

# NEWMASSES

25c

JUNE



Send us the names of those of your friends who might be interested in the NEW MASSES. We'll try to convince them.

# FIRST ISSUE OF NEW MASSES COMPLETELY SOLD OUT!

¶ The first number of the NEW MASSES appeared on the news-stands on April 20th. Within two days our reserve supply had been exhausted by re-orders, and by the first of May newsdealers all over the country were completely sold out. We did not have even enough copies left to fill subscriptions that were pouring in.

¶ We asked our distributors, the Eastern Distributing Corporation, to call back unsold copies from all points east of the Mississippi. We hoped to get about a thousand copies for our own use. We got less than 300 copies.

¶ The distributing company's New York City route men said that newsdealers all over the city were complaining at the number of copies allotted them. They wanted to triple and quadruple their orders.

¶ A man came into our office the other day offering to pay any price for a copy. He had tried to get a copy at a 72nd Street news-stand. Sold out! He tried several stands further downtown. Sold out! He decided he must have a copy. He tried every news-stand along Broadway and Sixth Avenue to Eighth Street. Nothing doing. Full of admiration and pity, our advertising manager gave him a cut copy, the only one left in the office.

¶ We received a letter signed Blanche Naylor: Violent threats and impassioned pleadings fail to divulge a copy of the May number on, under or above any news-stand on

lower Manhattan. May I be so bold as to beg that you will pity me, and forward a copy.

¶ The Washington Square Bookshop, 27 West 8th Street, New York, sold their order of 50 copies in two days. They wanted 200 more, but we could not supply them.

¶ Jimmy Higgins' Bookshop, 127 University Place, New York, sold 350 copies in a week. He pleaded with us to let him have 500 more. They were not to be had.

¶ The Book Nook, Detroit, writes: Sold 24 copies NEW MASSES in two days. Local distributor unable to supply more. Sold out. Please send re-order at once.

¶ To the Liberal Bookshop, Minneapolis, we wrote: Unfortunately we have not a single copy of the first issue left in our office and we cannot send the ten copies that you asked for by return mail. If you have any customers who are so anxious to have a complete file of the NEW MASSES that they will accept a late delivery of the May number, we will send you copies as soon as they have been returned from the news company. Judging by reports, there will not be many of these, but we will surely, we hope, have a few.

¶ From Washington, D. C., Los Angeles, Denver, Seattle, Chicago—from all over the country—we have been receiving letters from bookshops and news dealers begging us for copies. But the May number is exhausted.

¶ We are doubling our print order for the June issue—  
We hope that will *not* be enough.

So

Don't rely on the news-stands. Subscribe!

WRITE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS BELOW — CUT OR TEAR ALONG THIS LINE — SEND WITH \$2.00 FOR A YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION

**NEW MASSES**  
**39 West Eighth Street**  
**New York City**

Name ..... Address .....

If you don't want to tear the book, send us \$2.00 with your name and address. We'll know what to do.

## WE ARE BORN

Writing in the *Emporia Gazette*, William Allen White greets the NEW MASSES, is delighted that the infant seems so lusty, and gives it six months to live!

Mr. White is wrong. Despite his chronic obstreperousness, he remains like all liberals, a loyal child of our old mother capitalism, not realizing that she is now some years dead; that neither in life nor in the arts can she continue to nourish the children of the new world, who, even in America, are rapidly outgrowing their intellectual swaddling clothes.

However, Mr. White unquestionably gets us. He says, in effect, that we come not to chide the old woman, but to bury her. Right. And as for our own likelihood of survival, we submit that the future of this new world is probably a better gambling chance than the awkward and uncertain present of capitalism. Here is what Mr. White says about us:

Fancy what will happen to a magazine like this when the Watchers and Warders, the Defence Society, and the Minute Men wake up to a realization of its implications. So, if you are going to get a copy, buy it quick. For by this time next year the NEW MASSES will be a memory. We give it six months—and costs!

\* \* \*

We bid welcome to the NEW MASSES, which makes its bow on the news-stands today. Looking over the first number, