievements. One pioneering role we should like to see acknowledged on this occasion is your long championing of the idea of "workers' theater." For many years when people scoffed at the idea, it was kept alive in your pages by Gold, Freeman, Dos Passos, Lawson, Peters, Basshe, and others. Today the "workers' theater" is a reality, the new theater a vital force in American life and drama. A lot of the credit belongs rightfully to the NEW MASSES. We're happy to claim our lineage and proclaim our gratitude.—HERBERT KLINE, for the editors.

Joe Jones

JAMES W. FORD

GREETINGS to the NEW MASSES, which has consistently fought for the rights of the Negro people, which has exposed every form of Negro oppression, and which has opened its pages to all those fighting for the rights of Negroes to live as human beings and to enjoy complete equality in every field.

I am sure that my people join me in congratulating the NEW MASSES on its twenty-fifth birthday, and wish it an even greater future as a champion of all those oppressed by decaying capitalism.

NORMAN THOMAS

I AM SORRY that absence from town made it impossible to send you any extensive message on the occasion of your twenty-fifth anniversary. Here's wishing you many years of long life and vigorous inspiring service in the cause of true proletarian culture.

ELLA REEVE BLOOR

AS ONE of your constant readers for the past twenty-five years of your existence, I want to speak to you of my appreciation of the present-day achievements. The NEW MASSES has become a necessity. It is our job to make it reach thousands more this year.

"SOVIET RUSSIA TODAY"

CONGRATULATIONS on your twenty-fifth anniversary! *Soviet Russia Today* greets you for the vigor and intelligence with which you have interpreted for Americans the great events of the Soviet Union in its march toward the bright goal of a new society of freedom and peace, of material abundance and rich cultural life for all. It greets you for the struggle you are waging on behalf of the forces of democracy and peace everywhere, and for giving expression to the efforts of labor to unite its ranks to beat back the agencies of Reaction. And now especially it greets you for arousing Americans to the need to support the heroic defenders of Spanish democracy in their magnificent fight to hold firm their People's Government against the murderous assault of fascism.—JESSICA SMITH, for the editors.

CLIFFORD ODETS

NO PAPER in our country is more necessary today than the NEW MASSES in the constant struggle against those twin bastards, war and fascism. May the NEW MASSES have many more birthdays and anniversaries!

CAROLINE DECKER

TWENTY-EIGHT MONTHS without a NEW MASSES is more than long enough to make one unbearably impatient to get ahold of a copy.

However, being a labor prisoner is made much easier by knowing that such as the NEW MASSES, in its various forms, has weathered twenty-five years of social strife, of Lusk committees, Red-baiting committees, gag laws, and come through invincible.

May its twenty-fifth year launch it on the road to very soon being the leading cultural organ of a farmer-labor party and a free, happy, and prosperous American people!

DONALD OGDEN STEWART

MY GREETINGS, praise, and congratulations to the NEW MASSES on its twenty-fifth birthday and to those who have made it what it is.

Joe Jones

Main Entrance

The spires of Madrid dazzle the war correspondents into a new demonstration that their calling allows for a special talent

By Robert Forsythe

BEFORE I die I think I should like to be a war correspondent, because it is the one profession which seems to require nothing in the way of preparation but a steady ability to be wrong. In the World War the action was on such a gigantic scale that most correspondents confined themselves to writing of a particular company or a particular small sector of the front, and in the later phases of the conflict such men as Philip Gibbs wrote more in the nature of interpretative commentators than experts on battle. They seemed to realize that there was no possibility of covering the battle-front, and were content with describing the morale of the men, the humor to be found in the trenches and in the larger affairs of policy, of which they knew as much as the generals, which is to say, nothing whatever.

Not content with their perfect record of ineptitude in the World War, the more pertinacious of the correspondents continued on to the Russian war between the Whites and Reds, and acquitted themselves with such glory that any analysis of that violent struggle from the newspapers of the period would take on the aspect of a phantasmagoria. On any fair estimate, the war news of that epoch could be set down as 110 percent inaccurate. Not only were the war correspondents wrong on any available piece of news, but their inventions were of such romantic character that they constituted an almost completely new war and will undoubtedly befuddle historians to the end of time.

In the intervening years there were the Riffian wars, the Chinese revolution, the war in the Chaco, and conflicts raging in every corner of the globe; but it was left for the Ethiopian war and the Spanish revolt to restore the glory of the profession. It will be centuries before anyone equals the record of H. R. Knickerbocker of the Hearst press in the Spanish civil war. From the beginning of the struggle Knickerbocker acquired an obsession about the spires of Madrid. He saw them by day, he saw them by night, he had the heroic forces of Mola and Franco marching into Madrid so often that even the sturdy Moors would have been winded from the labor. On July 22, Knickerbocker reported that the troops of General Mola would enter Madrid in the morning (the spires of the city could easily be seen from the strongly entrenched lines of the Christian avengers). By some curious transformation, Knickerbocker ceased being the demon searcher for truth and entered upon a career of prophecy and military foresight which would have won him a place by the side of Alexander and Napoleon if the gentlemen under Mola had only accepted his word that with the spires so near it was a duty to the Hearst afternoon circulation to march into the doomed city.

The disease spread throughout the ranks of the correspondents and settled like a cloak over John Elliott of the New York *Herald Tribune,* who was marching the fascist forces into Madrid like mad from early July on. Neither Knickerbocker nor Elliott ever admitted that Franco or Mola intended to march into Madrid in the morning; it was always Elliott and Knickerbocker (and later John Whitaker) who said that *they* knew the rebels would be in Madrid by the morrow (the spires were now plainly visible to anybody who cared to look). Knickerbocker, who had been a reporter before joining Hearst, embarked upon a career of such magnitude that clairvoyants throughout the world trembled for their prestige. If Knickerbocker could get an entire army into a defended city by the mere gesture of allowing himself to be hypnotized by the church steeples it was only a question of time until he ran the crystal-gazers out of business.

Woodcut by H. Glintenkamp

Indeed, the notion that Knickerbocker might be in league with the celestial powers was augmented by his persistent escapes from disaster. There were moments when it appeared that the lack of success of the loyalists was caused by their anxiety to fire at Knickerbocker rather than at their fascist enemies. "RED BULLETS MISS KNICKERBOCKER," the Hearst headlines would read, and one was aware of a gigantic American audience snapping their fingers in disappointment and crying "darn . . . missed him."

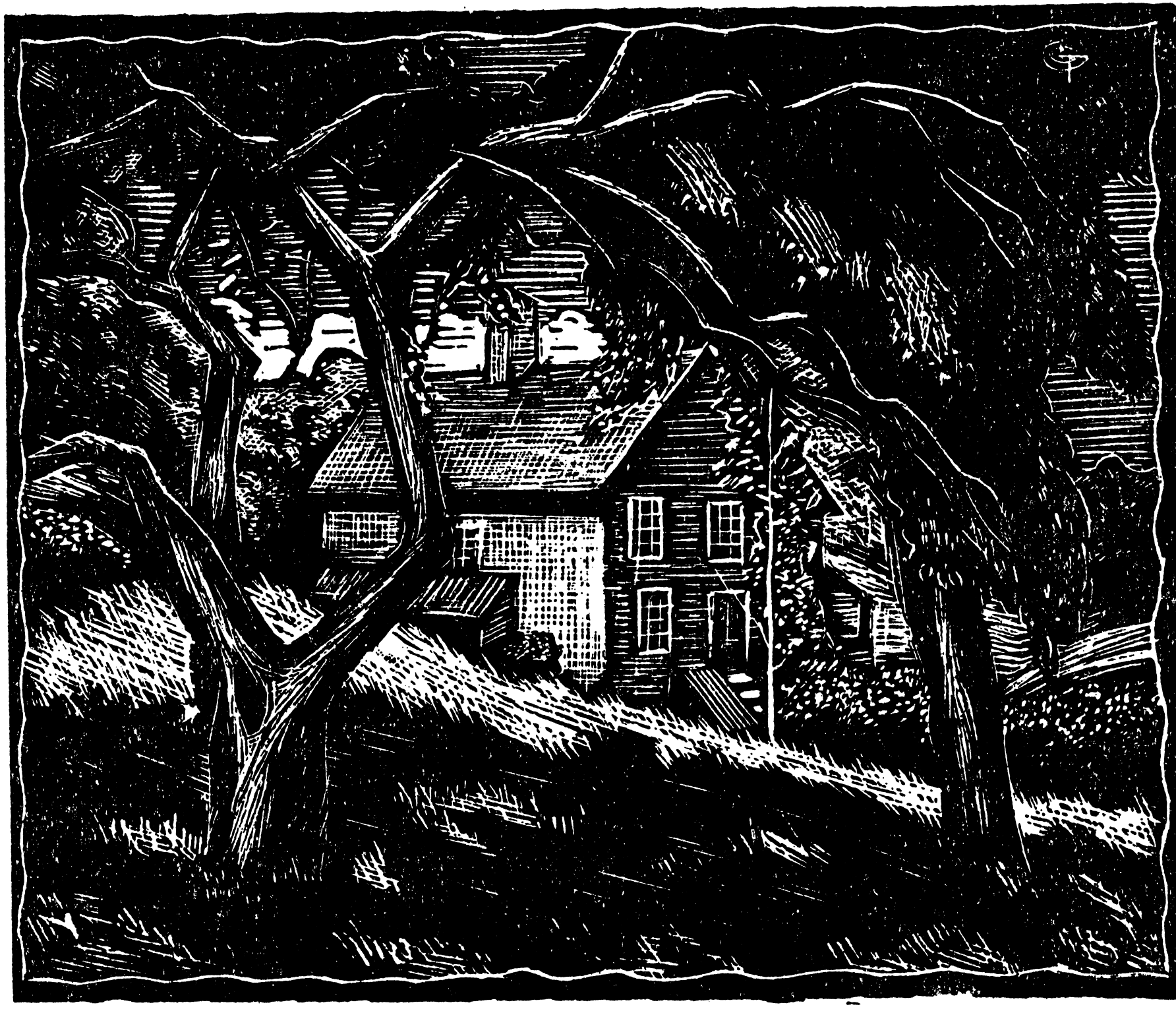
These headlines were only equaled by the superb pronouncement in the New York *World-Telegram* on the third day after it became apparent that the fascists were not to stroll into Madrid, no matter how the spires beckoned in the bright November sunlight.

FRANCO, ANGERED BY DELAY, REFUSES TO CONTINUE FIGHT

It was apparent that the loyalists weren't playing fair with Señor Franco, who, according to a story in the Sunday *Times,* is something in the nature of a Clark Gable of the Iberian peninsula. He goes "lightly" to battle, said the *Times,* and it is to be understood that he felt deeply the lack of hospitality of the citizens of the capital city.

Even more affecting was the dispatch by Mr. Whitaker to the *Herald Tribune* saying that the rebels would enter Madrid tomorrow and feeling sorrow for the defenders who were merely committing suicide by their obstinacy. The dispatch unfortunately had been delayed two days, and in the meantime the defenders were committing *harakiri* with such effectiveness that even the Moors had turned away in horror, running a bit toward the rear in their desire to avoid such a spectacle.

To the suggestion that the correspondents might simply be misguided reporters who were lost away from the court-house beat, it might be replied that they were all furnished with a special make of typewriter which made a single impression, "the rebels will march into Madrid tomorrow," by one stroke of the keys. The only difficulty with this is that the machine could scarcely have been prevailed upon to alter this fervid prayer to "the nationalists will enter Madrid in the morning" by mere edict of the Franco press department. It must simply be as I suspect: a war correspondent needs only a capacity for self-delusion and sweeping misstatement to become a Pulitzer-prize winner. I very much want to get in on this business before it is too late.



Woodcut by H. Glintenkamp

A Good Character for a Novel

Proving that the ability to argue both sides of a question can have alarming consequences

By Rex Stout

PURDY'S friends often told him that he would make a good character for a novel. Not that he was a card or anything like that; they meant a serious character; it was so remarkable for a man of action and impulse like him to be also so broad-minded. He always saw both sides of a question, and what was more, he insisted on other people seeing them too.

That trait of his character came out in little things as well as big ones. For instance, he might happen to have an evening conference, lasting until midnight, in his office on the top floor of the bank and business building which he owned, and on leaving with his associates and walking down the corridor to the elevator, there would be a couple of scrubwomen with pails cleaning the floor. One of the frowsy women would let her mop slip and swish dirty water on one of the men's shoes. Purdy would be at her like a flash: "You! No excuse for that! See Mr. Squill tomorrow; you're through!"

That was the natural unstudied impulse of him, his genius for direct and forceful action; but not more than twenty seconds later, on the way down in the elevator, he would see the other side. He would laugh apologetically to his companions: "After all, I suppose that poor woman works all day at something before she comes here at eight o'clock to scrub floors, and she's probably too tired to know what she's doing. A rest won't hurt her any, poor woman." Then he would as like as not give them some statistics on industrial fatigue, for he owned factories too and was an authority on that, having considered all points of view.

Almost never did a point of view get by him. When the Junior Charity League sent a telegram to the state legislature urging the ratification of the child-labor amendment, he threatened to cut off his daughter Aline's allowance unless she resigned from the league at once; but that very evening he told his wife that he understood Aline's attitude perfectly well, indeed he sympathized with it; he did not at all condemn her innocent girlish sentimentality, he merely could not permit it to interfere in practical adult affairs which Aline was not old enough to understand. That was the pattern of his conduct in both public and private concerns; never bigoted or intolerant of others' opinions; in action, bold and firm, tempered, as necessity might require, by prudence; in comprehension, catholic, sensitive, hospitable.

It is a melancholy thought, and a brutal impertinence to mankind's dear belief in a natural justice, that the source of calamity to a man may be his most shining virtue. That was what happened to Purdy. In spite of his vigilance and firmness, outside agitators gained a foothold among the workers in his largest factory. His well-organized system of espionage failed miserably; before Purdy himself was aware of the danger, the agitators had injected the poison of discontent into every artery of that splendid organism; and when things came to a head and a strike was called, more than 70 percent of the force of nearly 2000 men proved to be disloyal. The factory heads blustered, to no purpose. Purdy himself, with his customary courage and directness, harangued the men; they actually booed him! A few of the company guards, naturally provoked by the boos, became a little over-enthusiastic, and a scuffle ensued on the edge of the crowd, but only half a dozen of the strikers were injured, and none fatally.

Days passed, and the misunderstanding—for Purdy saw clearly that that was all it amounted to—got pretty hot. Of course the factory had to shut down. Purdy was compelled to refuse to negotiate with the strikers, because he saw the futility of such an attempt as long as they were being influenced and bullied by the outside agitators. He tried first to get some sensible ideas conveyed to the men through those individuals who had formerly handled the inside espionage for him, but found that that circuit had a short somewhere. He tried yelling at his factory heads, but that only made him hoarse. He tried hiring new men, but the picket line was too much for him. That made him madder and firmer and bolder, and he decided to shoot the works. He sent out a call to agencies for strikebreakers and guards, demanded protec-

Gangsters and Detectives

Lithograph by Russell T. Limbach

Gangsters and Detectives

Lithograph by Russell T. Limbach

tion from the mayor and got it, and bought a thousand cots and blankets and installed them in the packing rooms. That put the strikers in an ugly mood. They insisted on gathering in groups, they hurled insults and threats, and some of them even threw stones. With the strikebreakers and guards inside, the factory was in a state of siege. The agitators had to be arrested to prevent the possibility of serious violence. Guards were posted every fifty yards around the high board fence surrounding the property.

Purdy did not sit comfortably in his uptown office and let his lieutenants bear the brunt of it; that was not his way. Twice a day he visited the factory himself and surveyed the battlefield; and on the second night after the strikebreakers had been installed, he was impelled by his conscience and the sense of his responsibility to inspect the scene after dark. After dinner he got in one of his cars and drove out alone. The street approaching the factory enclosure was dingy and dark, but the big gate was like day under the floodlights, and the only thing resembling a picket line was a group of sullen strikers standing fifty yards down the street from the entrance. Three cops were at the gate and, recognizing Purdy, they opened it and let his car through. He stopped just inside and got out and one of the cops walked over to him.

"Everything quiet, Sergeant?"

"All serene, Sir."

"Good. I'll stroll around the fence."

All would have been well if he had contented himself with entering the factory, or if he had taken the cop with him, or even if his tolerance and broad-mindedness had not chosen that occasion for display. The tragedy was abrupt, brief, and absolutely unnecessary. Purdy started off along the fence, thinking to go clear around and return to the main entrance. There were lights at intervals, but rather dim ones, and there were stretches that were almost dark. He strode on the gravel to the first corner, turned it, sloped down and up again across a depression, having accosted three of his hired guards as he passed them. He was in a good humor, having enjoyed an especially fine dinner, and probably that accounted for the fact that he began to see the other side as he walked along; and, seeing it, he naturally had to give expression to it. He spoke aloud to the night:

"Yes, certainly, I can see their side of it. I can even understand those goddam agitators. I can see how a man of that type would say, 'You listen to me, boys, and we'll make that bastard Purdy sign on the dotted line. You join my union and pay me to run it, and you'll get what you want and I will too. Either that or we'll blow up his goddam factory and bust him. Purdy gets all the gravy and all you guys get is plenty of nothin'. If you stick with me we'll show that son of a bitch Purdy——' "

Purdy, interested in his exposition, did not notice that he had reached a break in the fence where there was a subsidiary gate, nor did he notice that a guard had popped out and reached for him; the first Purdy knew was that someone, there in the semi-darkness, had grabbed him by the neck and was calling him names. Impulsive, furious, Purdy raised his hand and pushed, and as luck would have it, he happened to poke his finger directly in the eye of a burly thug who had been bored stiff for ten hours. The thug yelled with pain and rage and came down with a club with all his might; Purdy tried to dodge; the club got him just below the medulla oblongata and broke his neck; he crumpled on the ground. The thug bent over to look at him and growled in disgust:

"By God, I think he's dead."

He was. The whole thing was deplorable.

Against This Culture

His first time on the picket line, he fixed
Eyes on his young wife and her pale, edged face
Turned back to shield him as she kept the pace
And shared his feelings, strange and warmly mixed.
A year before, their paintings had been sold,
Small payments barely sheltering belief,
And even now, pinned down by Home Relief,
They squirmed, their shadowed anger not quite bold.

Art needed contemplation, mellow life
Between slow, steep discoveries—he stopped,
He choked. Policemen, charging, smashed his wife
And groaning, spitting teeth and blood, she dropped.
Then deeply, not in momentary rage,
The intellectual stripped, lunged from his cage.

MAXWELL BODENHEIM.

★ ★ ★

Winter Ballad

Not knowing what
it's all about,
poor Miss Poverty
turned devout.

Went to church
and heard the organ
play for her
and Mister Morgan.

Ah the pride
of kneeling down
with the gentry
of the town!

When she rose
she didn't dare
blow her nose
in the great air.

She was happy,
simply crying
as she felt her
doubt dying.

When the preacher
spoke of sin
and the people
yawned at him,

How could he
detect the mouse
in that overwhelming
house,

Looking straight
at her and through
without saying,
I mean you?

Oh how large
the little you
grew and nearly
fainted too.

When the plate
came by she stared,
dropped a sudden
penny, scared

Of the many
coins and paper,
gold and silver.
What a caper

When the penny
crept on top,
nearly made her
breathing stop!

Georges Schreiber

Luckily the
march began,
and she slipped
behind the man

Whom the
congregation bowed to,
those who really
were allowed to.

Then she spied
a hole and ran
out into the
cold again:

Cold of course
for human pins
who refuse to face
their sins.

She did all
she could to keep
winds and snow
from driving deep

What it was
she must have done,
perforated
to the bone:

Wrapped herself
as well as she
could in her mere
poverty.

When she died
her property—
nothing we
shall ever see—

Went to Death,
and Death began
with a somewhat
better plan,

And a better
piece of fur
than the world
had given her.

ALFRED KREYMBORG.

Grandfather and Grandson

Orange candles and batiks were part of the old Masses tradition, of which the New Masses is only a partial heir, says the author of "The Big Money"

By John Dos Passos

TWENTY-FIVE years back, writers and painters and their hangers-on, who had been filtering into New York from the Middle West (a crop that suddenly sprouted from seeds of culture sown by a generation of literary housewives and bluestocking schoolteachers) had begun to coagulate in New York in the low-rent section of old brick houses known as Greenwich Village. Greenwich Village stood for bohemianism, yearning for the cafés and red lights and museums of Europe, orange candles, batiks, but also for a genuine community of feeling with the common man who did the work, and for the romantic libertarian creed. If you could strip off conventions, repressions, destroy cramping institutions, the common man would stride forward out of the welter of the past, happy, powerful, and inventive, and willing for his neighbor to be happy and powerful too. The mouthpiece of the writers and artists of the Village was the *Masses*. There was a great deal that was callow about the old *Masses,* but the spirit that gave it life was in tune with the real needs of its generation. Today we can look back on the *Masses* as the grandfather of a whole shoal of magazines with aims as diverse as *Time* and the *New Yorker* and *Esquire*. The NEW MASSES is heir of only one of the tendencies stirred up by that anarchically run and democratic and bohemian sheet.

Looking back on the Village and the *Masses* from this distance it is possible to see that they made up an integral part of what we used to call The Movement, that upsurge of revolt against the ruling business men of which Bryan was the first messiah in the West and which took in the I.W.W., the Non-Partisan League, Progressivism, the huge growth of Eugene V. Debs's following, and the small-town revolt against convention, Sunday-school teachers, and the rusty corseting of conduct left over from the Victorian era. It's these waves of popular insurgence that have, from the time of the Founding Fathers, somehow kept this country a democracy.

The wave swelled forward in an irregular line, broke, and receded. The Movement, on the side of workers' organizations, never recovered from the McNamara case and from the suppression of the I.W.W. Woodrow Wilson's betrayal killed white-collar liberalism at its roots, only on the ethical and literary and artistic side were there any permanent gains made. The period since the war has socially been a period of personal liberty, the writer has recovered the use of unbowdlerized English, and the national capacity to see painting and drawing has enormously increased. The *Masses* school of cartooning and vivid writing was an opening wedge in that direction.

After the war in a very different, less exuberant world, an effort was made to start the *Masses* up again on the same old basis, but the spirit of the time was different, the old disorderly methods of running the paper didn't seem to work. For labor organization and the growth of social ideas the time was one of defeat, sectarianism, and retraction. As a sort of literary supplement to the *Daily Worker* the NEW MASSES has published a great deal of distinguished work and done a great deal to educate the country in Marxian thinking, but I don't think it will turn out to have had anything like the fertilizing influence that the old *Masses* had. Now we are on the upward surge of a new democratic wave. If the monopolies and their campfollowers manage to break it before it has reached its full strength it will probably mean the end of the American experiment. Perhaps under the impulse of the time the NEW MASSES will be able to break out of the narrow sectarian channel and furnish again some such focus for youth as the *Masses* furnished twenty-five years ago. I for one hope so.

The Open Road Lithograph by Boardman Robinson

The Open Road

Lithograph by Boardman Robinson

The Open Road

Lithograph by Boardman Robinson

A Red Village Is Occupied

The Fifth White Division prepared to attack; with the Chinese Red Army absent, the peasantry acted

By Agnes Smedley

THE autumn had come and the fields of ripening rice would soon be ready for the sickle. For the sickle—or for the burning torch. For this time, as in the spring and in the autumn of the year before, the war had also been fought around the crops. What the White troops failed to reap for their own food, they burned. They needed the food for two reasons: to starve the peasants into their old servitude under the landlords, and to feed themselves. The peasants would sell them no rice, and not one vegetable or one bit of fruit. All the food for the White soldiers had to be transported from the big White cities such as Nanchang. There was not enough of it to feed them. And so the order had gone out from the White stronghold that the soldiers must conquer the villages and feed themselves.

The Whites held the cities and big towns. But down in the villages the Soviets still existed and the common people ruled themselves. Some savage power had been engendered in them. This power the Whites did not understand, but they understood that until it was broken the landlords could never return, White tax-collectors could never be carried in sedan chairs over the country, pawnshops could never reopen, opium could never be sold—that "civilization" could not show itself in the villages. The Whites called it "civilizaation." But to the peasants the old order meant serfdom, slavery; it meant hunger, rags, the whip, anguish of body and mind.

Ned Hilton

"The return of prosperity sure makes a big difference."

Still the order went out from Nanchang: "Conquer the villages; build blockhouses to hold them; feed yourselves."

It was the autumn of 1934 and the Red armies fought on all fronts in Kiangsi. The odds were heavy against them—the whole imperialist world against them. Yet they fought on. Up in the northeast of Kiangsi the Whites had occupied the town of Kweiki. They looked northward into the villages, toward the fields of ripening grain.

The Fifth White Division in Kweiki drew up its plan. It would take the market town of Chowfang to the north, build a blockhouse, and dominate the many villages that formed a sort of network around it.

The peasants of Chowfang and the villages about soon learned of the plot against them. The Tenth Red Army Corps was fighting on many fronts and could not come to their rescue. Every young, able-bodied man in the region was with the Red army. In the town and the surrounding villages remained the older men, young boys, the women and girls, and a number of crippled Red army men. All the good weapons were with the Red army also. The people were armed with hand grenades, though not enough. The peasants manufactured mines in their own homes, and with these blew up many enemy positions, or mined the roads leading into the Soviet regions. But of these also there were not enough to stop the pressure of the well-armed Whites. In Chowfang and thereabouts were a few old muzzle-loading shot guns that could knock a man out for a few days, but their chief value was in the noise they made.

The peasants of the Chowfang region gathered together, sat down, and began to think. They thought for a long time, and almost everyone had something to say. Then this is what they did.

First, they evacuated every living soul from Chowfang, leaving behind a few things to give the appearance of occupation, such as chairs, benches, rice jars, beds. In the rice jars, under the doors, connected with the benches, stools, beds, were concealed mines that would explode at a touch. When doors were opened, a mine would explode.

The streets were mined, as were the paths and the road leading to Chowfang, but these mines could be set off from a distance when some hidden person pulled a wire.

This work went on at night, while hundreds of other women, children, and old men sat whittling bamboo sticks down to sharp, needle-like spikes at both ends. They made tens of thousands of these spikes, and when they were finished they began driving them into the earth all around Chowfang, then covering them lightly with earth. In a big circle extending for hundreds of yards around Chowfang, the earth became a hidden bed of sharp bamboo spikes. If stepped upon they would drive straight through the soft-soled shoes worn by all Chinese soldiers. Only the paths were free of these spikes.

Then, around the fields of spikes, the people dug trenches and covered them with weeds, branches, and leaves. They turned grave-mounds into dugouts. In these would lie the men and women who would set off the mines when it was necessary; in them would be concealed the men with the old shotguns and the few hand-grenades.

This complete, the peasants poisoned the wells, left a few jars of poisoned water in the buildings, and departed from Chowfang.

They did not have more than a few hours to wait after their labor was finished. Peasants brought news from Kweiki that a column of about five hundred White soldiers had already left and was approaching Chowfang. They had sent men in advance with long bamboo poles to jab the paths wherever a soft spot was seen; they were trying to discover buried mines. The Whites, said the peasants, were not bringing much food—they were going to reap the harvests and live off the country. They also did not have much ammunition, which showed they were going to build blockhouses and hide in them. They knew the peasants had no guns and they thought they would not need much ammunition. The peasants had also learned that two rich landlords, who used to own Chowfang and the land about, were guides for the White column.

Men and women took up their positions in the dugouts and trenches, and thousands of others, filled with exultant curiosity, lay concealed behind bowlders, trees, and along the hills.

When the first streaks of dawn appeared the next morning the advance guard of the Whites could be seen approaching. Then came the others. All marched with fixed bayonets, ready for attack. They were ready to take Chowfang by surprise, capture people and force them to build the first blockhouse.

Nothing disturbed them as they approached. Not a soul stirred, not a sound was heard. Chowfang seemed to be sunk in sleep. They turned down the main path and began to move more rapidly. They entered the town, leaving guards at the entrance. The watching hills, trees, and grave-mounds could see the landlords instructing the officers where to station men. All exits to the town were at last guarded. Nobody could get past such sentries. From a hill a few dozen pairs of eyes could see right down the street on which one landlord's old palatial home was located. It had been a Soviet school. One man in a long gown, certainly the former owner, led a body of men into this house. Other houses were also being entered, soldiers using the butts of their rifles or pistols. Some soldiers kicked in the doors without ceremony.

THE HILLS and the grave-mounds stirred as Chowfang began to explode. The opened or kicked-in doors flew back and hit the kickers in the face, and old iron, glass, nails drove their way into the bodies of men. The landlord's former home had admitted the landlord and the officers without the door exploding, but from the interior came a series of explosions. Two or three men ran out screaming in agony. Chowfang was turned into a madhouse.

The silent listeners heard the commands of officers rallying their men. Then small units moved through the streets, hurling hand grenades against the doors of the houses to break them in and explode the mines within. This done, they grew brave and entered. Then from within came the sound of explosions. The soldiers had moved a bench or a stool, a bed or a rice-jar. Wounded and dead men lay in the streets everywhere.

Not a sound came from beyond the village, but the Whites began placing machine-guns in position and from behind buildings their heads could be seen peering in all directions. Their machine-guns began to rattle to scare the people if any there be, or to draw a reply. Silence was their answer. Then, from behind the machine-guns, small units of soldiers were sent dashing from the village toward all places in which people might hide—toward bowlders, grave-mounds. They dashed with bayonets ready and with savage yells designed to strike terror to the hearts of the peasants. Their yells were soon turned into shrieks of agony, or they sank unconscious in their tracks, impaled on the bamboo spikes. There, around Chowfang, lay dozens of White soldiers. Yet their officers drove more forward, through new positions, only to learn that they were surrounded by a field of spikes.

The Whites stood in terrified little groups

Street Scene, Madrid Jacob Burck

Street Scene, Madrid

Jacob Burck

Street Scene, Madrid

Jacob Burck

in the town. A street bomb went off beneath a group of them.

Some houses were cleared of bombs and in these the Whites took shelter. Others continued to smash in doors with hand grenades. All day long this continued, and all day long mines concealed in the most unexpected places exploded, wounding, killing, blowing men to pieces. The Whites brought water for the wounded, and drank to cool their own racing blood. The wounded cried for water for the last time, and the men seeking to cool their racing blood no longer needed it. Their blood was cooling of itself. But before they could get word to all the men that the water was poisoned, dozens had drunk it.

The Whites disappeared into the cleared houses and waited for the night. Nothing moved in the trenches and the grave-mounds. But the doomed men within the town knew that there were people in the neighborhood. What fiends the Reds are, they told each other. What right had these people to act like devils when all the government troops wanted was to take their crops and starve them into subjection again? Who did these people think they were, anyway, to deny the right of the old landlords to return and rule them as they saw fit, to whip them when necessary, and to loan them money at 100 percent or more interest per year if they considered them worthy and respectably inclined? The common White soldiers sat listening to the exchange of moral phrases, wishing only that they were out of it and the landlords for whom they were fighting were at the bottom of the sea. But still they squatted in the shadow of the landlords and officers about them.

When night deepened, the Whites prepared to escape from the town. The watchers could see their dark figures skulking against the houses, they heard them begin to march, heard the clink of steel, and saw their dark figures start rapidly down the main road. The listeners and watchers waited. Then a dozen mines along the road exploded with a deafening blast, the ranks of the marchers were shattered, and those in the rear turned and fled back into the town.

Some hours passed, and the Whites began digging. They were digging shallow trenches right out through the fields of buried spikes. They were going to dig their way out. They had no more than begun when the besiegers showed themselves for the first time: from the trenches and grave-mounds their old shotguns blared, making a fearful noise. They hurled a few hand-grenades. The Whites fought back with hand-grenades, but they had used most of their supply blowing in the doors.

The next day the siege continued, and the next and the next. The mines continued to explode in the town sporadically, now and then one blew up a part of the street. The besiegers knew that the Whites had food for a few days only and no water save that in their own flasks. Each night small groups of them tried to escape along the paths, but they were driven back or killed by the peasants. The besiegers provoked the Whites to fights that they might use up ammunition.

On the last night, a few White soldiers, officers, and one landlord threw away their guns, threw away everything except the clothing on their backs, and made their last desperate attempt to escape. To avoid detection, the landlord had clad himself in the uniform of a private soldier.

Ben Benn

The Whites separated in small groups of two or three and started. But the peasants saw them creeping and running in desperation, and began exploding mines and hurling hand-grenades. Of all of them, three escaped alive, and these were captured. One was an officer, one his orderly, and the other the landlord in a private's uniform. The orderly was already half dead and the peasants let him die. But for the remaining two they brought a rifle and some cartridges abandoned in Chowfang and, before the sun arose, shot them.

On the next day the people went into Chowfang to bring out the mines as yet unexploded. They would need them later, and many of them they began planting on the road leading to Kweiki, to greet any White reënforcements that might come that way. They buried the White dead, taking first their weapons and the little ammunition left. But the town was almost ruined and the water poisoned. The peasants thought of it as a deserted battlefield. A few people returned to occupy buildings on the outskirts, but there were few of these.

The rice turned to a golden yellow and the peasants reaped and threshed, then carried it to hidden places. A large part of it they put aside and this, with the rifles of the dead, they began carrying inland to the Tenth Red Army Corps in which their sons, brothers, and husbands fought.

No more Whites ventured into the villages around Chowfang that autumn and winter. The Nanking generals decided to wait for more foreign airplanes and more foreign pilots, and to take the villages later. They contented themselves with swift raids into Soviet regions.

In Nanchang, the stronghold of the Nanking generals and the imperialists, White propagandists sent atrocity tales out to the gaping reactionary press of China and the world. The Red army, these tales reiterated, was hated by the peasants because it burned their homes, murdered them, destroying all they had. Wherever the Nanking armies went they were received as deliverers. But with it all the landlords wandered around Nanchang and Shanghai, wailing. The wind often caught in their silk, fur-lined gowns, and spread them out like the broken wings of a buzzard.

★ ★ ★

Black Sea Rest Home

Clean sea running like quicksilver on shale, on hot worn stone;
Lapping, lipping the rock of the bare beach, and I repeat, gazing:
This is the shore where Jason came; here grew the fleecy tree;
Here hung the large fruit of legend, and here the bronze birds sang.
I see the same sun-up over Asia, thin color of lemon,
Sense the zest of lost races; and greatness, tools, language, trade.
Here is the memory of ancient peoples—picking and culling
Shells, boiling dye, dragging nets, bathing to kill lice,
Or launching boats to the rough south. They worked the land fallow
With blunt shares, tamed the wild falcon, fought the invader;
Married his woman, took his child for slave, shackled the sturdy,
Made the hut near the fig tree, planted the pomegranate,
Citrus, oleander, plum. . . . Kept custom old, centuries old and little change.
And with the bent backs of slaves, harvested the clean sea, the convex, moving
Empty and clear near the hot rocks. This the Phœnician saw,
And the Tartar and the trader Greek.
In this sweet heat I see
(With the same sky, yes, and the same rush of water—these pure carry over)
What no man saw on earth before, never before. New and like rock to stay,
Wealth in a just scale, the start without finish, the Soviet
And history jubilant to come. Here the floods of toil
Rest. Here they come to put their feet into the old ocean,
Bathe the arms of one will, plunge like dolphins in. . . .
The skilled worker rests in this lap, in this old cradle, happy.
Makers of the next great age strip themselves and swim.

GENEVIEVE TAGGARD.

The British Are Coming

There are more and more signs among them of a fast-maturing revolutionary culture

By Granville Hicks

THE backwardness of revolutionary literature in England has long been apparent. It is true that, three years ago, we were startled by the appearance of a group of brilliant young poets who pledged their allegiance to revolutionary principles. But a few poets do not make a literary movement. Moreover, though no one can deny the originality and the technical skill of Auden, Spender, and Lewis, soberer judgment does suggest that their work expresses a not particularly representative type of revolutionary impulse. To us in America, who are used to seeing revolutionary writers take an active part in the revolutionary struggle, the apparent isolation of these three writers from the working-class movement is an ominous sign. One cannot feel sure of either their future development or their influence on revolutionary poetry.

THE development of the crisis of capitalism usually produces, on the one hand, a tense excitement among a section of the intellectuals of a country and, on the other, a preoccupation with working-class lives and an expression of working-class attitudes. Auden, Spender, and Lewis have eloquently recorded the intellectual ferment, but the literature of the working class has been slow in appearing. There is, indeed, Harold Heslop, who has militantly expressed the Communist point of view in such novels as *Last Cage Down,* but Heslop is not an altogether prepossessing writer. The only British novelist of working-class life who is at all familiar to Americans is James Hanley. In *Ebb and Flood,* in parts of *Boy* and *Stoker Bush,* and especially in *The Furys,* Hanley has described with knowledge and power the lives and characters of sailors and waterfront workers. Hanley knows how the working class lives, but he seemingly has little interest in

The Devil's Wash — Mabel Dwight

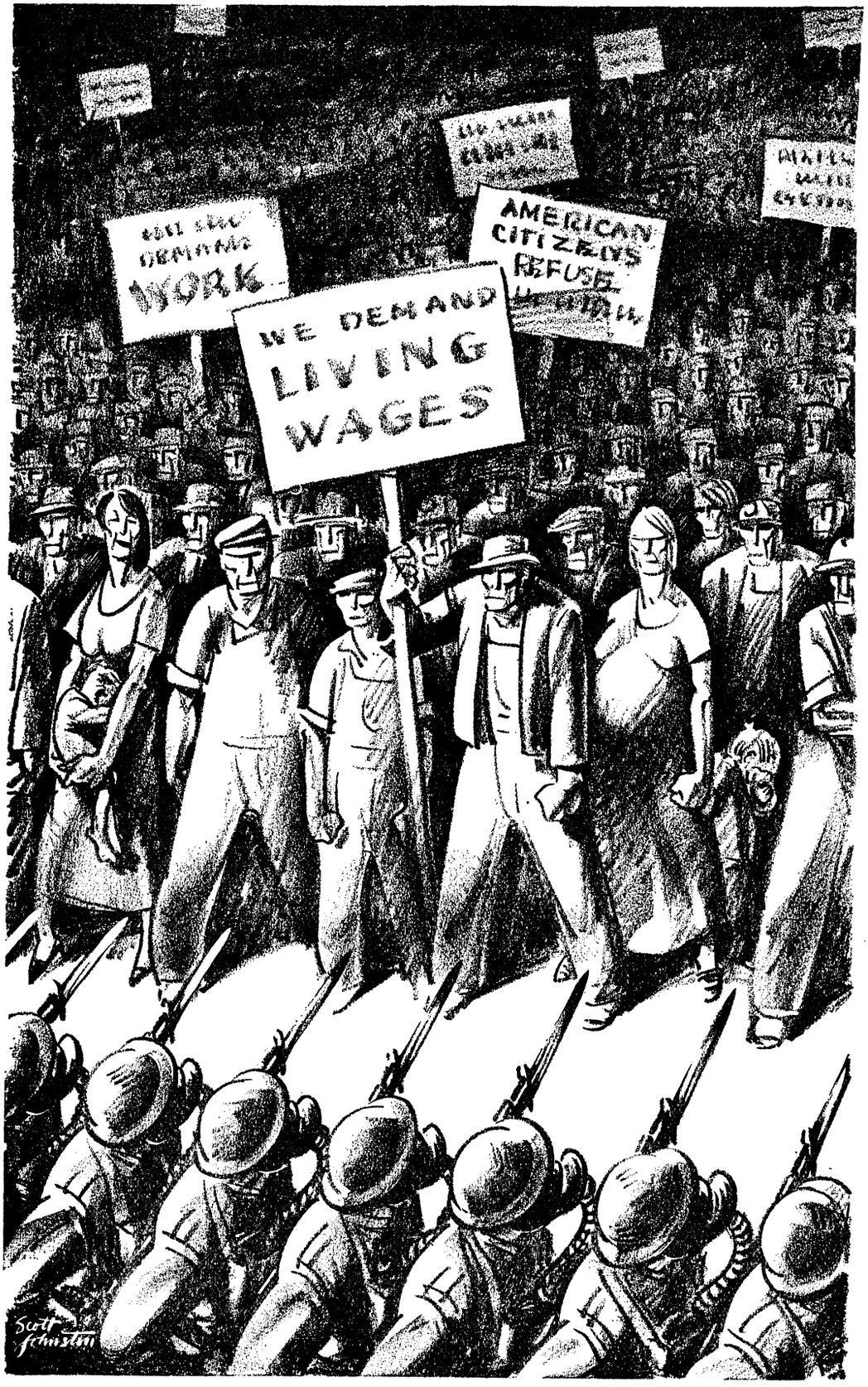
The Devil's Wash

Mabel Dwight

why it lives as it does. My objection to Hanley is not that he is not an avowed revolutionary, but that he refuses to make the intellectual effort that his art demands. The effort would probably make a revolutionary of him; it would certainly make him a better writer.

My reservations about Hanley, which are intensified by his most recent book, *The Secret Journey,* do not keep me from recognizing that, like the three poets, he has a real place in British revolutionary literature. The truth is that one can always find faults in any writer. The revolution expresses itself through the imaginations of many men, not through the imagination of a single genius. What we are looking for in Great Britain is a body of revolutionary literature, and that is what we are beginning to get.

Three recent novels indicate what is happening. Ralph Bates's *The Olive Field,* a considerably better book than his *Lean Men,* shows that he is one writer who knows working-class life—that of Spain, as it happens—and is not afraid of revolutionary passion. Naomi Mitchison, in *We Have Been Warned,* brings to the examination of contemporary life the candor and unconventionality that made *Cloud Cuckoo Land* and *The Corn King and the Spring Queen* so superior to other historical novels, and to these virtues she adds a militancy that is more important than her political confusion. *Daughters of Albion,* by Alec Brown, is based upon a shrewd and thoroughly Marxist analysis of the breakdown of bourgeois society. It is almost Dreiserian in its freedom from literary graces, but it reaches the imagination because of the author's dogged determination to get at the truth. All three books are badly constructed—irritatingly so—but all of them are alive.



"National Defense" Scott Johnston

ANOTHER significant phenomenon is the appearance of *New Writing,* a semi-annual anthology edited by John Lehmann, who recently contributed to *International Literature* a valuable essay on British revolutionary poetry. *New Writing* is not limited to British literature; Egon Erwin Kisch, Anna Seghers, André Chamson, and other Continental writers are in the first number, and America is to be represented in the second. The anthology is not specifically revolutionary, but its pages are not open to "writers of reactionary or fascist sentiments."

It is noteworthy that Lehmann and his associates are interested in gathering together for British readers some of the best work of the international revolutionary movement. It is also important that an outlet is being given for British writers of revolutionary or anti-fascist tendencies. Of the writers I have mentioned, only Bates and Spender are represented, and Alec Brown as a translator. The most notable contribution, it seems to me, is the story by Christopher Isherwood, who wrote a bizarre but memorable book, *The Strange Case of Mr. Norris,* and who collaborated with W. H. Auden in writing *The Dog Beneath the Skin.* His picture of Germany is as immediate as a news report and yet achieves a deeply tragic effect through its understatement. For me it establishes beyond any question Isherwood's importance as a revolutionary writer.

Among the other British contributors, Edward Upward, William Plomer, and John Hampson, all of whom contributed to *New Country,* and Gore Graham, who is apparently the youngest of the writers represented, seem to me clearly capable of first-rate revolutionary fiction. (Plomer and Hampson have written novels, unpublished, so far as I know, in this country.) Upward, like Isherwood, has the same kind of mind as Auden and Spender. Hampson and Graham write out of immediate knowledge of the working class.

There is more variety in American revolutionary literature, and I think we have the superior writers, but there is a British revolutionary literature that can be read and enjoyed and respected. Perhaps the time is not far off when we shall have to admit that we have been equaled if not outdistanced.

Subterranean Echoes

The thunder of Marxism, says an authority on the press, gets a response even in the editorial workrooms of the Reaction

By George Seldes

I WILL wager a solid-gold copy of the Code of Ethics of the American Newspaper Publishers Association against an aged Landon button that not a daily in the United States, not even the New York *Thunderer,* will print a scientific statement naming the poisonous cosmetics it sells to the public. How in thunder, then, can you expect them to open their columns to the economic truth about a poisonous social-economic system?

The answer is, of course, that you, a reader of this weekly, not only cannot but do not expect it, and that I am really wasting my time when I use an intelligent publication in order to point out the corruption of the American press, since every intelligent person already knows what is happening to that "bulwark of all our freedom," that "palladium of the people," that rock through which all our liberties gush so abundantly.

And yet I continue to do so because of an inner necessity. More important, however, is this other fact which I have discovered to my own surprise and edification, that there are hundreds of persons who, making their bread writing for the big newspapers, give their leisure time to fighting the very institution which doles out that bread. I am surprised and edified because these men are still employees, whereas I now have little to lose by talking about the corruption of the American press.

I must give one example, although it throws me somewhat off my track. Of some two hundred letters I have received from working newspaper men, one encloses a photostatic copy of a statement written by Theodore Roosevelt, Senior, the Mussolini *manqué* of his time. Now the name Theodore Roosevelt arouses no vainglorious emotions in me, but what a stick it is with which to beat the bourgeois dogs! And the Great Roosevelt speaks plainly about the Associated Press, the source of most of our news and the great corrupted coöperative of the newspaper publishers which Hearst, McCormick, Noyes, and a dozen other reactionaries control. Roosevelt says it is a liar.

I will not dispute this statement. But to it I would like to add another, that whatever its character and reputation may be, the Associated Press is more honest, more trustworthy, more ethical than about 90 percent of the newspapers it serves. The public, I hope, will accept my estimate, whether or not it agrees with T.R.'s.

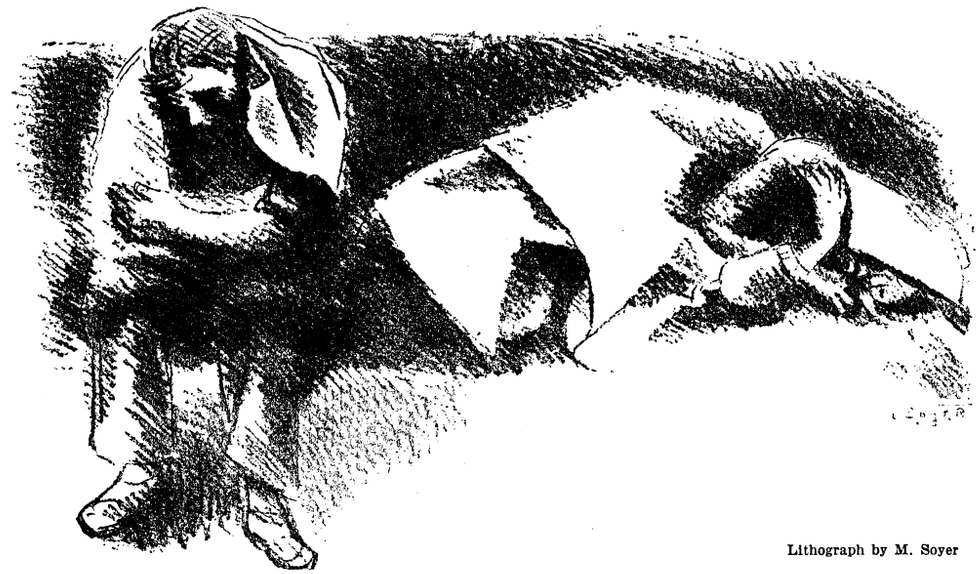
And by this route I return to my journalistic pi. Whether or not the great masses have realized it—and the tremendous vote against the candidate endorsed by 85 percent of the press indicates that at last there is a response to that strong strident note Upton Sinclair first struck sixteen years ago in *The Brass Check*—it is no secret that the workers in journalism, from City Editor Swinton, who told the last generation that newspaper men were street-walkers, to Heywood Broun, who has led the profession from the red-light district into green union pastures, have always known that it was a pretty dirty business.

The dirt, as the emergence of the Newspaper Guild has proven, was almost entirely in the hands of the owners, publishers, and editors. We see now that men would work for Chandler, McCormick, Hearst, Block, Knox, without losing their clean courage and integrity. But we might have known sooner. Because at all times in the quarter century of which I have evidence, the employees of those same owners who are the proven enemies of a free press in America have, because of this inner necessity whose explanation I leave to the modern students of the psyche, openly or secretly aided the real free press, the press of the Left. We all know about John Reed. But there have been anonymous hundreds, and so long as the great press continues to represent property and profits and necessarily corrupts itself doing so, there will be more hundreds in the future who will gain great satisfaction by contributing freely to free publications.

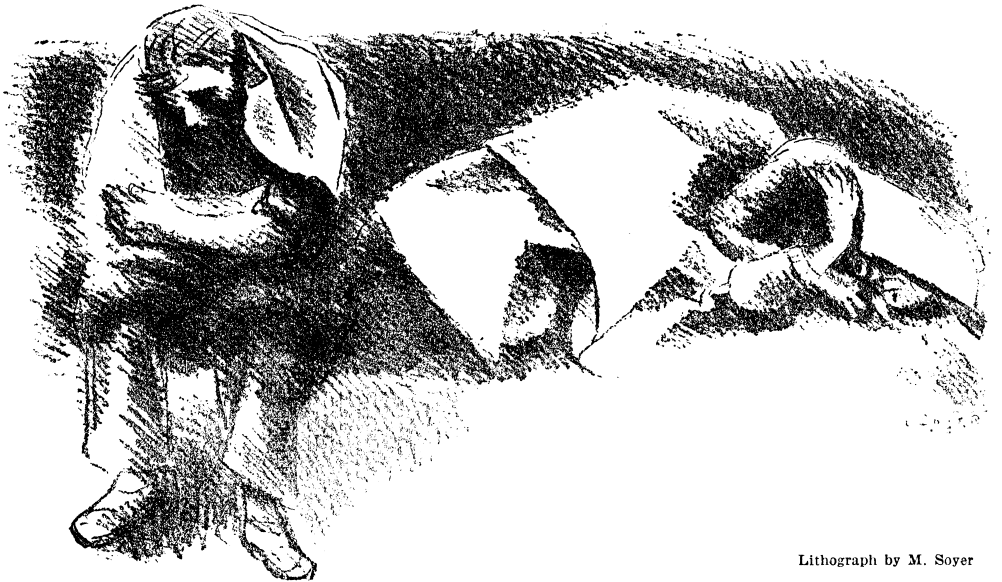
It is perhaps only good journalistic sense that prompts them. Every newspaper worker who gets a good story and knows his own paper will not print it, instinctively looks for an editor who will. He does not ask for pay, neither does he question the political color of the daily or weekly to whom he offers a news item or an interpretive article. I do not think that a social conscience enters into the matter. Perhaps it is a social subconscience, Dr. Freud? But does it matter?

The facts simply are these: (1) that the so-called great press still suppresses the news, and when it does not suppress news, it buries it alive, and when it does neither, it colors news, or it omits certain news, or it distorts the headlines, or it violates its own code of ethics every day in some manner or other, and these statements are corroborated in every issue of the *Guild Reporter,* the official organ of organized newspaper workers of America; (2) that the press of the Left is publishing in every issue much news which the press of the Right is either suppressing or distorting; and (3) that the employees of the Right press are voluntarily aiding the Left.

Mr. Hearst naturally bellows in his senile way that the newspaper workers are Communists, Socialists, radicals, Reds. This of course is no legitimate accusation, since by law they have the right to be. But it is not true. The proportion is probably the same, perhaps a trifle higher, than the radical vote in the recent election. But it is really significant that the Marxian thunders which are reverberating around the world and the Marxian lightning which became visible to many in the present dark economic days, should actually have been heard and seen, if only dimly, in those distant, subterranean strongholds of sophistication and cynicism which constitute the newspaper offices of America.



Lithograph by M. Soyer



Lithograph by M. Soyer

Capitalism Has Made It Plain

Pointing out that events are moving fast, the founder of EPIC cautions on tactics

By Upton Sinclair

OF COURSE I am glad to hear that the NEW MASSES has reached the ripe age of twenty-five years. For a radical publication, that is indeed aged. I think that if you can manage to survive another five or ten years you may achieve immortality; because events are moving fast now, and if we do not get war and fascism we shall have to adopt some kind of collectivist system.

We are living through tremendous times. I get a great many thrills; also I am aware of a great many dangers. Capitalism has made it plain that it is not going to give up without a fight. If the fascists succeed in Spain, they will try the same thing in France, and if they succeed there, they will be ready for the big go at the Soviet Union.

It is hard for us to imagine what a fascist world would be. They would destroy our institutions and our books, and everything in the world that we value. (I have just read in the New York *Post* that they have put all of my books out of the public library in Vienna.) They would put us all out, and where would we go?

It is a time to be wise and cautious. I do not mean that we should weaken in our determination to achieve a planned society, for it is either that or the gradual starving out of the working class. But we have to watch our step and choose our tactics carefully, and guard our tongues against idle threats and needless provocations. We must manage somehow to get the masses of the people with us, and keep them there, and it is no easy task, considering the lying power of the capitalist press.

We in America have to learn to understand the American people. Every time we fail to do this, we put new weapons into the hands of our enemies—and God knows they have enough already.

I wish I could say that I have always followed these rules myself. They are the result of forty years of studying the American problem, and our EPIC movement in California was an effort to carry it into effect. I had neither the health nor the money to go on with this effort; but it stands as an all-time high for any American state, and very nearly for the whole forty-eight states. The lesson I draw from it is that Production for Use is a better name than either Communism or Socialism; and that Production for Use for the Unemployed is the path of least resistance to our goal. Many a workingman who has a job is afraid to risk it; but few workers of either hand or brain will attempt to argue against putting the unemployed at productive labor for their own benefit; and few taxpayers can object to the argument that the unemployed should be taken off the taxpayers' backs. If in the process of doing that, we put one-sixth of our people under a planned and collectivist economic system, we shall have given a demonstration which the other five-sixths cannot possibly fail to understand. Incidentally, by taking the unemployed off the labor market, we make it possible for wages to go up, and without strikes, or even without legislative enactments or constitutional amendments.

Lithograph by Louis Lozowick

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Migratory Intellectuals

Being some remarks on those self-styled best friends who, because they effect no happy marriage of theory to practice, have now become our severest critics

By Michael Gold

I SPENT a few days recently in one of the lynching towns of Imperial Valley in California. Only two weeks before, in a town nearby, some 200 vigilantes had brutally beaten a candidate for Congress. They kept him from making a scheduled radio talk, and almost wrecked the radio station in their crazy wrath. The candidate happened to be running on the Communist ticket. No known Communist can appear on the streets of Imperial Valley. Emma Cutler, a year ago, was driving through in a car and was recognized as a Communist by a sheriff's deputy. He arrested her, and she served six months for vagrancy in the awful summer of El Centro, where the thermometer goes to 120 for weeks.

No union organizer of any affiliation can openly enter Imperial Valley. The underfed, tent-dwelling, despised American helots of the valley, the people who do the work, harvest the crops that make Imperial Valley prosperous. Every strike they attempt is immediately crushed with machine guns, assassinations, and legal frame-ups, as cruelly as though it were an ancient slave revolt.

My host was a small-business man. He told me that forty wealthy men dominate the economics and politics of the Valley; they supervise all business, pay the vigilante gangs, boss the sheriffs and judges, write the editorials, and preach the sermons. My host was a secret sympathizer with labor. Friends sneaked the *Nation* and *New Republic* to him through the mails disguised in Hearst newspapers. Occasionally he saw the NEW MASSES. He had a gun in his house, if ever the vigilantes should decide to censor his literary tastes with tar and feathers. He had to keep his mouth shut most of the time, or be pushed out of business overnight, or worse.

This man's son worked as an accountant for a department store. The boy, a clean and rather innocent young athlete with no political views, was a member of the vigilantes. He had to be, to hold his job, he said. The vigilante chief, who was made County Supervisor by the forty wealthy growers and shippers, came around one day to the store. He was recruiting. "How many of your men can I count on?" he said to the boss. "All of them, of course," the boss said, promptly. He, too, knew which side his bread and caviar was buttered on. So here was another conscript for the vigilantes, unhappy about it, however, because he knew his father's opinions.

Doesn't this picture sound like Nazi Germany? It is repeated in thousands of small American farming towns.

In New York, Imperial Valley seems as remote as Germany, Italy, or Spain. No vigilantes yet roam the streets of New York, and it isn't dangerous yet to write articles for the *Nation,* or even the NEW MASSES. In fact, there is a prestige attached to this: no blatantly right-wing writer could have many friends among his contemporaries in New York.

Yes, it is a kind of bandwagon for the moment, and from the heights of this wagon the lost, bloody little American towns are seen as from an aeroplane, by some master strategist. That is why so many New York intellectuals become super-Leftist, Trotskyite, Lovestoneite, Norman Thomasite, and what-not.

It is so easy to criticize the mistakes of a Joe Louis being beaten by a Max Schmeling —even though you yourself have biceps no bigger than a thimble, and have never yet licked anyone your own size. It is easy to criticize Soviet Russia in a steam-heated New York restaurant, before a group of book reviewers and college instructors who've never shot a White Guard *saboteur* in their lives, or built a great machine out of only their naked wills. It is easy, damned easy, to claim to be a Communist, but not a "Stalinite" Communist; oh, no! not the sort of lowbrow Communist who goes into Imperial Valley to organize workers and spread socialism, does the job, in brief, and doesn't know there is a little group of Phi Beta Kappa Trotskyites in New York who think harshly of him.

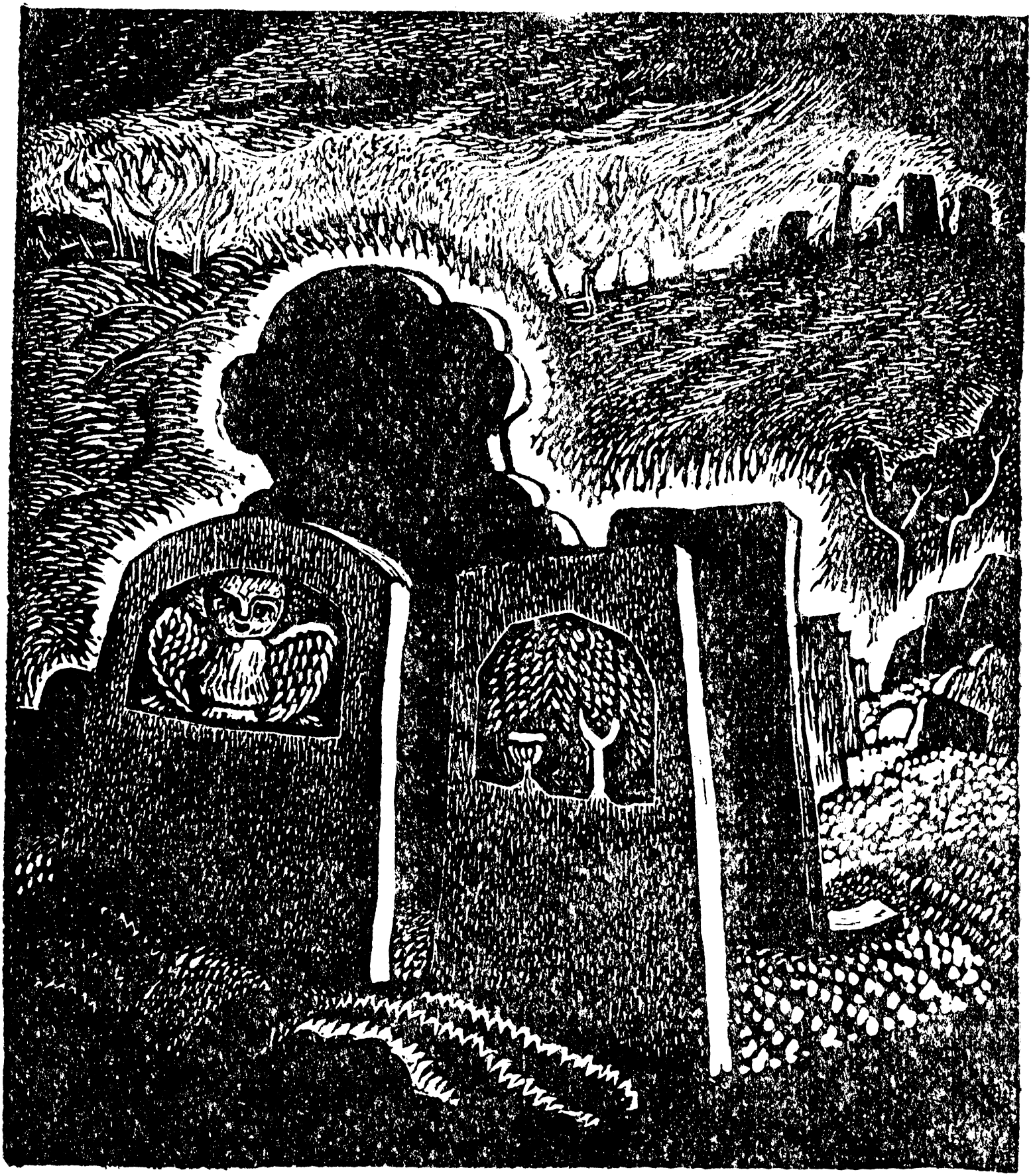
Ah, these wonderful victories on paper of the New York super-Leftists, these stern attitudes they strike in their vacuum, these monuments of sterile theory they erect! Some four years ago, when Prof. Sidney Hook was first coyly flirting with communism, I remember that I had a conversation with him. He astounded me with his scholarship, as it is called; I believe the man had read every line and footnote of Hegel, Marx, and Lenin. I refused to be crushed by an encyclopedia, however, and pounded away at him to extract an opinion as to where he stood on the concrete applications of Marxism. At this point I listened to the bright-eyed young pundit's flounderings in even more astonishment; he knew a lot less than I did; in fact, couldn't make up his mind. I patiently went over the positions of the Lovestone and Trotsky factions, for example, and compared them with the line of the Communist Party. Mr. Hook thought they were all equally logical and just. It was a beautiful demonstration in futility. If, by his own pragmatic test, Professor Hook's life depended on his immediate opinion, the man would have been too paralyzed to act.

Woodcut by Wanda Gág

He knew absolutely nothing about political life as it develops from day to day, the dialectics of struggle, the thing in itself. His wisdom was worthless to workers on the battlefield, because it had no relation to facts or to practice. He dealt in abstractions; but great theorists like Marx and Lenin never deserted the realities. What is any theory if it isn't based on practice? Even a eunuch may have theories of love, but what good are they?

I saw a group of these theorists like Professor Hook come close to the Communist Party in the 1932 campaign, then drop away. The reason was their god-awful intellectual vanity. They could not believe, in their precious little circle, that there was anything to learn about Communist practice from men like Foster, Hathaway, Browder, or Bill Dunne. No, it was they who wanted to instruct the Communist Party. Less than six months old in communism, they believed the Central Committee of that party, a group of labor veterans, should treat with them on the terms of equally sovereign powers. Brain would direct brawn, evidently. What pompous and formal schemes they offered, what elaborate projects for inner reform, what revolutions and revelations! When their programs were not immediately accepted, they felt injured. It was the "mediocre" leadership that could not, or would not, understand their superior plans. Never once did it enter the deeps of their bookish minds that it is one thing to spin a plan, even the most perfect plan, and another thing to put it into practice.

After their "disillusionment," they deserted, with noble gestures, of course, the Communist Party. Now most of them are busy slander-



Woodcut by Wanda Gág

ing, sabotaging, confusing, and diluting the Communist program in the liberal journals. Communist Party members are rarely invited to write on communism for liberal magazines; it is these hasty renegades who do all the expounding and have the inside track. Ability? No! Affinity! Sidney Hook, the William James pragmatist, is now making his liberalistic career on explaining "what Marx [an anti-pragmatist] really meant"; and Max Eastman, philosophic follower of Plato, Nietzsche, Bakunin, and Woodrow Wilson, is chosen to collate an anthology from Karl Marx's *Capital*. Would these liberal journals invite Josef Goebbels to write an impartial study of Jewish history, or review a book by Albert Einstein? The comparison seems too odious and far-fetched; but speak to these strange people, the ex-Communists, and you will find that they loathe and hate the Communist parties of the world more intensely than they do capitalism, and besides, are completely anti-Marxian in theory.

It is indeed a mean little role to play at this moment of history, this endless Communist-baiting by some intellectuals. Let the Freudians go into the depths of some of the motives, but I for one, trace it to vanity, careerism, and the simple inability to accept the internal discipline of any organization in whose objects you completely believe. It is this that stirs up the will-to-confusion latent in so many intellectuals, that troubled, deracinated class that now has to make a great choice.

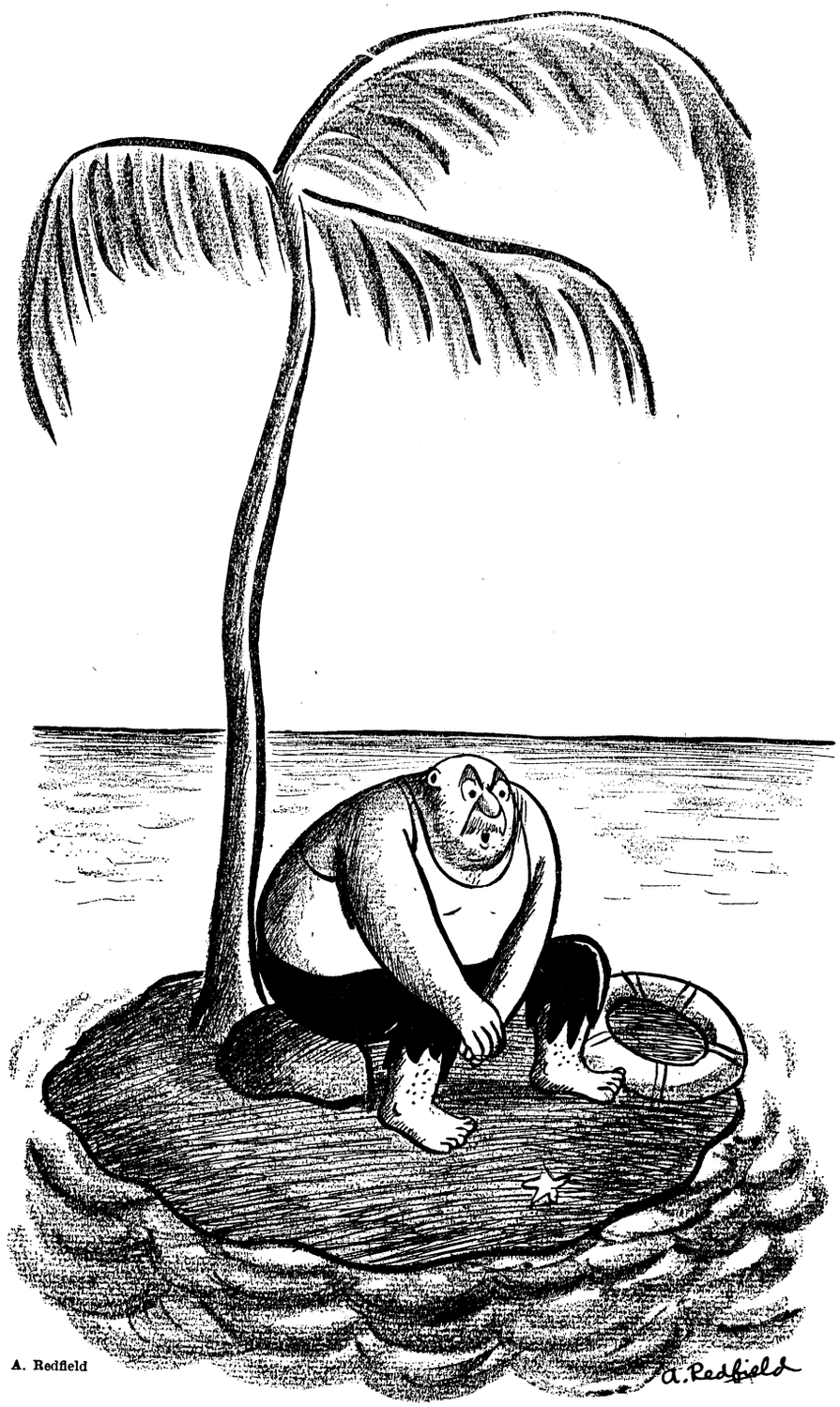
I have, in the years I have been around the Communist movement, seen at least three generations of such people come and go. I was thinking of one of the more recent cases, James Farrell, on my trip to Imperial Valley. Listening to my business-man host, surrounded by spies and thugs on every street corner, faced with the fascist reality that exists just under the topsoil of American democracy, I remembered a chapter in Farrell's book on criticism, titled, I believe, "Two Worlds."

Mr. Farrell, among his other easy New York iconoclasms, had some mighty sharp and scornful words to say about the bad logic and bad Marxism of Robert Briffault. In *Breakdown,* Mr. Briffault had painted an eloquent and, I thought, moving picture of the dilemma of the middle-class man who finds himself caught between the two worlds of capitalism and labor, and must make a choice. All his social roots, his emotions and *his bread and butter* were comprised in the capitalist frame; but his mind and his heart told him that labor had all the justice and hope on its side. If he came out openly for labor, however, it might mean breaking up his whole established life, losing his friends, his family, and his *bread and butter.* Mr. Briffault faced this hard choice honestly, and tried to help the middle class see that even if it meant sacrifices, it was better to save one's integrity and follow one's heart and mind.

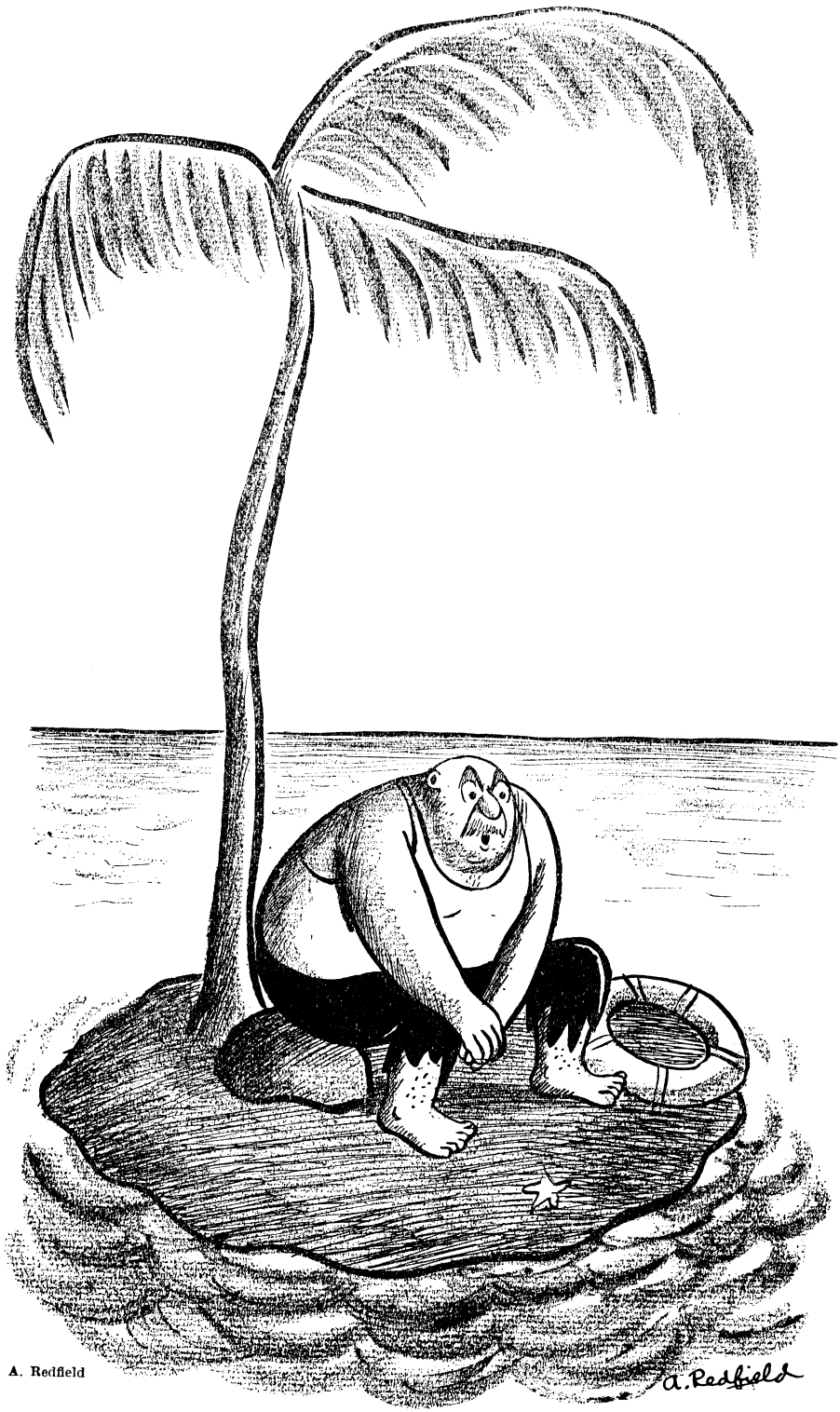
James Farrell thought this sentimental, and denied that such a clear choice ever presented itself. Farrell, among the literary circles of Paris, Chicago, and New York, had never met this moral dilemma, so it did not exist. Mr. Briffault was making it all up. Briffault was tender-minded and Christian; Farrell was hard-boiled and scientific. There were no two worlds, he said; they overlapped so subtly that who but a romantic could find any divisions between them?

So I wished Farrell could have been there to talk to a small-business man of Imperial Valley. It is the place for "hard-boiled" New York intellectuals who frighten us with words. It would have been interesting to see whether Farrell could persuade my host that the two worlds didn't exist, and that you didn't need a gun in your home if you read the *Nation.*

No, they are not really scientific or "hard-boiled," these New York coffee-pot intellectuals and "leaders." Under all their dicta one hears the old wailing of the parliamentary Socialists, the bureaucrats and careerists who for decades tried to blur and forget and deny, like a bad dream, the simple fact that there is really a class struggle and two worlds. The Eberts and Lavals and Morris Hillquits never wanted to surrender the rewards still open to them in the capitalist world; they never burned these bridges behind them. Thousands of such office-holding, money-making Socialist



"Good God! Not a soul to boss around!"



"Good God! Not a soul to boss around!"

leaders needed a theory to leave the bridges wide open behind them, and they invented the theory of class collaboration. It is the intransigent loyalty of the Communist Party to the working class, in fair weather and foul, that finally alienates such people; this is the taproot of all their gushing words, theories, and criticisms. In the bourgeois world, even the liberal one today, it is still an unpopular thing to be completely and logically Communist, in thought and action. For the aspiring writer, or college teacher, it simply doesn't pay; and why should it? So instead of recognizing this hard reality, and accommodating oneself as best one can, the aspirants dilute working-class theory and slander Communist workers. Thus, they believe, they have made a niche for themselves in a transition period, made the best of the two worlds, reconciled Communism with a respectable career.

Loyalty to a cause comes only out of a deeply felt and deeply reasoned conviction of the truth of that cause. If one believes in communism, one must also accept the only instrument history has taught us can bring it—the Communist Party—the two cannot be separated. And if one chooses the Communist Party as one's instrument for organizing a better world, one must loyally accept its decisions —otherwise the party dissolves into chaotic particles. Surely this is the mechanics of all history today—changes and revolutions are not brought about any longer by strong individuals, but by strong parties. The New York intellectuals of the type I have been describing can never be consistently loyal to any party, and I wish the Trotskyite-Socialists whom they have just joined *en masse* all the joy they can pluck from this new army of vain generals.

On and off, I have been an editor of the NEW MASSES for almost fifteen years. It has always been a free-lance paper, without "gold from Moscow," or "orders from Union Square." But we always tried to keep it in the line of the Communist Party, because the party was right more often than any other guides that I, for one, could find. It was the Communist Party that first organized the southern workers in Gastonia and other places; that first foretold the great depression; that first organized the unemployed; that first projected full Negro emancipation on the American political scene. It is the Communist Party that first alarmed Americans to the immediate danger of armed, military fascism here, that raised the slogan which Norman Thomas even now denies—fascism versus democracy.

This doesn't mean other parties and groups have not fought the reaction in my time; no, this would be wrong to say. But in my time, the Communist Party seems always to have furnished the lead; it has been the heroic pioneer; it has blazed the trails, taken all the dirt and slander and persecution, and gone on.

And the Communist Party is the workers' party that first preached the United Front. It was slandered as usual for it, but it has proved in France and Spain that it is the historic means by which alone we can defeat fascism. And who are the people that don't believe in the United Front, who sabotage it everywhere, create added dissensions, invent poisonous lies to hurt this United Front? The same intellectuals I have described—I've seen them myself busy at their rabid plotting in France and America. This is their contribution to the people's struggle against fascism: on the barricades they gleefully shoot us in the back, and explain it on theoretical grounds.

Why should I make Sidney Hook my political guide rather than Earl Browder or Stalin? I really believe these men have seen more of revolution than the campus of New York University. Why should I exchange the joint experience of a world party of veteran working-class revolutionists for the intuitive wisdom of an Anita Brenner or James Farrell? In my own experience, checking by the documents, I have found the Communist Party's theories sounder at every grave moment when I had to decide for myself than all of Mr. Krutch's sad essays or the subjective flounderings of a Norman Thomas.

Time and again we have had groups of migratory intellectuals cluster around the NEW MASSES, and then leave for places that paid them regular cash. Always I found them worrying about the Communist line; it was too direct, it was too "dogmatic"; their earnest and endless plea was invariably for dilution of the truth.

If I were a young intellectual today, troubled by the confusions these people bring into the war of the two worlds, I would go back over the files of all the liberal magazines and Trotsky-ish journals and make a check-back with the NEW MASSES. I am sure we will have nothing to be ashamed of, and that viewed restrospectively, truth will be most often found on our side, because truth is the necessary tool of the hard-working Communist Parties of the world, its guide in life-and-death decisions such as don't have to be made by the migratories.

Fragments

Lithograph by Jose Clemente Orozco

★ ★ ★

Old Habit and New Love

Daybreak has its own desire, noon its peculiar longing, and dusk a tired demand—all for paths that lead to the rusty levers of smoky and familiar landscape.

An itch eats at softening callouses, sweaty hands won't stay dry, and the body's limbs are eager, chafing to revitalize the sleeping speed of chilled flywheels.

There is an ache for marriage, for the sight of halves grown whole, for cactus land to blend with dingy dream, for the welding of iron and bleeding palms.

It is for fusion of number and nerve we strain, of cobweb and waterfall, of worker and lonely machine, of old habit and new love.

Electric anger rises to smelt trolley-track to pliability of artist's brush, daring to quicken the whirs of crankshafts till they drone, ring as meaningful as music.

O Creators: Poets, Makers of Melody! Some first-shift dawn shall find us on equal ground, holding in our hands the world's tools, drafting the hope-prints of our vision on canvases of green earth!

RICHARD WRIGHT.

Fragments

Lithograph by Jose Clemente Orozco

Belief in Man

An American literary pioneer sees that as the guiding genius of our twenty-five-year history

By Sherwood Anderson

IS IT that long—twenty-five years? How old we grow! Can it be twenty-five years ago that, out in Chicago, we began to hear of plans, the magazine to be started, names of men we respected, looked up to as leaders, to be editors? Floyd Dell, who had gone to New York, may have written a letter to a friend and it was passed about. Floyd had been something of a literary father to me. It was at his house I first saw "literary" men. I must already have been scribbling away for five or six years. He wrote me presently, asking me to send some of my Winesburg tales and, Lord knows, I was glad to send them. I was having a rough time trying to get them published. There was a prison warden up at Sing Sing who had dared to treat prisoners as human beings. The politicians were after him and, to get him, were whispering about that he was a homo. Floyd wanted a story of mine, called "Hands."

Later I went to New York on a visit, had breakfast one morning with Jack Reed, and later, one winter night, walked with him for hours. What living talk! How human he was, how alive to others! I met and talked with Art Young, that big laughing man, had drinks with him and others of the old *Masses* crowd, and how strongly they remain yet in my mind as part, a very pregnant, vital part of something we all felt going on, just at that time.

It may have been a time rather like the present. There was a stirring, something felt, as one might say, coming up from below—as though the farms of our big fat Middle West wanted to speak, as though the growing factories of the towns wanted to speak. I wonder often if there is too much inclination to romanticize all this. We felt, I'm sure, that in writing there had been enough of the dominance of New England. There was, for the time, a lot of emphasis on sex. It was perhaps inevitable. Most of us got, for a time, the name of being "sex-obsessed." It was, I'm sure, only an effort to get sex back into a healthy place in our effort to express American life.

And it was a stirring period. The World War brought it sharply to an end. Something did happen. A new grimness came into faces seen on streets and, oh Lord, the hypocrisy!

WHEN the old *Masses* got under way, the Provincetown crowd was getting a start on McDougal Street and, out in Chicago, Margaret Anderson was starting her *Little Review*. Someone took me to see her. "She is going to start a magazine. She will publish stuff

A. Walkowitz

they're afraid of," I was told. Life is full of these delicious moments. When I first saw Margaret Anderson she had a job editing a Protestant-church magazine. There was something highbrow getting under way too. *The Dial,* with Gilbert Seldes as managing editor, got going. Edgar Lee Masters was writing *Spoon River Anthology,* Carl Sandburg his *Chicago Poems.* Down at Springfield, Ill., Vachel Lindsay was making his half-mad, often beautiful cry to the gods. For a time the thing was all over the shop. Minor poets went to an Iowa town to read their verses. Seven or eight hundred people came. For a time books of verses sold like popular novels.

Without a doubt there was, until the World War came to deaden it, make it sick, something in the very air you breathed. Let's call it, "belief in life." O.K. Well, it seems to me that the impulse that led to the beginning of the *Masses* was a part of it. It was a strong, good, alive part of it. At the time it touched all parts of the country, reaching down even to New Orleans, where a little group of men and women had also started a magazine. They called it the *Double Dealer.*

What I remember of it all now is a kind of new boldness. Such a lot of things being said that everyone wanted said. Looking back to that time, it seems to me that perhaps the whole thing was best expressed, a kind of laughing boldness best expressed, in the person of Jack Reed. It may be that this whole effort to remember clearly the mood of a past time is just nerts.

Anyway, there it was, as it stays in my mind, as though to say, "why all the fuss, fakiness, bunk—this believing in what we Americans have been taught to believe in—success, fame, some one individual among us crawling up, always over the shoulders of others? . . ."

Why not fun in life?

Why not fun even in being a bit serious about life?

This, as I find myself trying to remember it, for the time in the very air. It may have been, at last, the beginning of realization that all of the talk our popular magazines had been so full of so long was just bunk, that because a man had managed to become, say, a millionaire, he was important. We had been getting that dope almost with our mother's milk. . . .

Succeed. Be something big.

It had meant, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, getting a lot of money—no matter how you got it—having a big house, a lot of servants—going Park Avenue on your fellows. The *Masses* cutting across it, laughing at it, giving it the "what t' 'ell?"

When it happened, when it began, I was an advertising writer and, oh, the bunk I had swallowed. It had just happened that advertising writing was the way I had found, at least in a small way, to beat the game. You get some money to live on without putting out much of self, hope to have a bit of life left. God knows I never put out much. My general impression is still that most business men are saps.

The real thrill was to find these others, men apparently caring a little, making the idea back of what you call "comradeship" have some meaning.

AND THIS, it seems to me, expressed in many ways, when the *Masses* was getting started, the *Masses* doing it with a kind of grand boldness, with a flourish.

And then the World War sapping it, draining it off into a kind of universal ugliness. It is a little hard to express all I have felt about it, but this I can say: that the *Masses*—old or new—will always retain for me some flavor of it.

Of what?

I think, just belief of man in man. If you are going anywhere that must be at the bottom of what you are trying to do.

Two Dictators

The one doesn't like the other, says the author of "Personal History," who sees in that fact a moral

By Vincent Sheean

THE other day I went down to Lago Maggiore to look at the scenery and talk to some fishermen and peasants of my acquaintance in those parts. A man named Giacomo, who fishes for a living—mostly against the law, since the fishery rights in the lake are kept for those who can pay for them or have "party" friends—told me why the small island of Sangiovanni was occupied on this particular week-end.

"Toscanini is there," said Giacomo. "He just arrived from Milan two days ago. He comes here so as not to be in Milan when The Other arrives. You know one city is not big enough for two dictators."

We stood and looked at the small island in the lake where Toscanini lives.

"He does not like The Other," Giacomo remarked.

On the way back from the lake we heard a radio blaring out the voice of The Other. It was his speech in Milan on November 1; or rather, the combination of threats, boasts, and rhetorical flourishes which he calls a speech. On house after house of the villages we passed through we saw quotations from his speeches painted upon white walls. "Italians, to arms! No surrender! We shall not make peace until we have fought well!"—and so on.

Any one-eyed loon could see in these inscriptions the uniformity of officialdom, its inspiring frown, its clumsy attempt at the sublime; the walls of Italy are like so many billboards turned over to the garish talents of a horde of amateur artists. The focal point of this radiation is, of course, the astonishing brain of Mussolini, so intuitive and free-moving that it seizes upon the unconscious, the involuntary, and the uncontrollable in his people's life and pulls it forward towards catastrophe. His technique consists in the passionate opposition of psychological forces to the march of economic law, and as unreason calls to unreason, these appeals have been conspicuously successful among those who must suffer most from their success. The Fascist genius and the Fascist power, however synthetic—however patched-together and cooked-up may be their ostensible philosophy—relate themselves to the subconscious by a transaction which is unquestionably successful, i.e., for the moment it works; no force in Italy has been able to stand against it. In this appeal to the black surge of unreason, the inherited unreason of the centuries, economic privilege has discovered a weapon like none that has ever come its way before—a weapon so powerful that it is now being fabricated in all countries for that same purpose, and attacks humanity itself through the simplest of its impulses.

Mussolini's success is at its peak. Its worthlessness is not apparent to those who admire it; its danger is not always clear to those who

The Cornfield

Lithograph by Arnold Blanch

The Cornfield

Lithograph by Arnold Blanch

The Cornfield

Lithograph by Arnold Blanch

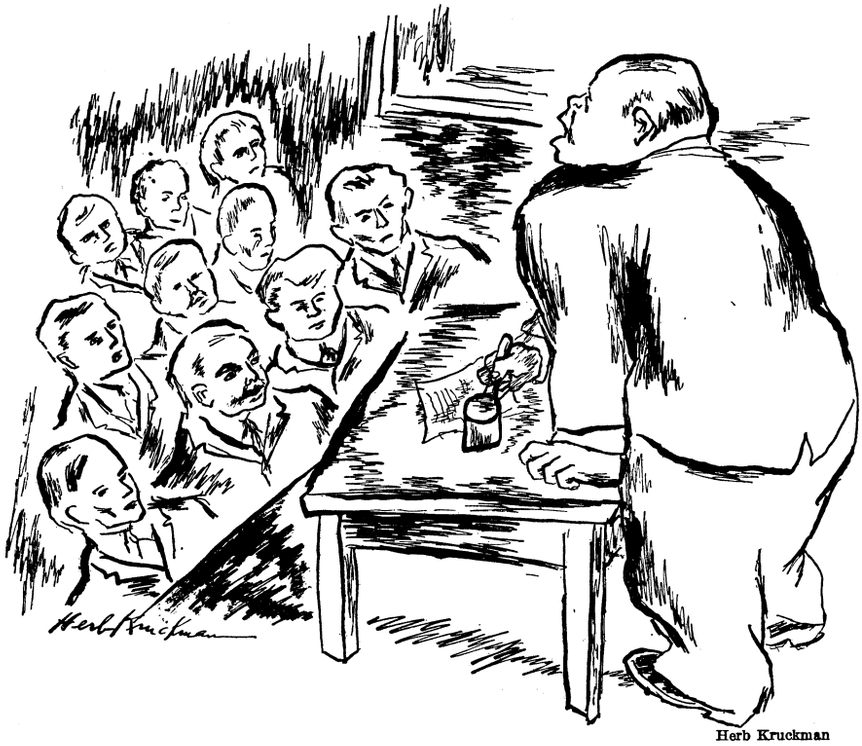
would like to ignore or underestimate it. His revolutionary past has equipped him with a technique such as no despot has ever possessed before. He uses that technique for the exaltation of everything the human race would be better off without: its tribal memory, its senseless inter-tribal hatred, its individual greed and collective unreason. By exalting these impulses into a system of life he has not only immensely aggrandized the intuitive unit called Benito Mussolini—a satisfaction which seems fully pathological with him—but has supplied the organism which is his master (i.e., national capitalism) with enough vital juice to continue a battle it must inevitably lose.

Death on the Plains

Lithograph by George Biddle

THE USELESSNESS of this reaction, its waste and cruelty, the certainty that it must increase the sum of human suffering by an unpredictable immensity (Spains upon Spains) may make us unduly impatient with the Italians who have yielded to it—that is to say, with the Italians. In this temptation it is not at all irrelevant to cast an eye upon that island in the lake where there lives another sort of dictator. This dictator, Toscanini, is a conspicuous example of the artist who minds his own business, but in doing so contrives to suggest a continuity of other impulses than the tribal ones in the Italian people as in other peoples. That is, the man is a musician and nothing else—an interpretative musician at that, who neither composes nor "arranges" music, but lets it go through him like the wind; he has no political interest or activity; his only significance is the one he acquires by having brought his social function to a pitch of perfection unequaled among artists. What is unique in him as a conductor is his absorption in the music, his passionate concentration upon the intention of the composer and its translation into sound. He "does" nothing to the scores he conducts—you can go to performance after performance and watch the score as he performs it (if you are capable of dividing your attention); there is no invention, no attempt to change or color, no imposition of effect. What there is is such intense realization of every fraction of the whole that the man becomes like a sort of electric score, a magnetized sheet of music which the actual players must follow exactly because they cannot help themselves, because it is the music; because it is as near an absolute as there is. In this operation the individual Toscanini is totally forgotten; he has no mind for it himself; and in his best work (offhand let us say the Beethoven Third and Seventh, the Brahms Fourth, and *La Mer*) the incandescence has reached such a pitch of intensity that you may reasonably say the orchestra is without a conductor—its conductor has fused himself into the work, and the players with him, so that you get an eccentric and over-driven orchestra like the Vienna Philharmonic playing like an assemblage of elements, a collective Toscanini.

The country which produced one of these two dictators produced the other as well, and from the same kind of stock. The juxtaposition is not without some suggestive power—like Giacomo's smile when he said, "He does not like The Other."



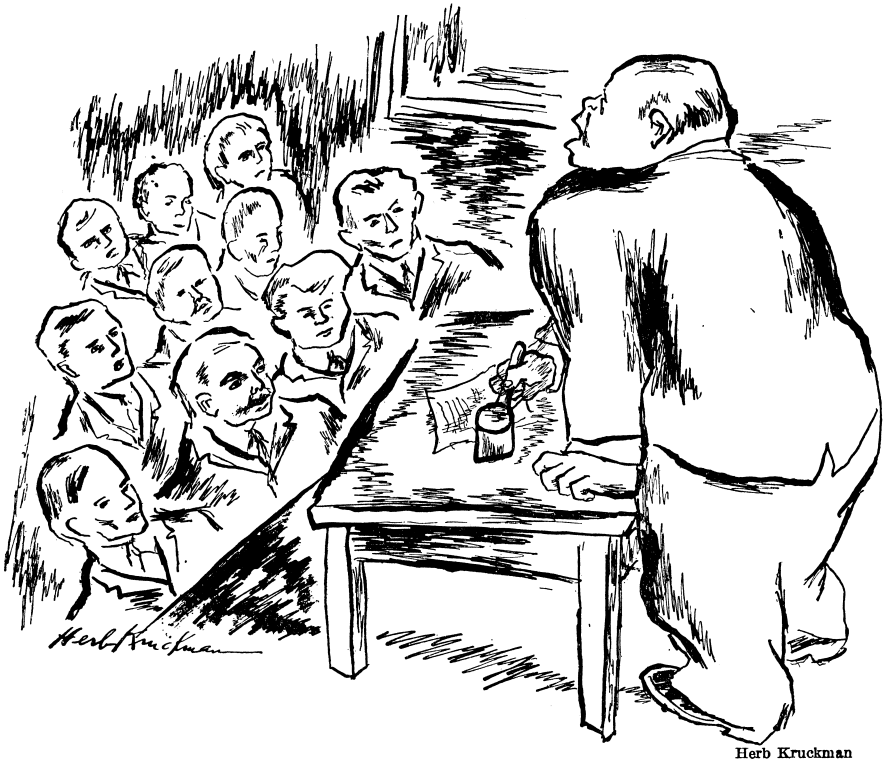
Herb Kruckman

"Democratic procedure! What do you think this is—a Red union?"

Death on the Plains Lithograph by George Biddle

Death on the Plains

Lithograph by George Biddle



Herb Kruckman

"Democratic procedure! What do you think this is—a Red union?"

The King Is Dead!

The news provokes a wild assortment of reactions, but when the tumult and the shouting dies, the heirs reign

By Albert Halper

I WAS sitting in the Automat over some rolls and coffee when I suddenly heard shouting. The crowded cafeteria was noisy, but on the instant everybody became silent. It was a newsboy outside, yelling his lungs out. From his fourteen-year-old chest the words issued like a tornado. "Ex-tra! Extra! *Hearst is dead!*" At once the cafeteria was holy bedlam. The compartments where you stick in nickels became jammed, and the help, those hidden guys behind the automatic food booths, began to yell "Halleluiah!" They came out from behind the classy fixtures, tearing their aprons off and shouting hoarsely. The busboys, seeing their buddies taking a holiday, let fall their dirty dishes and started pushing over tables. The manager came out, his eyes popping. The cashier behind the cage started throwing fists of nickels at the ceiling and in a flash the whole store was in turmoil, the customers turning over chairs and churning doorward.

In the street, people started grabbing the latest editions of the papers, talking, yelling. The one newsboy had been augmented by hundreds. People riding by on the elevated started throwing confetti out the windows. The chestnut vender at the corner began giving away hot peanuts. In fifteen minutes the traffic was in a tangle. Father Divine, riding in a second-hand Rolls-Royce with white banners, cried: "Peace, peace!" The choir from the Free Synagogue, atop the Claridge Hotel, burst out with, "Go Down William." From the loudspeaker Col. Jay C. Flippen's voice boomed: "Telephone, Bryant 9-7800."

By four o'clock in the afternoon the body was speeding eastward. It was met at the Newark airport by city and state officials. An honor guard of Spanish War veterans fired a salute of eighteen hundred and ninety-eight rounds of ammunition. From the laboring masses of Seattle, Washington, a delegate with a bouquet of horseradishes said: "We salute you, Randolph." The coffin was very heavy, weighing a hundred stone, ten ounces. It had been shipped over by special airplane from Europe in pieces and reassembled in Jersey City. A special cameraman, the same fellow who had driven Lindbergh off to Europe, snapped the picture. At the Madison Square Garden, which had been turned into a funeral parlor, the flashlights were booming. Colonel Knox, in charge of affairs, said, "The nation has suffered a great loss, a loss greater than bank deposits or insurance policies." Governor Landon, who stood upon the platform, said, "He made his pile the American way, as we say out in Kansas."

After the speeches, Primo Carnera and Max Schmeling stepped lightly into the ring and started boxing. Under the auspices of the Free Milk for Babies Fund the rounds went quickly. Father Coughlin cleared his throat and said: "He certainly was not a pagan!" The Italian ambassador, in a cutaway coat and pencil-stripe trousers, spoke briefly. "Italy, the Duce, and myself want peace, even though we have to fight through a forest of eight million bayonets! War does not pay! But we will build our empire! Here lies a man, one of the last of the Romans!" Hans Luther, in his broken English, also made an utterance. "From the land of the Fuehrer I bring him Aryan Deutsches greetings! Herr Hearst has saved America from communism and Americans will not soon forget it!" The governor of California said, "In the death of this man organized labor in my state and throughout the nation has lost its staunchest supporter." At that moment a delegation from the sausage workers' union in Brooklyn came up quietly and silently deposited upon the stage a small basket of boloney.

A. Sopher

The cortège wound down Eighth Avenue, going slowly. In the offices of the New York *American,* the *Mirror,* and the *Journal* the employees were singing. They would no longer be ashamed to receive their pay on Saturdays and could look a typewriter in the face without apologizing. When the cortège came by they leaned out the windows, waving their Guild cards. A big outdoor movie screen had hastily been put up on Forty-second Street and the *Metrotone News* reels were flashing, with Edwin C. Hill announcing: "A great man who during his life always fought for humanity and progress going on his last journey, flanked by New York's mourning millions." The Metrotone Globe Trotter kept trotting out the macaroni. Over the air waves came Dick Powell and Marion Davies crooning, "No more movies." Venders were selling horns, bean-blowers, and overripe tomatoes. Mr. Knickerbocker, flying in haste from the blood-soaked hills of Spain, zoomed overhead in a German bomber, sending out on his aerial teletype: "I bring him news of the Reds' defeats along fifty-seven fronts; he would have liked it."

The cortège made its way through the dense crowds, through the city's millions. Ten dowagers of the D.A.R., riding plump white horses, led the procession, carrying banners: "Deport Thirty Million Aliens." At Thirty-fourth Street the cortège ran into the Macy-Gimbel shoppers. The crowds were now terrific, and the cops on horseback went nutty. The big, hastily-put-up screen moved along on wheels, with the news reels flashing. Victor MacLaglen's Hollywood vigilantes dashed out of side streets in California airplanes to direct the traffic.

It took ten hours to make the trip to Coney Island. There, on the sands, a delegation of W.P.A. workers put the coffin on rollers. The coffin was placed in a sailboat and the glass blowers' union started blowing the boat seaward. In fifteen minutes the sails dipped over the horizon. Then the crowd went home and ate lustily, for they had been walking for hours.

On the morrow, however, the dead man's twenty-six papers throughout the country came out as usual. There were the customary headlines about Dubinsky and Frankfurter and the charge that Communists were running the school system. The people, in their celebration, had not figured the papers would continue to function. But they soon learned that though a king dies, his dynasty doesn't. On the back pages, in black type, was featured: "Starting tomorrow, the dynamic life of General Franco."

Frontiers

Until love breaks his body's boundaries
a boy has hiding hands and knocking knees.

Who have no later love, to that extension swelled,
the home inhabits them, like snails are shelled.

Th' unfearing grow in love, by stunting whip
untouched; and man to mankind grows in comradeship.

Alike with nations: See the fascist faces
how fear, to look fearful, makes grimaces;

glares behind borders, and screams out "treason!"
when any young blood rises in its season.

War broods there like an apoplectic's rage
that dies in striking—specter of its age.

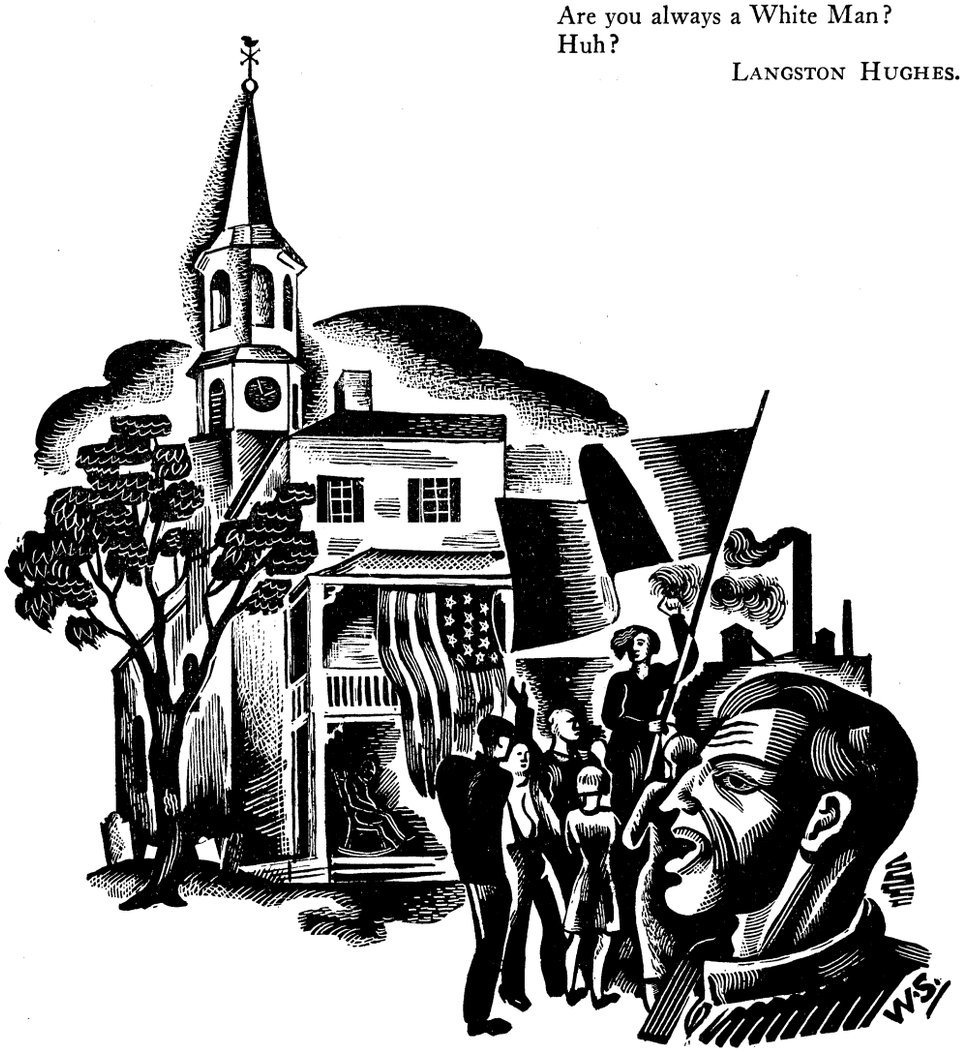
How different is that lifeward paroxysm,
the love that urges earth to Communism.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

White Man

Sure, I know you!
You're a White Man.
I'm a Negro.
You take all the best jobs
And leave us the garbage cans to empty and
The halls to clean.
You have a good time in a big house at Palm Beach
And rent us the back alleys
And the dirty slums.
You enjoy Rome—
And *take* Ethiopia.
White Man! White Man!
Let Louis Armstrong play it—
And you copyright it
And make the money.
You're the smart guy, White Man!
You got everything!
But now,
I hear your name ain't really White Man.
I hear it's something
Marx wrote down
Fifty years ago—
That rich people don't like to read.
Is that true, White Man?
Is your name in a book
Called the *Communist Manifesto?*
Is your name spelled
C-A-P-I-T-A-L-I-S-T?
Are you always a White Man?
Huh?

LANGSTON HUGHES.



William Sanderson

Darkness

It takes your calm and pure simplicity,
Darkness! your unforced natural unity,
To free from time man's anxious eyes,
And free his heart from rivalries,
And sink them in the deep and starry skies.

Sweeter than light
The cooling wash of darkness feels to him,
Although the world he has known so long as bright
Recedes from sense and limb,
Falling away
In disembodied grey;
But when at length
From the shores of vanishing color it swims into black,
The full, fresh night, in its rich reviving strength
Brings more life back
Than even a midsummer day
Can sparkle away.

SARAH N. CLEGHORN.

Freedom

(Adapted from Heine)

Freedom, stumbling through the stews
Barefoot, spat upon, and shocking,
Cheer up! Some day you'll have shoes,
And perhaps (who knows) a stocking.

Freedom, some day you will wear
A warm cap with ear-laps showing;
Then you will not have to care
In the path of all winds blowing.

Men may talk to you, no less;
They may even house and feed you;
They may love you to excess—
But, of course, they will not heed you.

You, however, must, you see,
Listen to your lords *and* heed 'em.
Hold your tongue and bend your knee,
And you'll have a future, Freedom.

LOUIS UNTERMEYER.

Poem

(From a sequence to be entitled "Conversation at Midnight")

CARL (TO MERTON)

Old men, you are dying.
Winter will find you scattered like sparrows over the snow;
Neat little sparrows, folded and stiff on the snow.

We will sweep you up with tender brooms;
For your song, although monotonous, was sweet:
"Plenty to eat!" you sang; "Plenty to eat!"

Guard your health; preserve your powers;
Today is yours. But tomorrow is ours.

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY.

Are you always a White Man?
Huh?

LANGSTON HUGHES.

William Sanderson

The Crisis in the Theater

An outstanding playwright traces social stage history and outlines some future possibilities

By John Howard Lawson

THE greatest need of current literary and dramatic criticism is a comparative method of analysis, by which art can be judged in relation to cultural trends and social pressure. "Marxist" criticism has tended to very un-Marxist generalizations. This is especially important at the present time when the theater (in common with the other arts) faces a crisis in its development.

In order to understand this crisis, we must understand the events which preceded it. In the early nineteen-twenties the progressive movement in the drama (Provincetown and Washington Square Players) rose as an affirmation of individualism, a revolt against the ugliness and regimentation of the machine age. The first attempt to build a theater on a social foundation was made by the New Playwrights Theatre in the spring of 1927. Ben Blake, in *The Awakening of the American Theatre,* emphasizes the important pioneering work of the New Playwrights: "Their productions were landmarks in the social drama." But in general the significance of this attempt, especially in its influence on later dramatic trends, has been disregarded.

This pioneering group announced baldly: "The New Playwrights is a workers' theater": "As organs of mass propaganda," said a manifesto in the fall of 1927, "the theater and the movies are already as important as the newspaper. Within a few years they may be more important. The New Playwrights Theatre will always be a clearing house for ideas and a focus for social protest. . . . There must be one playhouse which maintains a contact with those social forces which are the driving power of our times."

Why did a group of writers make this announcement in the middle of the boom years? It is inadequate to say that they did it because they were far-sighted or clear-headed. They were certainly *not* the latter. The proper explanation is that economic pressure forced them to take this position: they had no other outlet for their material. The same economic pressure forced O'Neill (although he was sublimely unconscious of it) to discover what one may describe as a Theatre Guild formulation. The Provincetown Players could not accept the pattern of middle-class thought which the Theatre Guild embodied; they were equally unable to change their orientation toward a new audience—thus there was no further reason for their existence.

Brooks Atkinson discussed the New Playwrights in almost the same words that he uses in dealing with social plays today. In the *Times,* February 26, 1928, he wrote: "As the only radical dramatic organization in town, they have full access to immediate and sensational themes, raw humanity, mass emotions, social idealism"—but all of this leads only to "sophomoric writing, flatulent thinking, and noisy boredom." In the whole course of his critical work, Atkinson has never attempted to analyze this contradiction between the admitted possibilities of the drama and its actualities as he observes them. Thus his very genuine sympathy for the new movement becomes platonic and critically uncreative.

THERE are not more than a dozen plays which are indispensable for an understanding of the theater's growth in the past decade. Of these key plays, at least three were produced by the New Playwrights: *The Belt,* by Paul Sifton, the first realistic treatment of the labor struggle in this country;

UNNATURAL HISTORY—XI

"Many types of sharks are found in North American waters, but perhaps the best known variety are the famous man-eating Pilfers (*Monopolus parasiti*). This group includes the large Gripy Hammerhead (*Morganus rapacii*), the Steely Filcher (*Swipi schwabi*) and the elongated Detroit Extorter (*Fordum graspi*). Attached to the fat Gripy Hammerhead are thousands of little sucker-sharks which accompany it on trips across the Atlantic where at different times of the year it can be found in most of the principal European rivers fattening up for the return trip to America. The Steely Filcher is generally found around docks and ship-building yards and uses the same tactics as the Gripy for catching its prey. The Detroit Extorter is unique in that it generally swims and fights alone. In spite of its harmless look it is just as ferocious as other sharks. This group have large tails and small brains.—JOHN MACKEY.

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Em Jo Basshe's *The Centuries,* a mass play of the East Side, extraordinary in its scope, technical facility, and poetic force; and *Airways, Inc.,* in which John Dos Passos brought a new approach (psychologically and dramatically) to the treatment of middle-class life.

THESE plays were derived from such earlier works as O'Neill's *Hairy Ape,* Elmer Rice's *Adding Machine,* Susan Glaspell's *Inheritors,* my own early plays, and many others. A dramatic history tracing the interconnection between these plays and their place in the social thought of their time is yet to be written. Unaware of this pattern of development, many people regard the sudden appearance of working-class plays in the early nineteen-thirties as a *complete change,* a spontaneous answer to a demand, with no roots in the life of the theater, and therefore leading nowhere except to a multiplication of similar plays for wider and more enthusiastic audiences.

Each of these plays grew out of a specific change in social consciousness, a new balance of social forces. *1931—,* by the Siftons, grew out of the vast unemployed demonstrations of that period, and its journalistic episodic form reflected the temper of social thought at the time. *Stevedore* coincided with the remarkable awakening of the oppressed Negro and white people of the South. *Waiting for Lefty* was brought to us on a wave of spontaneous strikes and exposure of class-collaboration policies in the labor movement. Its romanticism, its acceptance of conversion as a final solution, its technique of direct audience participation, reflected a mood which was valid at the time. *Black Pit* represented a valid reaction against this mood, a recognition of the complexity of the forces which encircle the individual and make his choice difficult. *Bury the Dead* appeared when the destruction of Ethiopia and the war preparations of Germany and Japan had directed social thought to the indivisibility of world peace.

Today the people of the United States are awakening to new political needs and pressures which affect every phase of the country's life. The theater reflects this crisis. The progressive movement has reached a new stage; a richer and more complex dramatic culture is needed. The theater does not respond to this need in an *accidental* manner; it is not simply that some dramatist takes a notion that it would be pleasant or profitable to write a particular type of play. The dramatist responds to definite pressures which affect his professional activity and methods of work, and which are part of the general social trend.

War Widow Etching by George Picken

Today the decisive factor in theater economy is the growth of mechanized entertainment (motion picture, radio, television). Wall Street controls mechanized production; naturally Wall Street wants to use the entertainment machine for big profits and reactionary propaganda. But the theater craftsman does *not* want this, because it destroys his freedom of expression and threatens his economic status. Big business tries to extend its control to the whole entertainment field; in order to oppose this (and their very existence as professional workers depends on opposing it), writers and others are compelled to organize more strongly; this means a closer affiliation with the labor movement and a decisive social orientation.

UNFORTUNATELY the most creative elements in the theater, who might be expected to play a leading role in this process, seem as yet unaware of the nature of the process. Indeed there is a tendency to think that the *broadening* of the Left drama can best be accomplished by diluting or concealing the social content, and by an emphasis on craftsmanship as an end in itself. Those who assume that a middle-class audience can best be reached in this way are simply ignoring the present direction of middle-class thought and the forces which determine its direction.

Ten years ago the New Playwrights looked forward to a people's theater. As one of the framers of that mad prophecy, may I risk the further prediction?—that within another ten years the main body of the American theater will be so thoroughly committed to a program of social action that plays *without* social content will be regarded as curious remnants of a dead past.

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The Tide

There is a tide moving. . . .
And who shall stay that tide?
Sick at heart we wandered ingenious cities,
In our mouths the lasting taste of iron,
In our ears the clamor of many merchants
And footsteps of the homeless, the disinherited,
In our minds stale hopes like old contagion,
Our tread slow, our thought shamed.

What herb for the sick heart? Only blood of the heart
Purging itself as the sea purges
Itself in war on the cliff, in heavy thunder,
In the long roll, the far spread up the sand.

Over the meaningless words, the broken honors
Like driftwood in the way;

Under the flotsam that floats it, the frail coracles
Of shibboleth, that regular pulse, the mighty
Constant throb, the heart of Mankind beating
Profound and strong.

Scourge, Xerxes—flay the sea with withes!
Carry the throne of Canute down to the marge
That he bid ocean stand—the moon—drawn foam
Flinch and recoil! Hurl mandates, forge strong chains
To grapple brine—brine of our blood, our tears—
Shackle the Sea!

Gathering into itself all waves that war,
Groping deep, and moving without sound
Under the weight of ages, as it has always moved,
Inevitably, far from the shouting breakers,
Forms the tide. . . .

Leave anointed prophets to prophesy
How it will come to the coast, how that lustration
Move inland like the mystery of moving water
To towers of sand. . . .

We only know the tide rising, the wind freshening,
An enormous pulse like a mighty drumbeat beating
Deep and slow.

A tide is moving
In the hearts of men . . .
And who shall stay that tide?

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

War Widow Etching by George Picken

War Widow

Etching by George Picken

Good-by

The falling of a steel beam made all the difference to Olga, who up to then had not felt that she must escape

By Albert Maltz

OLGA BAKOVCHEN sat in the crowded room and stared at her father. She wanted to cry. It was important to cry. Her mother was watching, and her brother, Charlie. All the neighbors, the church people, the priest, Marty Kristoff, Uncle Raditch, everybody crying, everybody with one eye on her father and one eye on her.

If only he looked different . . .

Over her father the tall candles burned. The room was hot and stuffed to the corners—everybody praying and blowing their noses. Behind the coffin the priest was swaying, pouring out the words like a stream.

Olga looked at him. His dark eyes were fixed on her and his thick beard was wriggling with the words pouring out. She squirmed in her seat. What was the sense of all the praying? It didn't make any difference. It didn't really make any difference.

The priest kept looking at her and she turned away. Goddam him, she thought to herself; what's he keep lookin' at me for? Maybe if I got out in front of him an' did a wiggle of my own or tore off my dress or something—he'd have somethin' real t'look at.

"Poppa," her brother Charlie cried out suddenly in a wail of grief, "Poppa."

Olga felt angry. A big feller like that calling out "Poppa"!

If only he looked different . . .

The candles burned and the room was hot with people. "Why don't you cry?"

"I wanna cry," she tried to say. "Poppa's dead, I wanna cry."

An' the priest was talkin' Polish so fast, but poppa couldn't hear it. Poppa liked to talk Polish. Poppa talked—songs sometimes down by the river. He was a big man but he had a soft voice for a big man.

Olga raised her face. Everybody was looking. "Why don't you cry?"

"I can't," she said, "I can't. If only he looked different."

And a knot twisted in her chest and nobody heard her.

How would it be if she got up all of a sudden and played the phonograph? Everybody would jump. They couldn't play it any longer anyway. Uncle Raditch was gonna give them six dollars for it. Uncle Raditch was making money now. He opened a saloon right after prohibition stopped. He wanted to give Charlie a job, but what good was it when Charlie was going deaf? Anybody who wanted a beer would hafta yell. That would be swell for the customers. So he was buying a phonograph and the six dollars would come in handy. "Why don't you cry?"

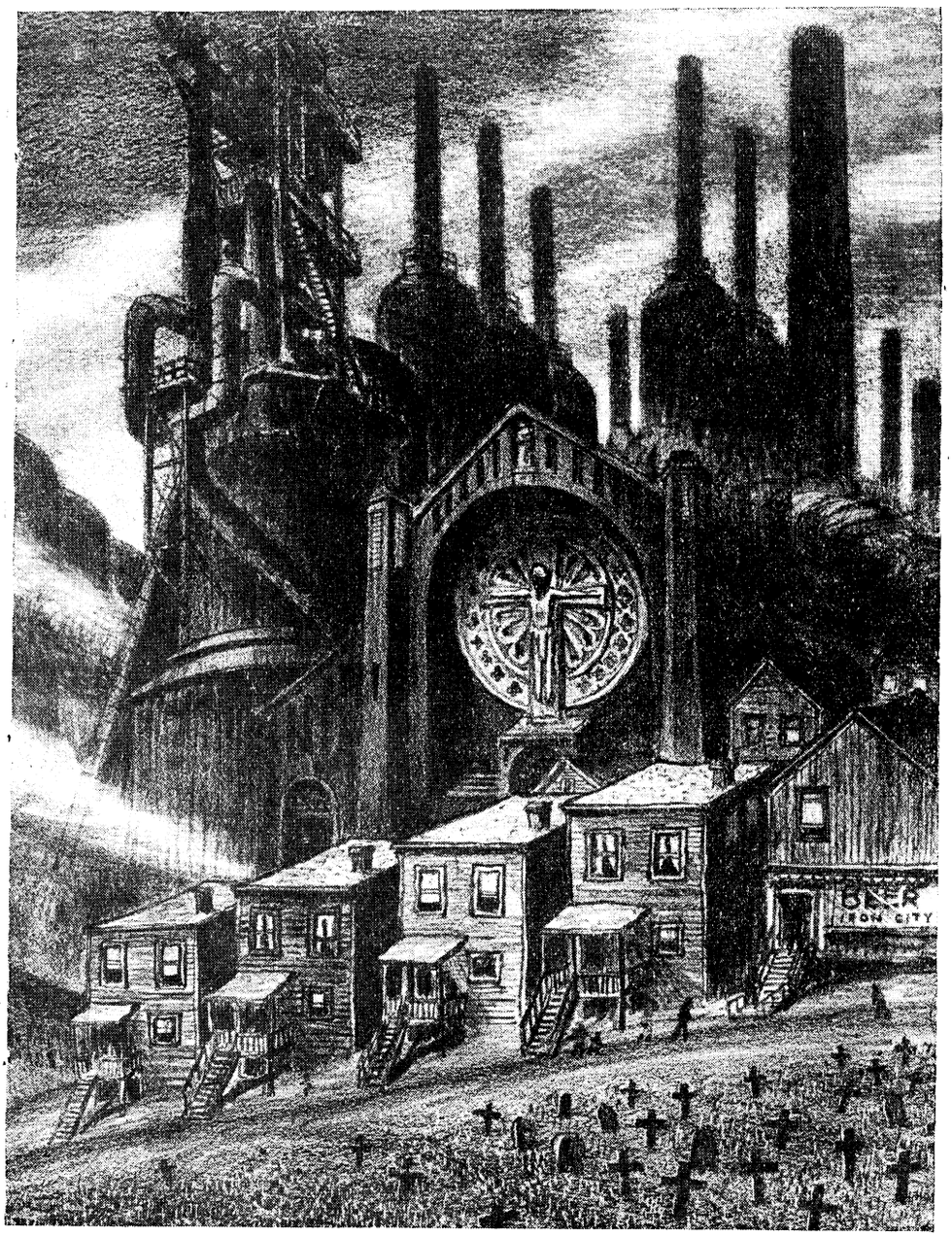
The wail rose in the hot room and Olga turned her face, mute and twisted. "I wanna cry, Momma." She pressed her hand to the tight knot in her chest. "I wanna cry, Momma . . . Momma, you look terrible."

Her mother's face was all screwed up. It was a million wrinkles, with the tears in a steady flow. She looked at Olga and shook her head. All eyes on Olga and the prayers for the dead pouring out like a stream!

"If only he really looked like Poppa. But it's a different face."

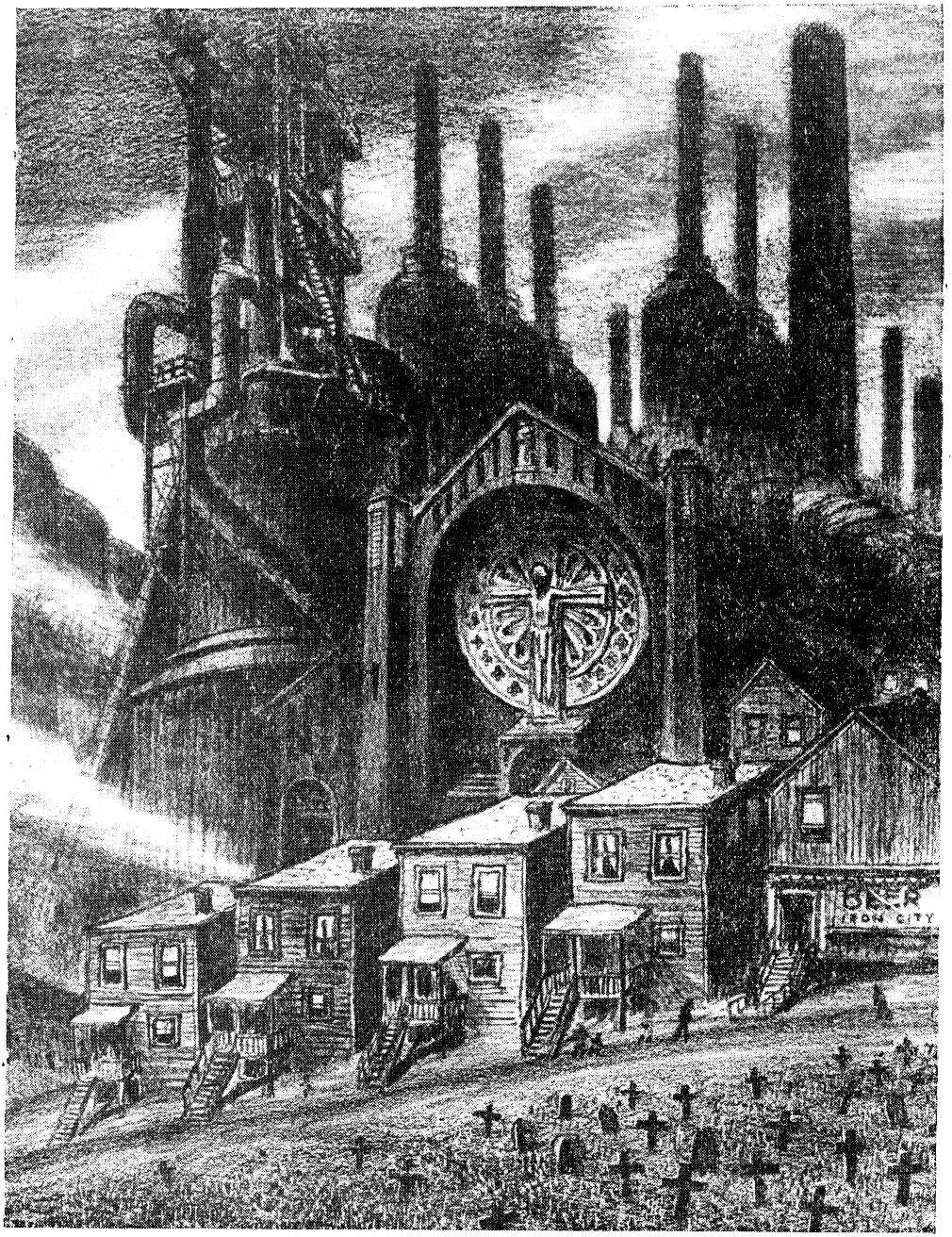
Her father's face had been broad and thick, with a copper-red skin, as far back as she could remember—fiery red, sometimes, when he came back from work. Twenty-eight years of looking into a blast furnace in a steel mill, but now his face was white like a sick baby's, and the skin was all shrunk down over the bone. That damn embalmer should have done something, Olga thought. That damn embalmer.

The priest was silent. His lips moved



Steel Town

Lithograph by Harry Sternberg



Steel Town Lithograph by Harry Sternberg

rapidly. The thick beard wriggled and the service was almost over. They would tell everybody what a bad girl she was. First she wouldn't cry . . .

Over the priest's head hung the old marriage picture of her father and mother. A million times she had looked at it. Taken in the old country with the oval frame and both of them standing so stiff. Her father was in dress clothes; her mother had on white—silk, maybe. Her father was straight with . . . and so tall . . . and . . . her father . . . her poppa, so tall . . . in an old box . . . in an old box . . . in an old box and they couldn't even show him below the chest because when the steel beam fell it cut him in two and all the blood ran out of him . . . her father . . .

Olga's breast heaved and the blood coursed up like hot fire into her face and a great, cutting sob tore up from her chest and then she was crying with hot, bitter tears pouring down over her hands and dropping hot and fast into her lap.

And the wax dropped from the candles and the priest swayed and everyone looked at old man Bakovchen with the white skin drawn down over the bone and the face like a sick baby's and the big body cut straight in half by a steel girder. And Olga was on her knees crawling to the coffin crying out "Poppa, Poppa, come back, Poppa," and then the service was over.

THEY came back from the cemetery late in the afternoon. The crying was over now and the mourners would be crowding into the house to eat.

Olga walked alone. It was cold and the streets were deserted. She walked slowly, her shoes scraping soft on the bare ground.

Down in the mill yard a Bessemer furnace was blowing flame into the sky, painting the dark clouds. Olga stopped to look at it. After a moment her lips twitched and she turned away.

She started up the hill. A sharp wind whistled and flapped her coat. She shivered and bent her head. Inside her there was a cold, dull lump heavy with the pain of the long, unending day, heavy with the service and the fevered cries, heavy with the dull clump of earth when the shovels swung and the grave closed and her father remained behind. I feel dead all over, she thought; inside of me.

She bent her head and climbed the hill. Inside the house they would all be standing around her mother, crying and waiting to eat. They would eat up the six dollars for the phonograph and more besides. And the next day and the next—for weeks they would cry, until they forgot about it or until Charlie slipped and left his hand in a roller and they brought him home too. She quivered a little. The hell with it! The hell with it.

A stone caught her heel and she cursed. Ontario Street! Her Ontario Street! Born there, went to school there, worked there, but she'd be goddamned if she'd die there. Not on a street that wasn't even paved! Not in a steel town! Not married to a dumbhead like her brother Charlie, twenty-three years old and going deaf in a nail mill for three days' work a week! Not walking the rest of her life from an unpaved street up forty-eight steps to a three-room wooden shack the company built and forgot about! And her man to get hit by a crane or laid off one week and kicked around the next. Not on your life!

She started up the steps to her house holding onto the rickety handrail. Six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven—not on your life! There was a twelve o'clock bus and she was gonna take it. Why not? Why the hell not? Twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four—why the hell not?

AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK Charlie came into Olga's room. He was a big boy and he filled the narrow doorway. He stood silent, watching her, his big, bony face creased and angry.

Then he jerked his head. "C'mon out. Everybody's goin' home."

Olga turned around sharply with her back to the bed.

"Whatsamatter with you anyway?" he asked. "Gettin' snooty, maybe? What'd you stay in here all the time for?"

Lydia Gibson

Olga looked away from him. "They don't need no help," she said. "They can go home without me."

"What?" He bent his head, his hand cupping his ear. "What did you say?"

Olga flamed with sudden rage. Inside her there was a blind rush of hatred that always came when Charlie couldn't hear. "What?" she said. She bent her head in savage mimicry. "What did you say?"

Charlie waited a moment, uncertain. "Whatsamatter with you?" he asked. "Aintcha got no respect for Poppa?"

Olga stood silent, her lips pressed together.

"C'mon out. Momma's goin' away too. She's gonna stay tonight with Uncle Raditch."

Olga didn't move. Her face was hot. If he kept standing there she'd tell him. The dumb fool. You damn, dumb, deaf fool. You dumb bastard, do you hafta work in a nail mill?

Charlie started to speak again.

"All right," she burst out. "I'm comin'. Can you hear that? I'm comin'!"

She went to the door.

Charlie looked at the bed. "What're you doin'?" he said. "What're you packin' that suitcase for?"

"Mind your own business."

She went out.

Charlie looked at the suitcase again and followed her.

The priest was the last to go. Mrs. Bakovchen offered him a final glass of wine. He drank it and blessed her, murmuring a word of comfort. She burst into tears. In these last days she had got to look much older. Now with her face all wrinkled with crying and her thin back bent she looked like an old woman.

Uncle Raditch helped her into her clothes. The priest looked at his watch, sighed a little, and went out.

Charlie hovered over his mother, trying to comfort her, straightening the thick shawl on her head. She leaned against him and wept. He caressed her clumsily, his big hand

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Death Be Not Proud

My aunt was old, enormous with disease,
Body long stilled, and finally the mind
Alternate in its fire and sleeping came to freeze
And all her weight to dying was resigned.

There was another dear to me who went
As a tall candle, inch, by inch, by inch,
Flame burning clearer as the wax was spent
Down to the socket, nor would any pinch

The fluttering mothlike flame, although the pain
Was more than crucifixion. Yet, O Death,
"After so long a drought, there will be rain"
He said, and held his breath.

I saw another dead, a working man
In unaccustomed black, his best. His face
Ironically rested, and a pan
For penny burial chaired beside the place.

Coin dropped, I stared upon the body there,
Then closed my eyes and saw the dead all white
An after-image on the eyelids clear,
A worker risen violent into light!

EDA LOU WALTON.

Lydia Gibson

fumbling over her body. Then she kissed Olga. Olga stood stiff, her eyes dry, her lips tight.

They went out.

There was quiet in the room. After a moment the auto sputtered below and Olga turned and went into her room. Charlie looked stupidly after her—then suddenly his hand jerked up and he ran to follow her.

She was at the bed packing her suitcase. He filled the doorway. She saw him there but didn't stop. He watched her, biting his lips, his brow creased, the fingers of one hand rubbing his thigh. Then he took a quick step forward. "What're you doin'?" he demanded.

Olga didn't answer.

"What're you doin'?"

She turned around. "I'm goin' away."

"What?"

She flared up. "I'm goin' away!"

"Where you goin'?"

"I dunno."

"When you comin' back?"

"I ain't comin' back!"

He stood for a moment, breathing hard. Then he burst out at her frantically. "You're crazy! What're you talkin' about? Where you goin'? What the hell's the matter with you?"

Olga faced him bitterly. "I'm going to New York! I ain't comin' back! I'm goin' right now! Tonight!"

He was silent, furious, holding his breath in the intensity of his anger. Then he grabbed her arms. "What's the matter with you?"

She swung her body and broke free.

They were silent, glaring at each other. Then his face twisted and he stepped back. "Olga!" His hand gave a little jerk and his voice was low and full of pain. "What's the matter?"

She didn't answer.

"What's the matter with you? What about Mamma?" There was a pause. "What about Mamma?"

"I'm goin' away." Her voice rose in a sudden scream. "I'm goin' away! I'm goin' away! *I'm goin' away!*"

She stood face to face with him, sucking in her breath in deep sobs.

Charlie stared at her. He was frightened now.

His hand jerked again. "Olga, you can't do it."

"You dope!" Her voice rose hysterically. "You dumb dope. You deaf bastard. Go to hell, you deaf bastard."

Charlie's face flushed with shame and his hand swung up hard as though to hit her. She jumped back. He looked at her bitterly. "You don't hafta talk. You don't hafta say it to me."

She was silent, panting.

"Is that somethin' t'say? You think I like goin' deaf like a dummy? You think I wouldn't work somewhere else if I could get a job?"

Olga put her hand to her breast. She felt sick now. The weight of what she had said had come down on her and she felt sick at the shame in his face.

His voice rose. "You think I like t' work in a nail mill? You think anybody likes t' work in a nail mill? You little bastard, I'll crack you in the face." He took a step forward. "I'll crack you in the face."

Olga's chest caved in and she burst into tears. Charlie watched her, his face dark with hatred.

Suddenly she cried out violently and flung herself blindly against the bed. Her head hit the iron bed post and she screamed with pain. She slid to the floor and lay there weeping and beating her heels up and down.

Charlie watched her, his face twisted with bitterness. Then he turned to leave the room. But at the door he hesitated. It took him a long time to speak. "You gotta stay here," he said. "You can't talk about goin' away."

In silence Olga raised herself up and leaned her head back against the bed. She was exhausted, but she still wept. "I can't stay here any more," she said. "I can't work here."

"What?"

She strained herself painfully to talk so he could hear. "I can't stay here any more. I can't work for the steel mill any more."

"Why not?"

"I can't!"

"What're you gonna do?"

She flung her head back with a sob. "I don't know. I don't care."

"You're crazy." His face was distorted with pain. "Where you gonna get a job? What you gonna do? You wanna starve?"

"I don't care." She cried out in a wail of passion and grief. "I don't care."

"You don't care?" he cried. "You don't care? You'll end up as a two-bit whore somewhere! You don't care!"

She shook her head and wept. "I can't work here any more, Charlie."

"Why not?" Then suddenly he looked at her with quiet, deadly concentration. "Why not—because of Poppa?"

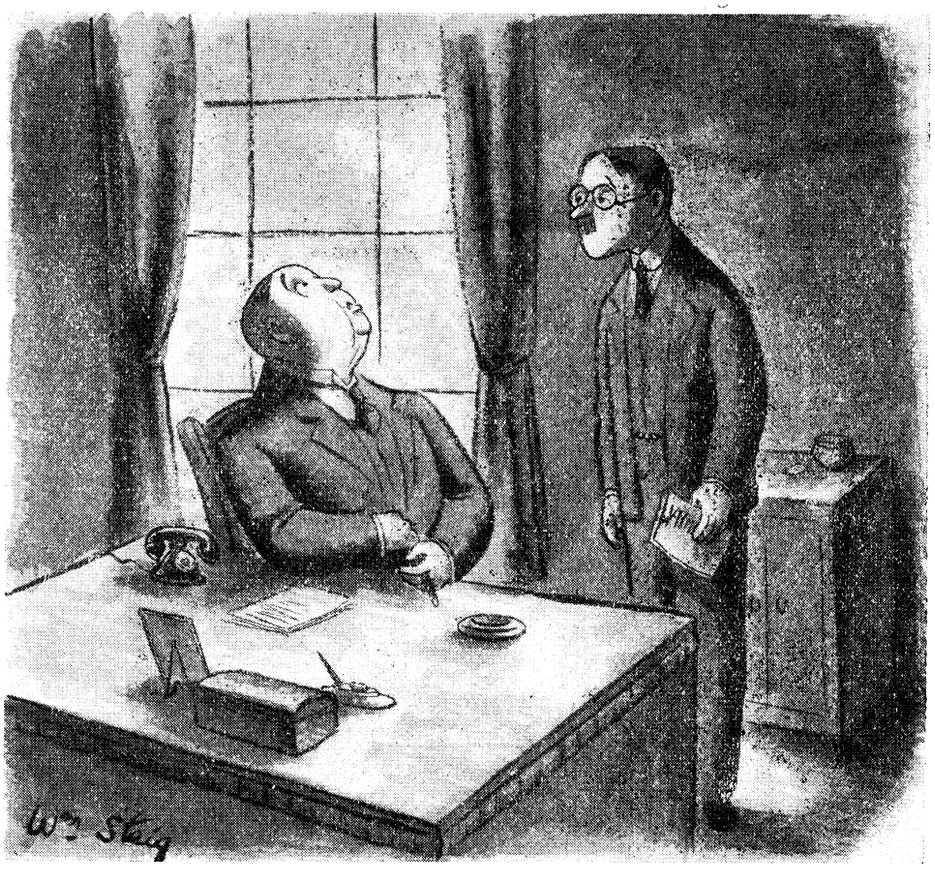
She nodded her head, gulping. "I can't."

He was silent. His face creased with pain. Then his head weaved a little as though he was trying to shake off what was troubling him. His mouth fell open and his breath came in long, deep breaths of anguish and pity for her.

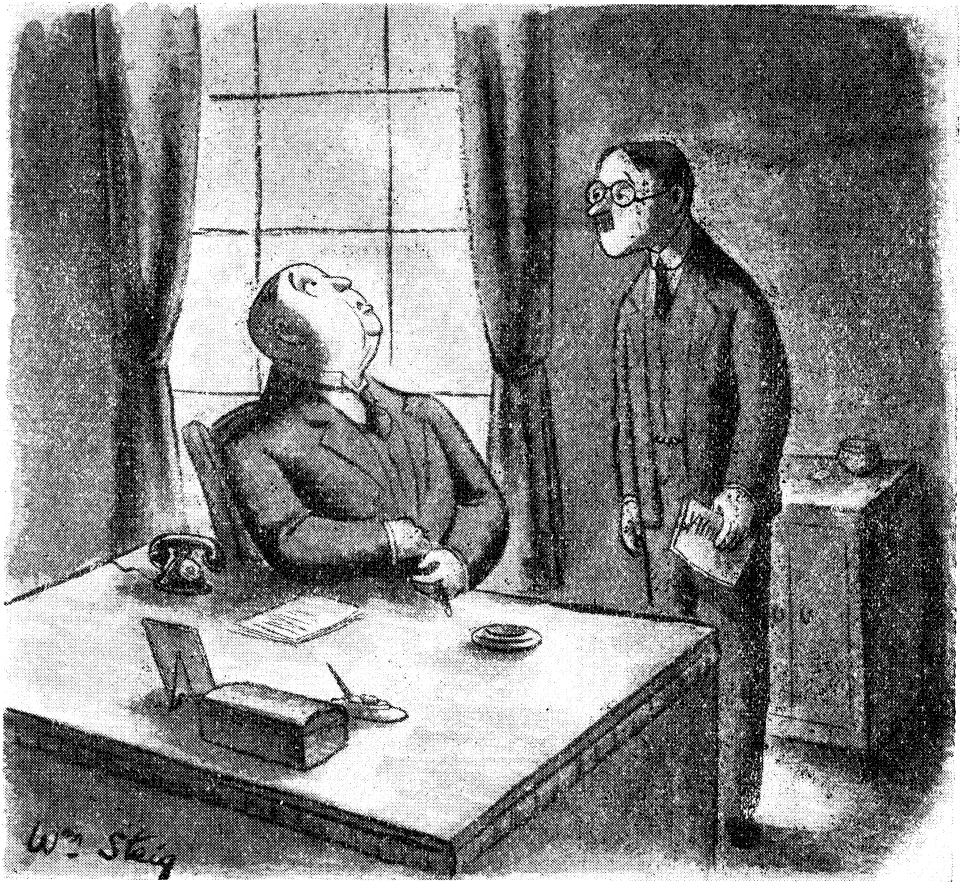
He went to the bed and picked her up. They sat down and he cradled her. She leaned close against him, folded in his arms. He was a big man and she was small against him. "I can't," she said again.

He put his head down against hers. "Sissie," he said, "Sissie." He stroked her arm. She quivered and wept, her face pressed to his chest.

And inside her there rose up the image of a time when he had called her "Sissie." He was a young boy running in a back lot. She saw him so quick and alert, waving his hand and hooting at her, calling her "Sissie" in derision, calling out the clumsy affection of a young boy to his sister—and she pressed her head against him knowing that the quickness was gone and her brother was twenty-



"Sincerely, Jones—is it true my employees hate me?" William Steig



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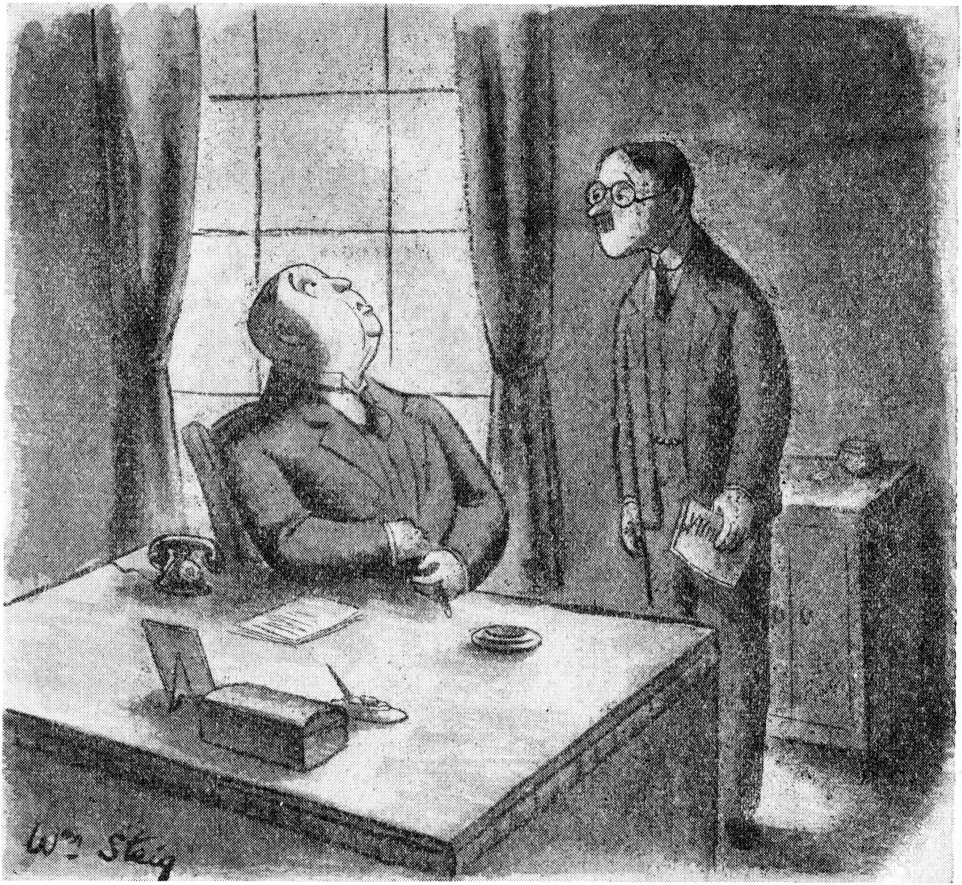


"Sincerely, Jones—is it true my employees hate me?" William Steig

three, heavy and awkward, bending over to hear, with his hand cupped to his ear like an old man because the noise in the nail mill had made him deaf—and her father was dead and this was their life. "Oh Charlie," she said, "Charlie, Charlie, Charlie!"

He stroked her and she leaned against him and wept. And finally she became quiet.

Wearily Charlie raised his head. "You wanna go away for good?" he asked.

"Yes."

"You can't do that," he said, without belief.

Olga didn't answer.

"You'll come back maybe?"

"Maybe . . ."

Silence!

He looked at her dumbly, pleadingly. "You've got a good job, Olga. You're makin' sixteen a week. You stay there maybe you'll be a private secretary. You'll get more."

Olga shook her head.

"We gotta take care of Momma."

She didn't answer.

There was a long pause. Then: "When you goin'?"

"Now," Olga said.

"Stay till tomorrow."

She shook her head.

"You can get some other job here."

She shook her head.

Charlie took his arms away from her. "You're crazy," he said sullenly. "You're crazy. You won't get along there. You won't even get a job."

She didn't answer. After a moment she shrugged a little.

Silently he got up, looking at her. . . . He went into the next room.

Olga sat for a while, dully, and then lifted herself up. She started packing again. Her face was blotched and puffed from weeping, but her mouth was fixed in a tight line. Once during the packing she went to the door to look at Charlie. He was sitting in a chair biting his nails. She went back again.

When she had closed the suitcase, she made up her face and put on her coat. Then she went into the other room.

They looked at each other, hesitatingly, averting their eyes.

"You're crazy," he said.

She stood dumbly.

"Do you need any money?"

She shook her head.

"You can't go without money."

"I got last week's salary." She raised her voice so he could hear. "I got my salary."

"You goin' t' see Mamma?"

Her lips twitched and she blinked her eyes as the tears suddenly welled into them —but she shook her head.

She walked to the door.

Charlie jumped up. "I'll carry your bag to the station."

Olga shook her head.

He took the bag from her.

"Put on a coat," she said. "It's cold outside."

He got his coat and cap. They went out.

DOWN the long stairway! Olga counted each step, checking each one off, one to forty-eight—the broken ones, the creaking ones, the loose ones. Forty-eight steps.

It was late and the way was deserted. They walked quickly, silently, with tight lips, not speaking one to the other. The night was cold and heavy with darkness.

Near the station Charlie stopped. He stood biting his lips. Then he took her arm. "You're a young girl . . . you gotta be careful." He hesitated. Olga kept her eyes on the ground. "You gotta be careful . . . you gotta watch out for men."

With a sudden, swift movement Olga lifted her lips to his ear. "I'll be careful."

Charlie looked at her. His bony face was twisted. "You're a pretty girl."

They stood like that, Charlie with his big body bending down to tell her something. They stood close, Olga looking at her deaf brother with her lips tight and no word to speak. And behind her, behind the hill, behind the covers of an old box, her father lay dead, his big body cut in two. And she wanted to tell him, but she found no word to speak.

Suddenly, quickly, she flung her arms around him. She raised her face and rubbed it against his. They stood close together in the open street and she kissed his face with little, swift kisses. "Poor Charlie," she whispered, "poor Charlie," but he didn't hear.

Then they parted. They walked again.

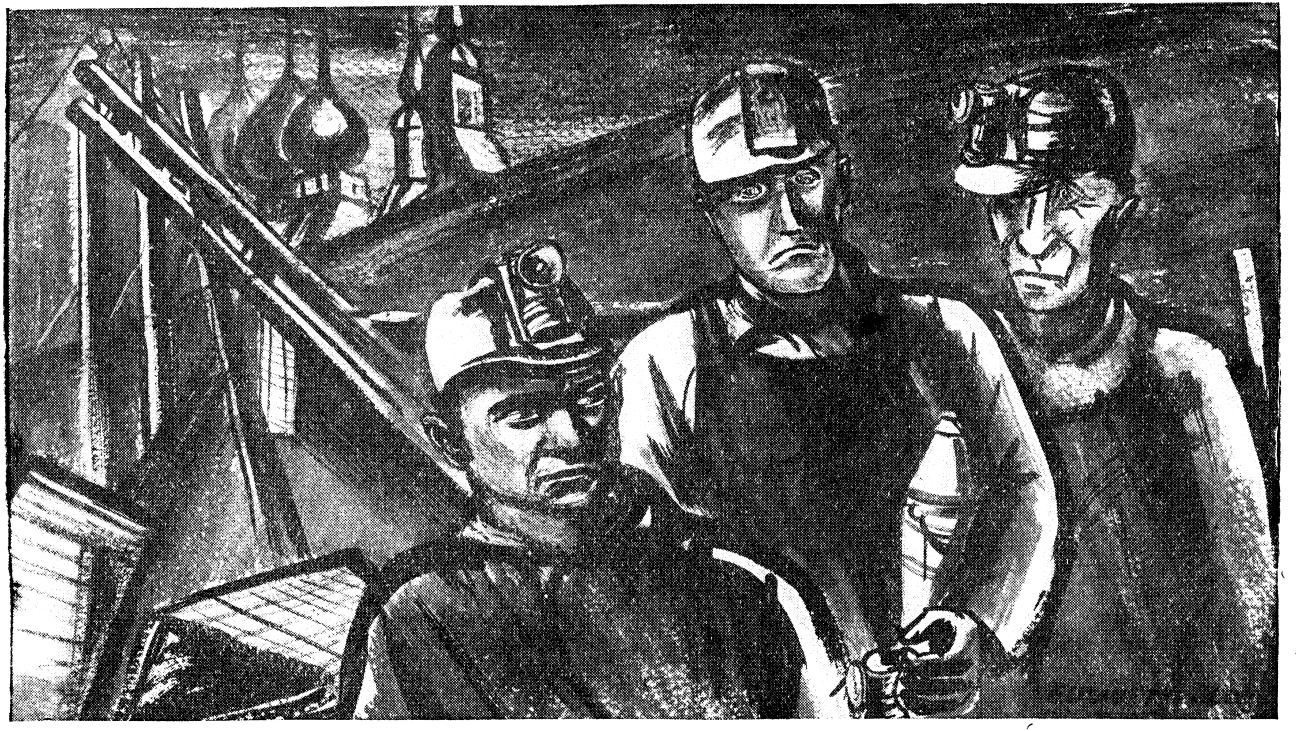
When they came to the station, the bus was ready to leave. They stood stiffly, awkwardly, not speaking.

Finally with stiff formality Charlie held out his hand. They shook hands.

Olga got in and sat down. She turned around to look for Charlie, but he was already gone with the darkness all around.

The bus started. It left the station and went down the main street to the highway. And as they passed the open yards of the mill, Olga could see the great Bessemer furnace blowing the whole sky red, lighting up the yards and the mill and the houses around. She stared at it as they came up to it—and then they were even with it—and then they were passing beyond—and a great, hot bitter wave surged up through her body and a choking sob convulsed her. "Good by, you bastard," she said, "good by, you bastard."

Unemployed Miners — Elizabeth Olds



Unemployed Miners

Elizabeth Olds

Maturing Civil War in Europe

The attack on Spanish democracy is viewed as the first step in a well-considered fascist campaign

By Scott Nearing

VISITORS to the Europe of 1936 find a tension and a sense of impending catastrophe. Such crisis-psychology is undoubtedly more prevalent in the European atmosphere of today than it was in 1913. The reason is evident. Then the setting was a war primarily between nations, and only incidentally between classes. Today the setting is a war primarily between classes, and only incidentally between nations. The Europe of 1913 was busy with preparations for international war. Today she is engaged in civil war.

Civil wars are more searching and searing than international wars. They strike harder and cut deeper. International wars are usually long-distance affairs. Civil wars stalk village streets and sit beside the kitchen fire.

The civil war that is now sweeping Europe may be divided into two chief periods. The first, from 1917 to 1920, was the period of the Marxist initiative. During those years the forces of the proletarian revolution were quite evidently in the saddle, and in central and eastern Europe at least they were the determining factor in shaping public policy.

The second period of the European civil war, from 1921 down to the present, may be described as the era of the fascist initiative. It might be more accurate historically to say that between 1920 and 1923 something like an equilibrium was reached in which neither Marxists nor fascists were able to register decisive achievements. But for present purposes, the fifteen years between 1921 and 1936 may be described as fascist-dominated.

The declared objectives of the contending parties in Europe's civil war contrast sharply. The Marxists aim to establish a coöperative commonwealth of European workers. The fascists aim to protect private property and to perpetuate the privileges of property ownership.

The Marxists during the early days of the struggle won power in Russia. They have held it there ever since. Basing their socialist construction on a socialized, planned economy, they have speeded up industrialization, broadened education, advanced the material well-being of the masses, and pushed forward rapidly, and on the whole very successfully, toward a new culture level based upon science and upon the full utilization of automatic machinery and mass-production technique.

The fascists have followed an essentially different line. In Italy, the only fascist country with a sufficiently long period of experience to justify generalization, the forms of property and the general character of economy have remained essentially what they were in pre-fascist days. Mass standards of living have been lowered; the same ruling class skims the cream from life; the ruling-class authority has been greatly strengthened, and the organizations of the workers have been destroyed.

John Groth

Marxism and fascism are both products of European capitalism. But Marxism proposes to replace capitalism by a coöperative world society, while fascism is founded on the principle of national and racial isolation and a struggle for supremacy between competing nations and races.

The European civil war is part of a survival struggle between these two social systems. The old is striving to perpetuate itself. The new is striving to replace the old.

Advocates of the status quo always enjoy an advantage in general position over those who would change an existing social setup. This has proved to be the case during the first twenty years of Europe's present civil war. The Marxists were able to hold the initiative for only about four years. Then despite their numbers and their enthusiasm, they lost it to the better-trained, more experienced fascists. During the last fifteen years the initiative has remained with the fascists, who have to their credit an unbroken line of victories from the "march" on Rome in 1922, through the British general strike of 1926, the Hitler seizure of power in 1933, and the suppression of working-class activities in Austria and Spain during 1934 and 1935. In the course of these victories the fascists have secured practically undisputed control over the whole of central Europe.

Dividing Europe, for purposes of analysis, into the Soviet East, the fascist Center, and the democratic West, one may say that the first decade of fascist initiative, to 1932, gave middle Europe to the fascists. Since that time the fascists have centered their energies on a campaign to control western Europe.

The point of greatest strategic importance in western Europe is France. If France once goes fascist, the minor western European countries, from Scandinavia to Spain, can be brought into line or safely ignored.

The victory of the Spanish People's Front in the February 1936 elections offered the fascists an obvious answer to the problem of fascizing France. If Spain as well as Portugal could be pushed into the fascist camp, France would be encircled, and a military revolt there against the Front Populaire could be readily and effectively assisted from across all of the important French frontiers. The Spanish civil war, approached from this point of view, becomes one of a series of engagements in a general fascist campaign to encircle France and thus to line up under the fascist emblem the strategic centers of middle and of western Europe.

Should the fascists succeed in this phase of their campaign, the forces of property and privilege in Europe could call to their support the resources and energies of Germany and her central European satellites, of Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal. Then, backed by British finance, "the Urals, the Ukraine, and Siberia," of which Hitler spoke so wistfully at the recent Nazi meeting in Nuremburg, would become the next general objective. Then would begin the long-awaited offensive organized in Berlin, financed in London, led by big business, and blessed by the Pope, against the specter of bolshevism that has haunted the capitalist world since 1917. Then would come the climax of the maturing European civil war, with the forces of privilege and the Red army in a death grapple, while social revolution stalked every fascist capital.

It is the tension of this maturing war situation that visitors feel in the Europe of 1936. The bitter conflict in Spain appears as merely one engagement in a well-outlined campaign. The five hundred million human beings who live in Europe draw a deep breath and turn to the prodigious task in hand: the epoch-making struggle for power between the forces of privilege, whose faces are set toward the dark ages, and the masses of European workers, who are determined to master their own economic and political destiny.

NEW MASSES

ESTABLISHED 1911

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People's Front

OF THE MANY HEROES defending Spain against the barbarous assault of the fascists, five have sent the NEW MASSES greetings on the occasion of our twenty-fifth anniversary.

General Galán, now commanding government forces in Madrid, writes: "From Somosierra, greetings to the readers of the NEW MASSES, hoping they will participate in the solidarity which is necessary to liberate Spain and the world from fascism, the enemy of everything progressive."

Jose Diaz, secretary of the Communist Party of Spain, writes us: "This fight is a question not only for the anti-fascists of Spain, but of the entire world. Every worker, every anti-fascist now fighting in Spain knows that our victory will have immediate repercussions among all the peoples beneficial to the mass of workers. That is why we shall keep on fighting without let-up, to the last drop of blood; we shall fight to conquer and we *will* conquer the enemies of culture and progress."

To the voices of the popular military commander and the leader of the Spanish proletariat are added the voices of three famous European writers, all now active in Spain.

From Madrid, Louis Aragon writes us in English: "Many greetings from Madrid to the comrades of the NEW MASSES. I feel sure they will do every possible and impossible thing for the help and defense of the heroic fighters of republican Spain. I want to tell them that the writers, scientists, artists of France — I mean the best of them— those standing with our Popular Front, are all against the politics of so-called 'neutrality,' and will fight with every force, every power of enthusiasm, for a real help to the only legal government of Spain, the democratic government of the working people."

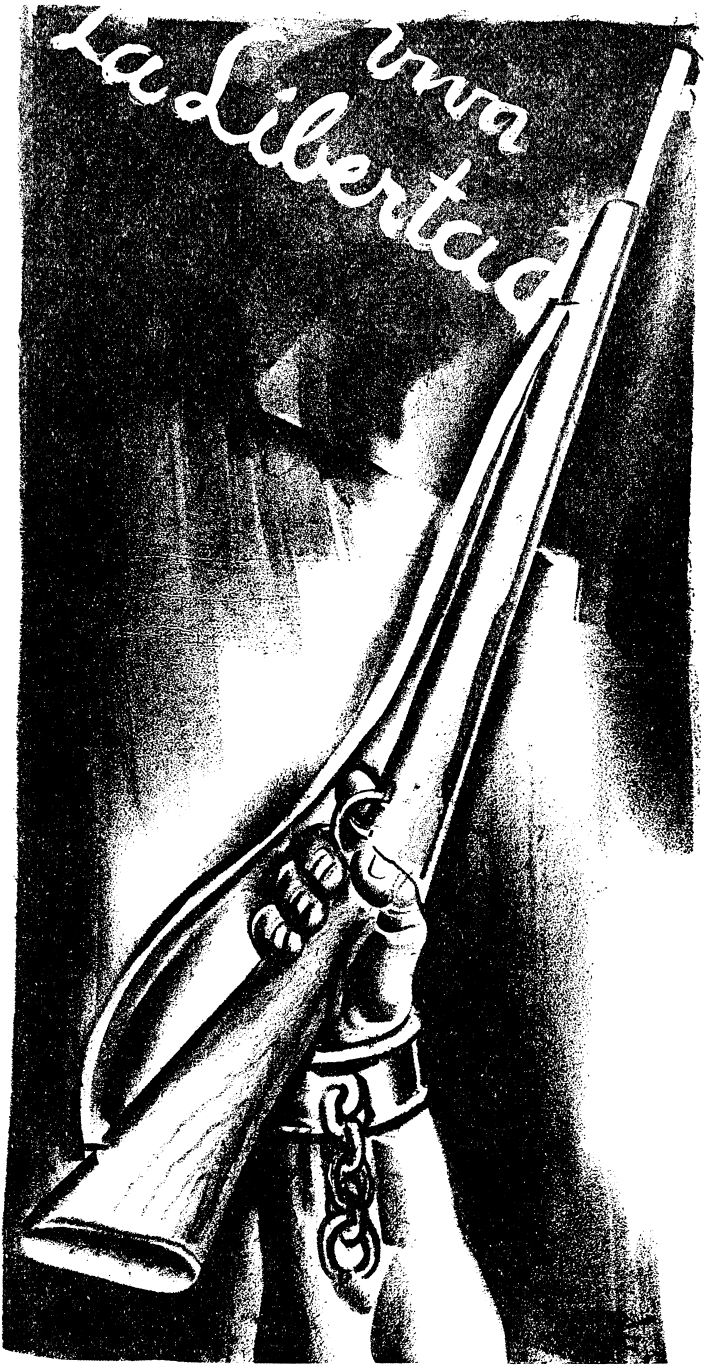
Ludwig Renn, one of the most brilliant of the German writers, was recently released from a Nazi concentration camp. From this hell-hole he went to Spain, where he is commanding a battalion of government militia. To the NEW MASSES he writes from Madrid in German: "Never has a country, its people, and its government been so slandered as Spain in this hour of her need, when sanguinary

Hugo Gellert

fascist criminals threaten her freedom. Let us all help the people of Spain!"

And finally, André Malraux, the brilliant author of *Man's Fate* and *Days of Wrath*, writes modestly: "I found your letter in Paris where I spent three days. At the moment I am commander of an aviation squadron in Spain, which precludes any possibility of literary work."

We are happy and proud to receive these greetings on our twenty-fifth birthday. Nothing illustrates more vividly the people's front idea for which the NEW MASSES stands than the heroic conduct of the men we have quoted. Eighteen years ago, NEW MASSES writers and artists—Robert Minor, John Reed, Albert Rhys Williams—were active in Europe's post-war revolutionary upsurge. 'Today Aragon, Malraux, Renn, and their like join hands with Diaz and Galán, in the defense of democratic Spain. Greetings, comrades, and through you to the Spanish people. May you soon wipe out the fascist scourge!



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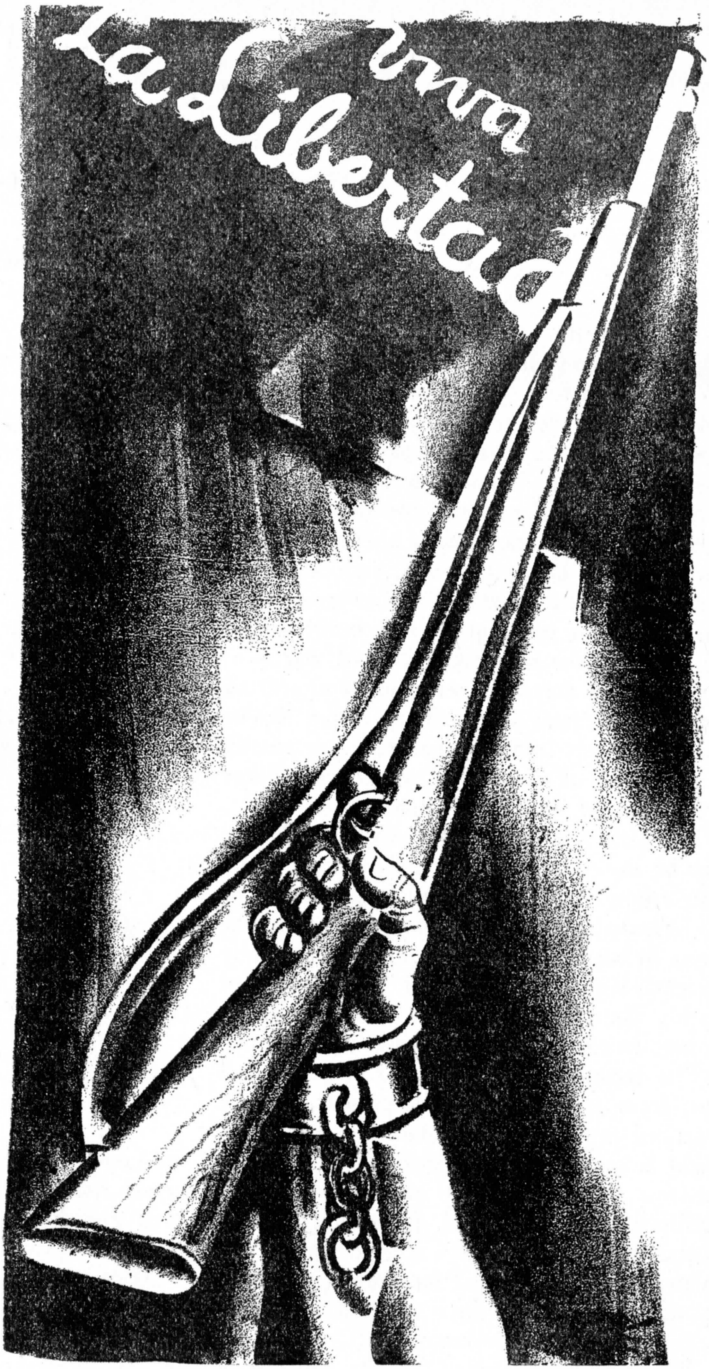


Hugo Gellert

REVIEW AND COMMENT

The Nature of Liberty

GEORGE SOULE'S expanding comprehension of the dynamics of American society has brought him, in the past eight years, closer and closer to a Marxist position. In 1928 he edited *Wage Arbitration: Selected Cases, 1920-1924,* in the introduction to which he implied that he believed that the arbitration table, coupled with union strength (preferably industrial), would resolve class conflicts. On January 13, 1933, he debated with Earl Browder the possibility of social planning under capitalism, which Soule had just advocated in his *Planned Society;* and at that time Browder said: "when Mr. Soule looks toward the further development of the processes started by Taylor and the Taylor Society as a way towards solving the fundamental problems of the present economic system, he is in a blind alley; that same blind alley which the whole capitalist system is in." At present, Soule implicitly recognizes the validity of Browder's judgment, for he concludes that the future of liberty rests in socialism. (*The Future of Liberty,* The Macmillan Company. $2.)

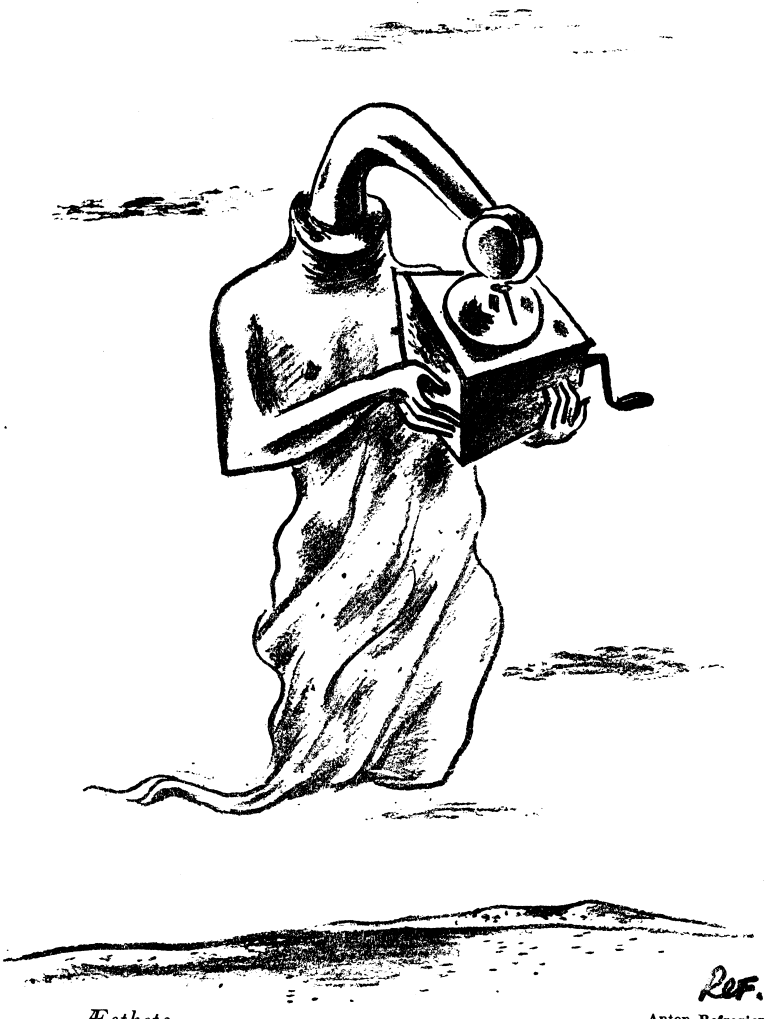
Furthermore, Soule gives a very persuasive rational form to the description of American social forces on which he bases his conclusion. With an even greater avoidance of "sectarian" terminology than is found in John Strachey, he defines and traces the dialectics of liberty in terms of the current *conflicts* of liberties. "On the one hand is liberty to amass wealth and power through private ownership or management of industry, trade and finance. On the other is liberty of the wage-earners and recipients of small salaries, the farmers, the professional classes, to have jobs and security, to express themselves through organization and political control of government, to seek a higher standard of material well-being and culture. We have concluded that the two sorts of liberty are incompatible" (p. 165). In contrast to "Liberty League liberty," with its use of the industrial spy and provocateur, and cunning lawyers who study how to make hostile laws contrivances in their interest, Soule offers us the unemployed man who "does not have the right to earn his living; he is deprived of a functional place in society. What he needs most intensely is not absence of restraint, but a social body into which he can fit, and in which his personality can find expression" (p. 22). He admits, very significantly, that in the Soviet Union alone does this right and this social body exist; he rejects the utopia of planned or regulated capitalism: "No matter how many modifications of capitalism may be made in the direction of a compensated economy—and many are certain to be made—these modifications are peripheral; they do not deal with the heart of the system, which causes its instability and leads to insecurity for all" (p. 148). Only "planned abundance," he concludes, can bring "socialized liberty."

In discussing the processes by which socialism can be attained, Soule is a bit hesitant. He is skeptical of the practicability of what he would most obviously prefer, a "peaceable transition." "But what we ought to fear most of all is the violence and dictatorship that are likely to be applied by the rulers of the existing society in their extremity, if they come to be seriously threatened. A dictatorship preparing for a new order that will express the needs of democracy and equality under the conditions of modern industry is endurable because it is creating the essentials for its own disappearance . . ." (p. 180). He recognizes that "a rapid and widely supported advance to socialism is the only possible defense against fascism," however, and enjoins us that "the first and essential task of any movement looking toward a new order is to win control by democratic means. . . . If violence then breaks out—if, as in 1860, we are again confronted with civil war through the recalcitrance of those who will not recognize the authority of popular government, control of that government by those who favor the new order provides the best chance of eventual victory." All this seems explicit and direct enough, but one feels that Soule is hesitant because he nowhere names such living forces as the farmer-labor-party movement and the Communist Party as useful instrumentalities in the process of attaining socialism. Why is Soule so reticent in defining the organizational forms that can achieve the transition he advocates? And is there not a danger in this reticence, a danger that he is "intellectually" convinced but not practically converted? At any rate, one can say confidently that no one who reads this book can remain hostile to the farmer-labor-party movement. And if one could persuade these readers also to master Lenin's *State and Revolution* (of which classic Soule's book is, to an extent, a rendering in more popular terms with more current examples), the Communist Party would make many friends among liberals.

Francis Pickens Miller's *The Blessings of Liberty* (University of North Carolina Press, $1), although of less intrinsic importance than Soule's, is also significant, however, of a possible new trend of thought in southern liberal intellectual circles. In many respects his thesis bears a striking resemblance even in locution to portions of Soule's volume (Soule's lectures at the University of North Carolina in 1935 are essentially included in Soule's book), but his solutions and program are among those that Soule has long abandoned: namely, a kind of improved New Dealism. Defining liberty as the balance between "freedom and security," Miller asserts that the need now is to ensure greater security for the people. In essence the program he advances provides for increased farm ownership and a slight degree of farm cooperation plus collective bargaining, social insurance, and more home-owning for the urban workers. He acknowledges the existence of the basis of a farmer-labor party when he says, "The rise of agrarianism and of industrial unionism alike signal the beginning of the end of the control of government by the industrialist class," but he never mentions the name, and rests his hopes on Roosevelt's second term. He desires to avoid

Æsthete

Anton Refregier



Æsthete

Anton Refregier

"revolution" and rejects "collectivism" as unthinkable to the American people. His style is so polished and his argument so lacking in concreteness that one can seldom feel sure of what he means exactly, that is, of how he would act in any given situation. Nevertheless, the little book is in the tradition of liberal publications issued from Chapel Hill and contributes to brighten somewhat the dark South. MORRIS U. SCHAPPES.

Fact (?) and Folklore

THE STORY OF HUMAN ERROR, *edited by Joseph Jastrow. D. Appleton-Century Co.* $3.50.

ADVENTURES IN ERROR, *by Vilhjalmur Stefansson. Robert M. McBride & Co.* $3.

DR. JASTROW has assembled sixteen popularly written essays focusing attention on the role of error in the development of scientific thought. The job was well worth doing, for many of us are likely to forget the false starts and blind alleys which occur in any phase of social or scientific activity.

Correctly enough, most of the essays have to do with the middle ages, when experimental science was practically non-existent. Theories were needed to reconcile new discoveries with the institutionalized ideas; astronomers, for example, burdened with the Ptolemaic system, had to explain planets wandering off their prescribed courses. Andreas Scheuchzer, Swiss naturalist of the late eighteenth century, discovering fossil bones, described them, to gratify the churches, as "the bony skeleton of one of these infamous men whose sins brought upon the world the dire misfortune of the deluge." An engraving of these remains was used in an edition of the Bible to attest the literal accuracy of the holy book. The bones have since been identified as those of a large amphibian ancestrally related to the salamander!

A recent error of a different kind was the prediction by Lowell and Pickering, American astronomers, of the existence of a new planet. Their predictions were based on certain discrepancies in the orbits of two other planets, Neptune and Uranus. The position of the new planet (Pluto) was confirmed, but it later turned out that the data on the orbits of Neptune and Uranus which Lowell and Pickering had used were inaccurate to just the extent necessary to predict correctly the position of the new planet.

The essays dealing with the "human sciences" contrast somewhat in tone with those on the older and more exact physical sciences, whose progress is relatively unimpeded today by social hindrances. Only a few years were necessary for a general acceptance of the quantum theory, as against the centuries necessary for an acceptance of the Copernican theory. Moreover, opinions pro or con on the quantum theory are not the concern of a chamber of inquisition. Contrast this with the status of race theories or of theories of social change in Germany and other fascist countries.

"Nicholas is so headstrong—he still insists on believing Mr. Landon was elected."

Moreover, the essays on the physical and on most aspects of the biological sciences exude a certain confidence or authority, justifiable in view of the universal agreement on matters of demonstrable fact, which is absent from the essays on anthropology and sociology. Dr. Harry Elmer Barnes, in the essay entitled "Error in Sociology," has produced a critique rather than a history, and it exhibits the writer's reformist liberal position throughout.

The editor has cautiously refrained from including a chapter on error in economics. In this and in other social sciences every Marxist book has a tissue of errors to unravel.

In spite of a similarity of title between the two books under review, Stefansson is concerned with the "standardization of error" rather than the history of scientific errors. The famous Arctic explorer turns his attention to popular fallacies, accepted through long repetition, mostly related to the polar regions which the author knows so well.

The story of the "standardized wolves" is a gem. Despite the thousands of stories and movies about wolf packs, there never was one, and there are few if any authenticated cases of wolves attacking human beings. The many years that Stefansson spent tracking down newspaper accounts of these incidents provides us with an amusing history of how our news is "developed."

The chapter "Are Explorers to Join the Dodo?" provides a good commentary on modern advertising and publicity devices. Stefansson concludes that we will still have "great explorers" as long as modern publicity methods prevail. We already have the first men to reach the North Pole by boat, aeroplane, and dirigible, but there remain the automobile and submarine, and, of course, the first woman (provided she isn't an Eskimo), the first child, the first Siamese twins, etc.

Stefansson tops off his book with an account of Mencken's fabricated "History of the Bathtub in America," published in a newspaper in 1917. The account was pure fiction and has been exposed dozens of times. However, parts of the "History" continue to turn up as fact. As recently as May 27, 1936, Dr. Shirley W. Wynne, former New York Health Commissioner, repeated the myth over the radio.

The reader of Stefansson's book will spend an enjoyable few hours with a noted scientist

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who has a fine sense of humor and irony to accompany his knowledge. The reviewer wouldn't swear that Stefansson hasn't deliberately created some new myths of his own in order to study their spread into reputable documents. EDWARD R. KENT.

Art for What's Sake

GEOGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF AMERICA, OR THE RELATION OF HUMAN NATURE TO THE HUMAN MIND, *by Gertrude Stein. Random House.* $2.50.

TRANSITION, No. 25, FALL 1936. 50c.

IF it is correctly assumed that Stein's book and the current issue of *transition* represent art, or attempts at (or upon) art, of a sort peculiarly likely to be suspect among many readers of and writers for this magazine, then a direct review might stand aside in favor merely of the passing of a few remarks.

For this suspicion and scorn of the more totally abandoned reaches of experimentalism in writing and in art, there are reasons so valid and so self-evident it seems unnecessary to go into them. Flatly mention two, however: (1) Plenty of the experimenting is lousy, quite some of it is desperately affected, the bulk of it is non-political; (2) it would now seem important that art have all possible force, and clarity, and length and breadth of reach.

There are other reasons, though, why this scornful attitude is unfortunate and for that matter dangerous. To name only the most important: art, and the art to come that is being shaped toward now, is thereby skimped of certain glandular secretions whose deficiency can impair force, clarity, and even size of reach: to say nothing of richness, subtlety, variety, comprehensiveness, discovery, total accuracy, total courage, total honesty, and a few other qualities which art can use all it can get of.

It should be remembered not only that for every instrument of art the world swarms with revolutionary material but that any new light on anything, if the light has integrity, is a revolution. And that if by no means all of this material is discernible through the most strictly Marxian lens, the man who is using the lens had better get his eyes seen to. Moreover, that the focus of a living (as distinguished from a dead or defunctive) science is eternally capable of adjustment to new discovery. Moreover, that a willingness to use and still more to try to invent or perfect still other lenses may well become all but obligatory and can in any case scarcely avoid being useful.

The materials of dreams and of the fluid subconscious, irrationalism, the electrically intense perception and representation of "real" "materials": to the degree in which these are thought of as beneath the serious consideration of any self-respecting Communist artist, critic, or absorber, Nuts. It is our hard luck they are so few, but there are artists who honor, explore, and use precisely these regions and who are enriching civilization, and I mean Left civilization, through them. There is space barely to mention only a few, for the serious consideration of anyone who doubts the fact. I would mention in the first place Auden. His work betrays him of no delusion that he is, or is capable of becoming, a workers' artist. If however the full and fearless use of the brain, whatever kind you happen to have, is serviceable to Marxism—and I would presume it is—he is doing original and valuable service on several fronts where plenty of sound enough artists cannot hope to qualify. I specially mention him because he is so shamelessly intelligent that he not only refuses to subscribe to the idea that a subtle and protean, deeply inventive intellect must dilute itself through the acceptance of Marxism, but proves the opposite in line after line of his published work.

Such work is important whether it frees the Scottsboro boys or not, and the sooner that fact becomes clear beyond any shred of doubt, the better for left-wing art in America. If you are not prepared to agree, though, set it aside for future consideration. Bring on the name of Orozco and let it pass. Bring on the name of the great popular artist Posada, whose firing squads, street scenes, devils, and calaveras discovered dreamlike strengths of space and tension which good movie has been drawing on or rediscovering ever since—and let that pass. We are now talking exclusively of popular art: of art intended among other things to teach and to excite and to please and to inspire working people: the best communist art. The best communist art; along with Joyce, the fully "major" poetry of this century; that is to say, the few best of the Russian movies, makes constant and voracious use of and experiment in exactly those materials whose use in this country seems so generally decried. That these movies are great poetry can be credited in strong proportion at least to just that fact. That their power and clarity is so intense and simple and

Lithograph by David Alfaro Siqueiros

Lithograph by David Alfaro Siqueiros

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wealthy, so capable of hitting its audience in the belly as well as between the eyes, can be credited to that fact all but entirely. For the materials of so-called surrealism are the commonest of all human property. And a man who cannot by mischance grasp a problem intellectually is grasped by it if it is presented through the subtler, more forceful, and more primitive logic of movement, timing, space, and light. The films of Pudovkin and of Pabst are tense, careful, tremendously able, and somewhat constrained by intellectuality. Those of Eisenstein are crackling like brushfire with this irrational brilliance; those of Dovjenko, from what I have heard and read of them and seen in stills, are advancing into even more exciting territory.

Certainly there are exceptions, but here so far in general the Left artist is in a self-depriving state of mistrust (so are his audience and his critics), and the "surrealist" artist is ditto. Both insist they are revolutionists. Both are. They have a lot to gain from each other's company, and there are no valid reasons in the realms either of sense or nonsense why they should stay apart. JAMES AGEE.

The Cartoon and Art Young

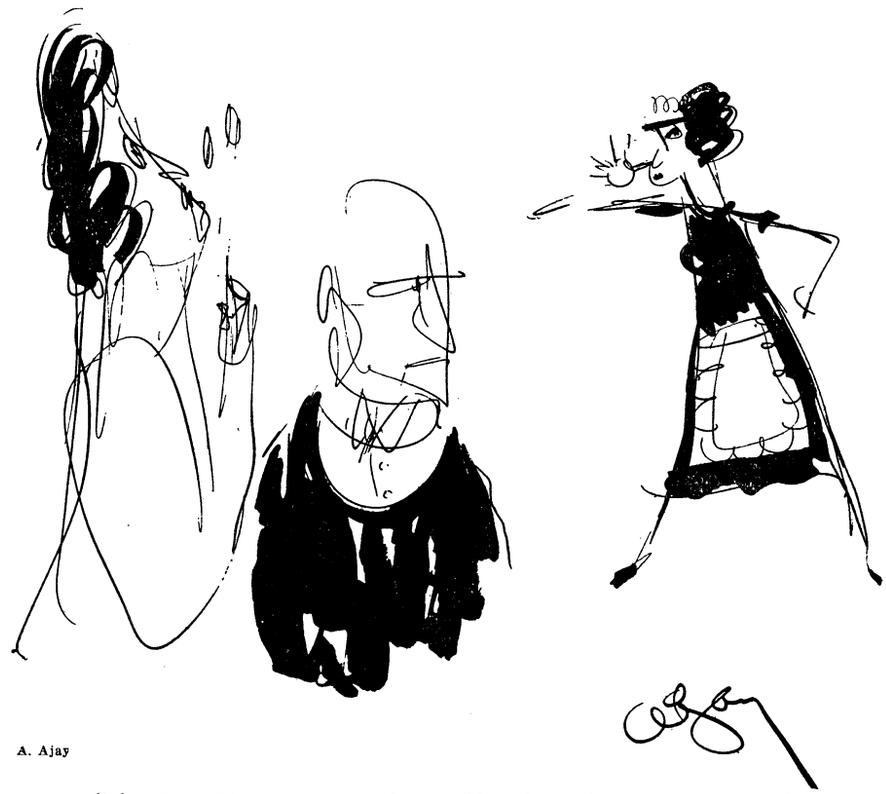
THE BEST OF ART YOUNG, *with an introduction by Heywood Broun. Vanguard Press.* $3.

ON the subject of Art Young, I think too much has been written about the time he went to sleep during the *Masses* trial, and what might be called the good-gray-chronicler-of-the-revolution aspect of his art; and too little about Art Young as you see him today, walking down past Genung's Department Store on Main Street in Danbury, heading for a glass of beer at the Tavern on White Street, or about the effect his work has had on the application of socialist thought to the field of cartooning in general.

I mention the Danbury aspect of Art Young because that is where I last saw him, and because of the curious feeling you get when you see him there, the feeling of surprise that a man who has done so much can look so placid and undisruptive. The matter of his influence on the political cartoon is, since it has to do with humor, a more serious affair, and must be gone into in greater detail.

At any rate, it is true, too true, that humor is intrinsically a deeply conservative, narrowly-limited field of expression. On the stage, on the screen, particularly on the editorial page, where the political cartoons are usually printed, its energies are mainly directed to the setting up of stock figures only to knock them down again; and since the joke, to be sure-fire, must be instantly recognizable, the only stock figures that can safely be employed are those that have long ago been accepted as *conventionally* ridiculous, in accordance with the tenets of established order. For if he strays from the field of the time-honored (or in this case, the time-*dis*honored), your cartoonist is likely to find himself tangled up with some tattered shred of "respectability" or traditional veneration still clinging to his subject, and so committing that worst possible breach of the jokester: "offending good taste." And good taste, for the generality, seems largely limited to vanilla.

That, roughly stated, is the reason why Weary Willie the tramp, and Sambo the roustabout, and, more recently, Lazy Dan, the lackadaisical W.P.A. worker, are good for a laugh any time, and the wealthy idler only rarely and under special conditions (as when, for instance, he is the effeminized son of a



A. Ajay

"Amelia will have to go, Albert. She's becoming class-conscious."

hard-working Pa); why May Day parades are comic, but Preparedness Day parades are not; why, much as all the good people hate war, those Veterans of Future Wars got into very hot water as soon as they touched the subject of Gold Star Mothers (who might logically be expected to be the bitterest opponents of war); why you can't make jokes about religion, patriotism—but I am beginning to overstate my case.

I am overstating it, it seems to me, partly because Art Young happens to have lived and made his drawings. I imagine you still can't make jokes with impunity about religion, patriotism, honest thrift, respect for the Home and for Property, etc., for King Features, the *Saturday Evening Post,* and the majority of the minority who voted for Landon; but you can attack these time-honored concepts—at least to the extent of showing up the hypocrisy underlying some of them and the evils they can be made to conceal—for wide audiences elsewhere. That you can do so, that "good taste" has widened to accept somewhat sharper flavors, is due to the fact that away back in the pre-war years Art Young, among others, had already perceived the shaky foundations on which so many of the contemporary shibboleths were built, and with quiet assurance and biting accuracy was engaged in showing them up.

To prove that, you have only to turn to his book, which is a selected collection of his drawings, from the earliest to the latest; they show clearly how many once-forbidden trails he helped open. Yet their value is more than merely historical: though even the cartoon for which, back in 1918, he was indicted for "conspiracy to obstruct the draft" (it shows an editor, a capitalist, a politician, and a minister tossing greenbacks back and forth and dancing a jig to the devil's brass band), seems innocuous today compared to what Gropper, Mackey, and even some of the regular newspaper cartoonists get away with. There is a grace, and a keenness of wit, and an ordered judgment discernible throughout the book that give it a more permanent value. Looking through its contents, at the non-political and purely "comic" drawings as well as the political ones, one feels that Art Young set up his own standards of "good taste"—standards based on sounder concepts of human dignity and honesty than those then obtaining—and not only stuck to them consistently throughout, but in so doing forced the world to come a little farther on his way.

ROBERT M. COATES.

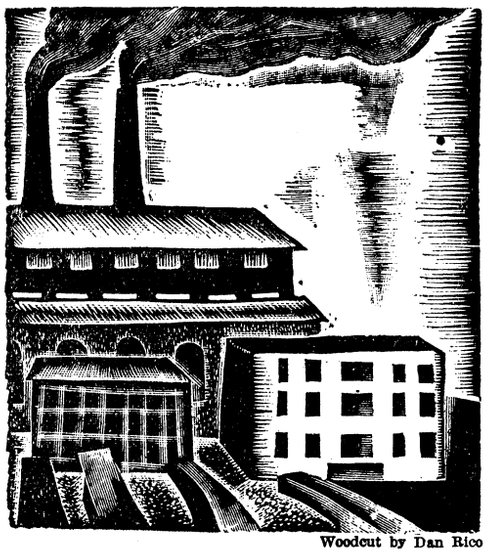
The Truth About Haymarket

HISTORY OF THE HAYMARKET AFFAIR, *by Henry David. Farrar & Rinehart. $4.*

WITH the publication of this book, a gap in the history of the American labor movement is at last filled. In no other instance has there been erected so monumental an edifice of official falsehood as in the judicial murder of the Chicago labor leaders, known to us as the Haymarket case. It is a

fact that in Chicago, even today, the press refers to the case only with fearful caution and with deliberate duplicity, so profound and enduring have been the effects of this event whose fiftieth anniversary will be marked next year. As recently as May of this year, Colonel Knox's *Daily News* carried a leading story blandly repeating for the misinformation of its readers all the ancient perjuries, as if nothing had happened in the years since 1886 to make known the truth—which is even part of the records of the State of Illinois in the heroic and noble 1893 pardon message of Governor Altgeld.

Dr. David has collected for the first time, and with admirable thoroughness, all the facts which have been known for some time but which have never been systematically recorded. He has tracked down every possible source, ransacked all the documents, and the result is a volume which becomes part of the arsenal of truth of the American labor movement. To the fact arrayed by him there can be no reply. The legend has it that Parsons, Spies, Schwab, and Fischer were hanged for murder and conspiracy. It is as clear as the noon-day sun that all the "murder and conspiracy" were in the camp of "law and order": the press, police, pulpit, and the industrial capital whose interests they defended. Although Mr. David does not press this point, all the evidence points to a cold-bloodedly organized conspiracy entered into by the state's attorney, the police, and leading Chicago capitalists like McCormick and Marshall Field to murder the leading spirits of the Chicago labor movement. The planting of evidence, the use of stool-pigeons, the incitement to hysteria, all the familiar methods of present-day frame-up, were used. The Haymarket hangings were the answer of rising American capitalism to the great wave of working-class unrest which had rocked the country since 1877 and culminated in the first national general strike in our history, the eight-hour-day strikes of May 1, 1886. Incidentally, Mr. David is mistaken when he denies the connection between May Day, as a demonstration of international labor solidarity, and the Haymarket events. But he is correct



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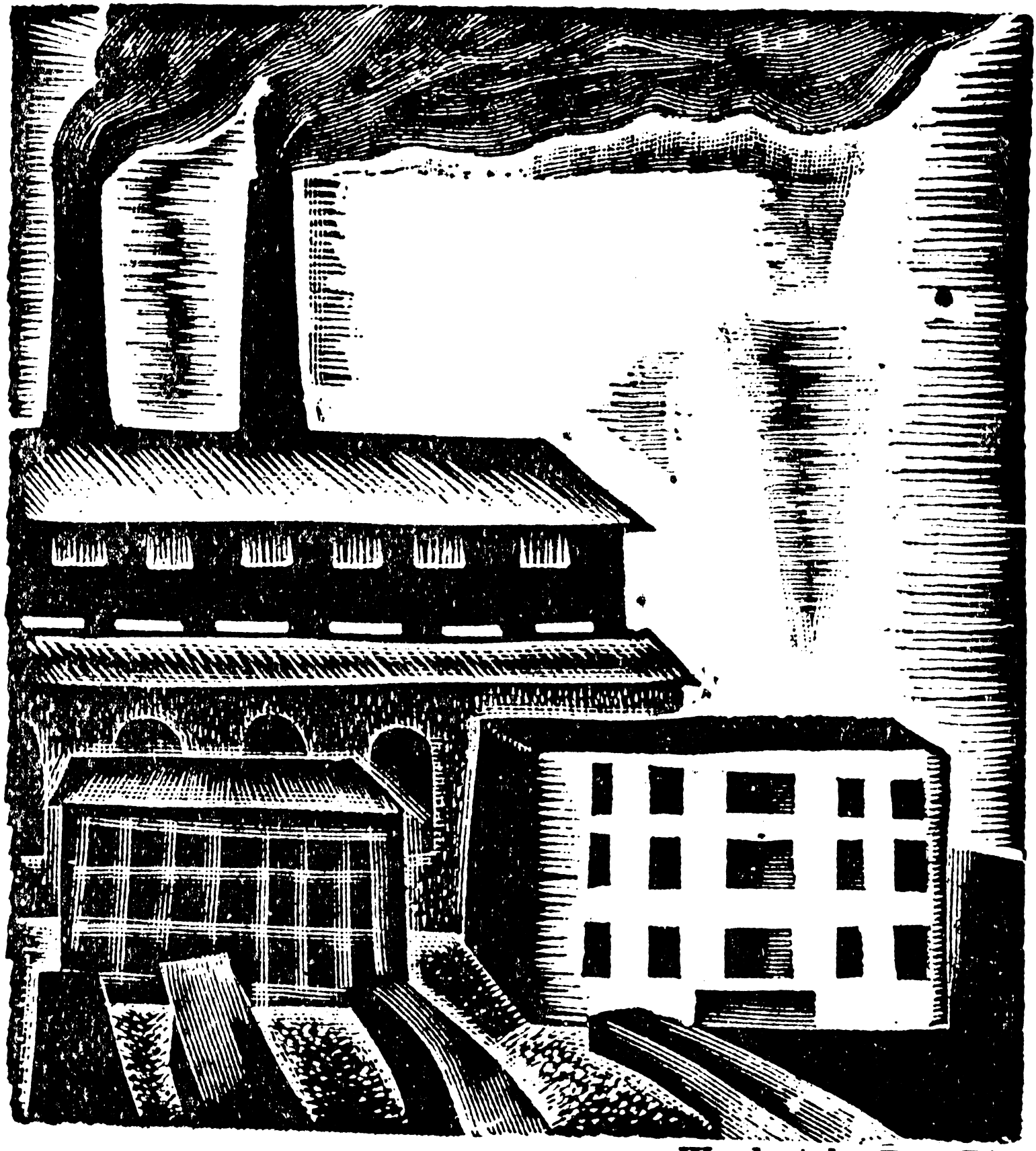


Woodcut by Dan Rico

in calling the "law and order" reaction the first national "Red" scare carefully organized —as the moral prelude for an attack against the labor movement.

It stirred American society as it had not been since the Civil War. Interesting for us is the effect it had on American intellectuals; it showed up John Greenleaf Whittier as something less than a hero and William Dean Howells as a man of pure courage.

Without in any way diminishing the great value of the author's researches, it still needs to be said his work falls just short of complete definitiveness through a hesitation to see boldly into the dynamics of the class forces which give the entire case its true significance. As a result of a certain academic empiricism of method, which will not reach conclusions unless there is a document upon which to fall back, and an unwillingness to derive full implications for contemporary history, the author does not make full use of his excellently marshaled material. He does not see (at least, he does not let the reader see) the whole case in its larger aspects as a *class* retort of American capitalism to the growing struggles of the American working class. We are at a loss to understand the real fear which seized upon American capitalism in 1886 unless we can see it as the result of its fear that the trade-union strikes become impregnated with a *revolutionary theory,* however confused. Leavened by Marxist insight, which would have drawn the explicit conclusions inherent in the case, the book would have been a better job. As it is, it is to be warmly welcomed as the first lucid portrayal of a great social drama which still remains a portent.

MILTON HOWARD.

An Item of Autobiography

THE OXFORD BOOK OF MODERN VERSE, *edited by William Butler Yeats. Oxford University Press* $3.

FIRST of all the book is misnamed. It should be titled: *The Oxford Book of Modern British Verse,* for (with the exception of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, included as American expatriates who have had a major influence on modern poetry, especially in England) modern American poetry is excluded. There can be no quarrel with Mr. Yeats's decision to confine his selection to the poetry with which he is familiar, but elementary honesty would have called for such a definition in the title.

Second, how far can an anthologist be true to himself without being false to his function? Even the most self-assured compiler must be aware of the limitations of his personal taste and must work out standards for the inclusion of poetry outside those limitations, whether that standard be general acceptance or the judgment of other minds whose authority he respects.

It seems to me that Mr. Yeats has been more considerate of himself than of his task. The anthology is almost an item of autobiography, and illustrates his strong bent toward the mystical and the æsthetic (the

"æsthetic" in the special and unfavorable connotation). Often, in his determination to avoid what has already appeared or what inevitably will appear in other anthologies, he has made selections that must be regarded as capricious and unrepresentative.

Mr. Yeats's arbitrariness has some advantages. Making his personal taste the arbiter results in this case in a general high level; further, it permits Mr. Yeats to take risks which more comprehensive anthologists dare not. As a result we are spared the poetically blank pages that would have been given up to famous mediocrities like Alfred Noyes, Richard Le Gallienne, and Stephen Phillips, though, in this respect, Mr. Yeats is trapped by his personal taste into tolerance of some other and uncelebrated mediocrities. The same factors make it possible for him to introduce impressive poets absent in more comprehensive and on the whole more useful anthologies like Untermeyer's *Modern British Poetry*. Four are worth discovering: Gogarty, Dorothy Wellesley, Higgins, and the Scottish Communist poet, M'Diarmid.

Do these make up for the exclusion of Charlotte Mew, Humbert Wolfe, F. S. Flint, H. D. (an expatriate and an "influence" like Eliot and Pound), Aldous Huxley, T. E. Hulme, Edwin Muir, Peter Quennell, and especially and unforgivably of Wilfred Owen, perhaps the greatest of the Georgians, and others of the war poets? To Mr. Yeats's attitude on the war poets I will return. It is pertinent, I think, to inquire why it was possible for other anthologists to secure permissions to print poems by William Watson and Robert Graves, and not for Mr. Yeats, who explains that he was refused. Did Mr. Yeats woo too haughtily?

His omission of Wilfred Owen and the British poets of the war he explains as follows:

> I have a distaste for certain poems written in the midst of the great war; they are in all anthologies, but I have substituted Herbert Read's "End of a War" written long after. The writers of these poems were invariably officers of exceptional courage and capacity . . . their letters are vivid and humorous, they were not without joy—for all skill is joyful—but felt bound, in the words of the best known, to plead the sufferings of their men. I have rejected these poems for the same reason that made Arnold withdraw his "Empedocles on Etna" from circulation; passive suffering is not a theme for poetry. . . . If war is necessary, or necessary in our time and place, it is best to forget its suffering as we do the discomfort of fever, remembering our comfort at midnight when our temperature fell. . . . Florence Farr returning third class from Ireland found herself among Connaught Rangers just returning from the Boer War who described an incident over and over and always with loud laughter; an unpopular sergeant struck by a shell turned round and round like a dancer wound in his own entrails. That, too, may be a right way of seeing war, if war is necessary, the way of the Cockney slums, of Patrick Street, of the "Kilmainham Minut," of "Johnny I Hardly Knew Ye," of the medieval *Dance of Death*.

Mr. Read is a writer of great intelligence and integrity, and I doubt that he feels comfortable having one of his poorest poems, a

Ellison Hoover

long stretch of Yeats-pleasing mystical banality, used as a device to exclude some of the noblest poetry of his contemporaries.

What Mr. Yeats says is nonsense. It is because the war poetry was not passive, but active, expressing sufferings which there was a determination no longer passively to endure, as the disbanding and revolutionary armies of Russia, Turkey, Austria, and Germany also showed, that Mr. Yeats, for reasons he might understand if he subjected his upper-class mind to examination, declares it unfit. As for passive suffering, most of Mr. Yeats's own poetry and many of his selections are expressions of passive suffering. Mr. Yeats needs an editor to revise him.

Mr. Yeats acknowledges the power and beauty of the Day Lewis, Auden, and Spender group. He goes so far as to say, "I can seldom find more than a half-dozen lyrics that I like, yet in this moment of sympathy I prefer them to Eliot, to myself—I too have tried to be modern." Yet he impugns their inspiration. "None of them have accepted it, communism is their *Deus ex Machina,* their Santa Claus, their happy ending." In a beautiful image, "the shell secreting the fish" he expresses his complete misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Communist philosophy. It is relevant to add that to this revolutionary poetry which he reluctantly prefers, though for the moment, to Eliot and to himself, he gives scant space.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Model Illustration

THE SAGA OF GISLI. *Translated from the old Icelandic, by Ralph B. Allen. Illustrated by Rockwell Kent. Harcourt, Brace & Co.* $2.50.

LEAVES OF GRASS, *by Walt Whitman. Illustrated by Rockwell Kent. Heritage Press.* $3.50

IN the field of book illustration Rockwell Kent has achieved a position of unquestioned eminence. These two current samples of his art are among his best.

For Gisli, a new translation of one of the thirty-two sagas of Iceland, a version which is commendably terse and free of the deliberate archaism that marred earlier translations, Mr. Kent's drawings are suitably virile and free. For the beautifully printed Heritage

Press edition of Whitman, his drawings are notable for sensitive spacing and adaptation to the typography, and for their wise limitation to interpretive decoration rather than outright illustration.

I. EASTFIELD.

Brief Reviews

BOSWELL'S JOURNAL OF A TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES WITH SAMUEL JOHNSON. *Viking Press.* $5.

Current editions of Boswell's *Tour to the Hebrides* are in a rather bowdlerized version of the original, which has just come to light and the publication of which is one of the literary events of the season. Comparison of the two editions indicates that while the version here offered is rough in many spots and calls for editing, it is fresher and more salty than the other. Apart from its literary values, the book is of historical importance for its insights both into the character of two notable figures of the time and into the conditions of life in England and especially in Scotland in the eighteenth century.

PAUL GAUGUIN'S INTIMATE JOURNALS. *Translated by Van Wyck Brooks with 55 illustrations in color, halftones, and manuscript drawings. Crown Publishers.* $2.

Gauguin's journals were first published in this country about fifteen years ago. They suited the taste of that period better than they do the taste of today. They are wild, but not so wild but that, at times, the frenzy is not calculated, the product of an æsthete one of whose principles was to shock the bourgeois. But there are some keen though undeveloped ideas, and many vivid passages. The book is of value toward an understanding of the painter's life and art. And the illustrations are attractive.

NOT SO DEEP AS A WELL. *The Collected Poems of Dorothy Parker. Viking Press.* $2.50.

Though Miss Parker's derivations are easy to establish, she has her own individual quality. The ironic note she plays on is too little varied; and the O. Henry-like device she uses, the last line surprise, becomes obvious. Fortunately, a little of the cleverness that makes the Dorothy Parker apocrypha among the best of unpublished American literature is also in her published verse.

★

Recently Recommended Books

The Truth About the Liberty League, by Grace Hutchins. International Pamphlets. 2c.

Audubon, by Constance Rourke. Harcourt, Brace & Co. Illustrated. $3.

The Maxims of La Rochefoucauld. Newly translated with a foreword by Louis Kronenberger. Stackpole Sons. $1.75.

'T Aint Right, by Westbrook Pegler. Doubleday, Doran. $2.50.

Reasons for Anger, by Robert Briffault. Simon & Schuster. $2.50.

Bitter Victory, by Louis Guilloux, translated by Samuel Putnam. McBride. $2.50. War novel.

Courthouse Square, by Hamilton Basso. Scribner's. $2.50. Novel of the South.

Æsop Said So, lithographs by Hugo Gellert. Covici, Friede. $1.75. Fables in modern dress.

Mexico: A Revolution by Education, by George I. Sánchez. Viking. $2.75.

The War in Outline, by Liddell Hart. Random House. $2. A critical history of strategy.

Man's Worldly Goods, by Leo Huberman. Harper. $2.50.

Fighting Angel, by Pearl S. Buck. Reynal & Hitchcock. $2.50.

The War Goes On, by Sholem Asch. Putnam. $3.

The American Legion and Civil Liberty, by Walter Wilson. American Civil Liberties Union pamphlets. 5c.

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Hollywood's "Winterset" and Laughton's "Rembrandt"—Comment on plays, music, and the dance

LAST year the metropolitan theater critics got together and awarded the Drama Critic's Prize to Maxwell Anderson for his *Winterset*. So great was the publicity and public acclaim that R.K.O. was convinced by Pandro S. Berman to put the play on celluloid. And as a film *Winterset* will do everything the producers expect of it. It will give R.K.O. Radio Pictures their 1936 prestige quota, and it will not lose money. Hollywood will be praised for its courage and its daring for presenting us with a film which deals with material of high social significance. To a certain extent all of this is true. And in the pamphlet prepared by the Educational and Recreational Guides, Inc., on *Winterset* as one of their group discussion outlines, which reach a great number of teachers and students, the author states: "This [the theme] is derived from the events of the famous Sacco-Vanzetti trial and the subsequent execution of these two men who were believed by many persons to be innocent victims of a legal murder. Without a knowledge of these events as they appeared to Mr. Anderson, neither the play nor the motion picture, which leans heavily upon them, can be understood."

Essentially the film version is exactly like the play. Although the scenarist, Anthony Veiller, has used much straight prose, a great deal of Mr. Anderson's "dramatic poetry" is retained. The film also adds a prologue in which we see Mio's father, Romagna (John Carradine), the idealistic Socialist, legally murdered for the crime committed by Trock (Eduardo Ciannelli). The end has been changed, too. Instead of Mio (Burgess Meredith) being killed by Trock's machine gun and Miriamne (Margo) committing suicide, the conclusion is now the conventional happy ending. Even with these changes, *Winterset* is still the story of Mio searching the truth in order to "make them [the class that murdered his father] see till it scalds their eyes, and make them admit it till their tongues are blistered with saying how black they lied." And how he comes to New York and meets up with the "Juliet of the Slums," Miriamne, and how it turns out that Miriamne is Garth Esdra's sister. Garth is the person who will supply Mio with the truth, since he was a witness to Trock's crime. And Judge Gaunt, who sentenced Mio's father, also comes to Garth seeking the assurance that Romagna (Sacco-Vanzetti) was guilty. The meeting of the judge and Mio was the high point of the play and is also the climax of the film. But the judge's speech, which is no doubt Anderson's message and the conscience-prick of the bourgeoisie, has been toned down in the film. Even so, it is the one brilliant episode in the entire movie.

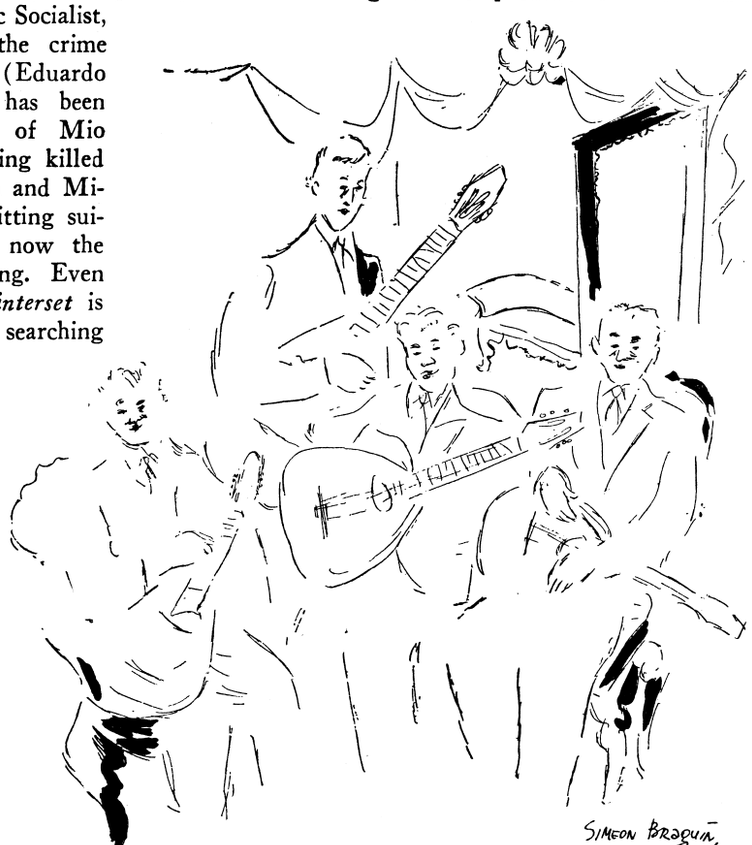
Winterset is an important film because it deals with a major social theme and comes from one of the important American playwrights. And when one compares it with the general Hollywood product, this estimation is even increased. But nevertheless, *Winterset* the film has the faults of *Winterset* the play. As Philip Stevenson put it in the September issue of *New Theatre*: "the play might have been given an affirmative resolution consonant with tragedy. It might have said, 'Look! Truth today is so dangerous to the established order that a man gets killed for knowing the truth.' But Mio, by the time he is killed, has abandoned the truth as mere 'revenge' and 'hate,' and what he dies for is 'love.' Sacco and Vanzetti identified love with 'the struggle and fight between the rich and the poor'; to love was a human emotion; love for the oppressed meant inevitably hatred for the oppressors. To Anderson love is an absolute—a universal—an abstract human thing."

Turning to the product of the British studios, we can say at once that Charles Laughton's reputation as one of the most brilliant actors of the screen is considerably enhanced by his current vehicle, *Rembrandt* (United Artists), directed by Alexander Korda. It is certainly one of the best things to come from Mr. Korda's studio, which has produced England's best.

There is no formal plot. The film is a series of episodes in the life of Rembrandt Van Rijn, beginning at the height of his career, when he was rich, bawdy, and gay. The next period is that of his relationship with Geertke Dirx (beautifully played by Gertrude Lawrence), his housekeeper. This period (about ten years) is one of decline in economic and social status. The final episode of the film is his second happy union, with his servant girl, Hendrickje (played by Elsa Lanchester, Laughton's off-screen wife).

The most negative thing about the film is its pace, which was largely determined by the structure of the "plot." It is a contemplative film, which seldom gets very emotional. The entire production is handled with a simplicity and warmth that is seldom found in the commercial film. Georges Perinal has, as usual, done excellent camera work, and Carl Zuckmayer has given us a rich and literate script. But it is really Laughton's film.

PETER ELLIS.



Simeon Braguin

THE THEATER

THE exceptional and wayward talent of Ruth Gordon makes of William Wycherley's Restoration comedy *The Country Wife* a not impossible evening at the theater, but only her brazen introduction of modern tricks and angularities into her reading of the role could have justified Gilbert Miller in producing it. The present version comes to New York by way of Westport, Conn., where it went on last summer at Lawrence Langner's behest, and London, England, where Tyrone Guthrie produced it in October. Miss Gordon graced both those performances, apparently with enough success to warrant Mr. Miller in giving Broadway a go at it.

Putting on this shallow dramatization of multifarious and unabashed cuckoldry (in which the falling from grace of a country wife visiting London, despite her husband's panting efforts to prevent it, is the central theme) could hardly have seemed a lively idea of itself. One gets the notion that perhaps Miss Gordon and some cronies, after a couple of rounds of the cup that cheers, began to kid about Wycherley's bit of fustian and saw possibilities for a half-spoofing revitalization of it with Miss Gordon operating the hypodermic. It almost comes off, but not quite. Still, there are many worse ways of spending an evening than watching Miss Gordon's clowning and studying (for you will not be so

gripped as to be beyond such detachment) her infinitely rich and carefully planned variety of pace, gesture, and delivery.

Noel Coward wound up his *Tonight at 8:30* series of nine one-act plays with three items which maintained the average of the first six as to their entertainment qualities and wandered somewhat off Coward's beaten track of preoccupation with the troubles of love and marriage. In the first of the final trio, "Ways and Means," Mr. Coward and Gertrude Lawrence are marooned by the exigencies of gambling in the country house of a friend whose hospitality is rapidly reaching the vanishing point. The timely advent of a coöperative burglar leaves them bound and gagged and giggling, with their worldly goods surprisingly augmented. "Still Life" is a somber reflection on the difficulties in the way of successful adulterous love which is rather less moving than the author intended, probably because the obstacles to success seem rather parochial and the prospect of success, granted the mounting of the obstacles, rather slim. "Family Album," the last of the series, is a pretty costume version of the old story that when a none-too-human parent dies, the grief at his passing can be amazingly alleviated by a glass of the right madeira and the intelligence that his will has left good round sums to the right people. Moreover, it gives Miss Lawrence, in black velvet and a henna wig, the chance to look her loveliest.

Tonight at 8:30 is without question an Event in the 1936 theatrical season, and you will enjoy the plays if you can overlook the fact that Coward is an old sourpuss on the question of human relationships. If you're planning to see one of the three groups in the series, we'd suggest the first, comprising "Hands Across the Sea," "The Astonished Heart," and "Red Peppers."

A. W. T.

CONCERT MUSIC

THE familiar pudgy globe that is Paul Whiteman graced the boards of the Hippodrome again this week. And the self-styled King of Jazz was given top billing over such lesser luminaries as Casper Reardon the swing harpist, Deems Taylor, the Williams College Glee Club, and the Philadelphia Orchestra in a jumboesque program of glorified American music by Rodgers and Hart, Ferdy Grofé, George Gershwin, Reginald Foresythe, and Adolph Deutsch. The day before, the public prints carried the lachrymose report of the Philharmonic-Symphony Society's contest for an American orchestral work of ten to twenty minutes in duration: 132 manuscripts considered, none found worthy of the $500 award, one (Philip James's *Bret Harte* overture) selected for honorable mention and public performance.

The so-called serious American composer (a lean and hungry-looking fellow) may have been given a one-man program in the W.P.A. forum laboratory series, but not for him the Philharmonic or Philadelphia orchestras nor even the solace of a paragraph or two in the press to pad out the thin pages of his clip file. Losing none of his old envy of his British cousin (Vaughan Williams's *Job* was not only played by the Philharmonic but was given—by one critic alone—a lengthy advance notice, nearly two full double columns, a good-sized review, and an additional "further reflections"), he is gnawed anew when the despised Tin Pan Alley tunesmiths wax affluent on the proceeds of hit shows and then have the gall to invade the concert field as well and pack, not the modest hall of the MacDowell Club or the New School, but the expansive Hippodrome.

Work on the latest neglected masterpiece (a trio for basset horn, heckelphon, and Irish harp) is suspended at this point while the American composer drapes himself in the well-worn robes of a Native Creative Artist to go forth airing his trials and tribulations to sympathetic colleagues and unsympathetic periodicals.

And his best friends are getting a little weary. The poor fellow is in a jam, all right, and he's had a dirty deal at best from established music institutions, but one's sympathy for him is coming to be tinged with the suspicion that after all he may be his own worst enemy. Talk is a bad father of music-making, and the American composer has worked harder with his tongue than with his pen. Indeed, he's been so articulate that when he sits down to write he is left with little or nothing to say. Every artist has to learn his craft, but there has been too much practising in public and too few finished craftsmen produced.

Our serious composer too often makes the mistake of aiming higher than his powers can ever reach. Rather than being accounted a neglected genius, he is properly placed as either pretentious or dull, or both. He can well afford to take a tip from Tin Pan Alley and radio tonal artisans and learn to write fluently, score economically and with the maximum of effectiveness. Or better, let him study a score like that of Kurt Weill's for *Johnny Johnson*. A model of simplicity and economy, Weill's music neither asks for nor needs highly trained interpreters, yet not a note fails to *sound*, not a phrase is lacking in

Soriano

significance and point. Of course it isn't great music, but it is what it was intended to be: first-rate theatrical music, integrating and intensifying a play that without it would disintegrate dangerously. It consistently grips one's attention, sticks in one's mind, and leaves one with the satisfaction derived from any job that is simply and perfectly done.

For further prescription: considerably less ego, fewer trips to the wailing wall, a rigorous if delayed course in apprenticeship, and a keener sense of the relationship between music and its audience, music and our lives. If the banner of neglected genius is to be raised, let it be borne in the cause of authentic genius. While the prodigious talents of Charles Ives and—on the other side of the water—the late Bernard van Dieren are denied a hearing, it is sheer impertinence for lesser men to whine about the neglect of their immature student works. If the American composer will forget for a time his dream of personal greatness and get back to earth, he will find ample opportunity for less ambitious but far more useful music making, music that will be at the least entertaining, at the best functional and craftsmanlike.

R. D. DARRELL.

RECORDED MUSIC

THE phonograph-record industry seems to have emerged from the depression in a way that even its most hopeful well-wishers did not consider possible. Nearly three million disks a month are being sold, the highest number in years, and the demand appears to be steadily increasing. The bulk of the increase is in popular records, for the price of classical recordings is such that only a fraction of the musical public can afford regular purchases.

The record companies are not wholly to blame for the exorbitant price of album sets. They are confronted with the fact that there are but a few machines in the country capable of bringing out all that is in the disk, which necessarily limits sales to a fortunate minority. Until there are enough machines in the country capable of giving reproduction of a higher caliber than the average radio the number of albums sold will be relatively small.

These remarks are a necessary preamble to this week's review of records, for it is becoming increasingly evident that the average reader cannot hope to buy a fraction of the excellent disks that are being issued. With most Victor red seal records selling for two dollars each, and Columbias at a dollar and a half, with an extra charge for albums, the purchase of even a single set is a luxury that few can afford.

Fritz Kreisler has re-recorded the Beethoven violin concerto with John Barbirolli conducting the London Philharmonic (Victor M325, $11.00), replacing his old version in which he was assisted by Blech and the Berlin State Opera orchestra. The new set is well recorded, but Kreisler is disappointing, particularly in the first movement, where

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his intonation is frequently faulty and his playing without fire. The marvelous passage after the cadenza, the most beautiful in the whole concerto, Kreisler reduces to sentimentality. The larghetto, however, is warm and sensitive in Kreisler's hands, and the last movement has almost the requisite spirit. Barbirolli adapts himself admirably to the soloist. Despite inferior recording, I greatly prefer Szigeti's Columbia version, the cost of which is considerably less (Columbia 177, $7.50).

With the same London Philharmonic, Sir Thomas Beecham does wonders in Haydn's E-flat major symphony (Columbia 264). The minuet is especially gay, and the finale is played with crispness and verve. If the recording of the Victor and Columbia albums sounds remarkably similar it is because the same studio, equipment, and the same engineers are used for all English Columbia, H.M.V. (Victor), Parlophone, and Regal records.

The album of the month which gives me the most pleasure is the collection of Bach's D-minor "Chromatic" fantasy and fugue, Six Little Preludes, and partita in B-flat major played on the harpsichord by Wanda Landowska (Victor M-323). The most moving is the fantasy and fugue, a work of unbelievable power, but the partita is exquisite, even in Miss Landowska's somewhat pedantic version. Only the preludes are mechanical and uninspired Bach. The recording of the harpsichord here is magnificent, attaining a resonance that American Columbia has never been able to achieve with Miss Yella Pessl. Perhaps it is partly a difference in the instruments, for Miss Landowska uses a French Pleyel specially constructed for her, whereas Pessl uses a modern German one. This month Miss Pessl is represented on the Columbia educational series (17071-17072) in some rather charming old Christmas music and some colonial minuets and gavottes, all extremely well played.

The most important chamber music release of the month is the Roth Quartet's interpretation of the Schubert "Death and the Maiden," in D-minor (Columbia 269). Here again the recording is lifeless, and the playing not up to the highest Roth standards, but the music is on the whole successfully projected. Before purchasing, however, a careful comparison should be made with the excellent version by the Budapest Quartet on Victor.

HENRY JOHNSON.

THE DANCE

ALMOST a year after its establishment, and in the midst of a thoroughly organized effort to rid itself of the handicap of its supervisor, Don Oscar Becque, the Federal Dance Theatre finally made its Broadway debut, and not too brilliantly, with Gluck Sandor's *The Eternal Prodigal,* with music by Herbert Kingsley and scenery and costumes by Nat Karson.

This is the second story of the Prodigal we have had this early in the dance season, and whatever the cause for this suddenly revived interest in the wayward boy, in neither case has there been any remarkable choreographic, technical, or ideological invention. If Kurt Jooss's *Prodigal Son* was banal, the Gluck Sandor piece goes theatrically haywire. It is novelty at best, and rests consistently on a comparatively unimportant level.

The Eternal Prodigal is the country boy who, vaguely dissatisfied with the "commonplace," makes for the wide open spaces, and so strenuously that he falls asleep. He dreams, surrealistically, of evil spirits, a love passion, "street ladies" (vintage 1890), and a six-handed surrealist leader of a surrealist swing band; and just when things should be going along fine, he is "hemmed in" by the props, and commits suicide—whereupon he wakes up and discovers all's well with the old folks and the girl he left behind him.

If Jooss was dull, at least he was consistent. *The Eternal Prodigal* is a turbid business. A confusion of styles, techniques, and simple time sequences, neither choreographically nor ideologically does it ever come out of its muddle. The composition is theatrically uncertain, dramatically unconvincing, and its informal use of voice and pantomime, while sometimes amusing, is completely illogical. Nor is Gluck Sandor's concept of slums, sailors, rooming houses, and modern dancing, despite his earnestness, particularly profound; on the contrary, there is much in the work bordering on unhealthy burlesque.

There were some good moments in a scene at the opera, Adolf Dehn-ish in spots, and a simple and effective movement of men working. The subway scene had a bit of familiar wit, and in contrast to the tortured choreographic tricks with which Sandor has choked the composition, the light satiric ballet of Lisa Parnova was refreshing. William Bruce, as the Prodigal, has a fair ballet equipment, but his pantomiming comes uncomfortably close to ham acting, in which he was considerably helped by the rest of the cast. Roger Pryor Dodge was lost in the role of the father, while Kohana had her one moment in what might have been intended as a take-off on Isadora Duncan. Gluck Sandor, as the evil spirit, did a variation on his *Sea Gull,* and Felicia Sorel had a rather long but scarcely distinguishing part in the production.

It's unfortunate that after all these months the first production of the Federal Dance Theatre should prove such a colossal confusion. The Humphrey-Weidman *Candide* and Tamiris's *Salut au Monde* (both W.P.A. products and both works of considerable merit, received enthusiastically in their Brooklyn, university, and settlement-house performances and ready for Broadway production) have been ready now for months. That it took all this time for the first significant opening of the Federal Dance Theatre is definite indication of the incompetency of the supervision; that two compositions, modern in technique and concept, were sidetracked for Gluck Sandor's direction of a conglomerate body of jazz, ballet, pantomimic, and *modernistic*

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dancers is evidence of a lack of understanding, if not plain prejudice, on the part of the supervisor.

The Federal Dance Theatre will come in for some severe criticism, and *The Eternal Prodigal* warrants it; but the fault lies directly not only with Becque, but with Hallie Flanagan and Philip Barber, who have for so long countenanced a supervisory incompetency which bids fair to destroy the excellent work of a well-equipped and an exceptionally well-trained group of W.P.A. dancers.

OWEN BURKE.

★

The Radio

(Times given are Eastern Standard, but all programs listed are on coast-to-coast hookups. Readers are asked to report at once any anti-working-class bias expressed by these programs or their sponsors.)

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Astronomy. The first of a series of broadcasts called "Drama of the Skies," from the Hayden Planetarium in New York, Sat., Dec. 12, 5:30 p.m., Columbia.

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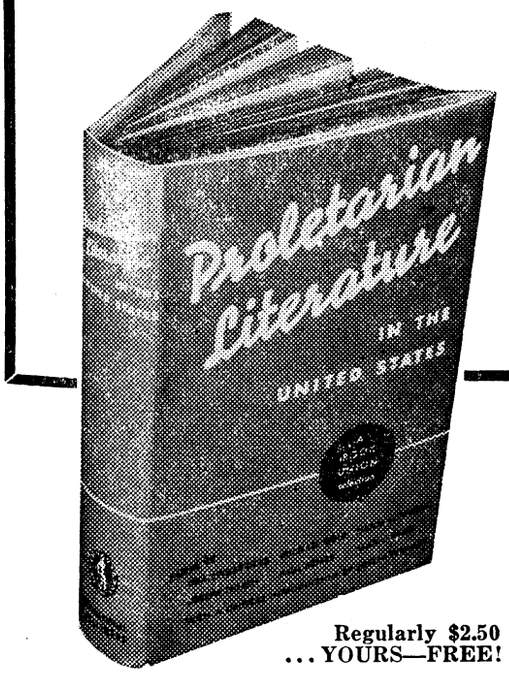

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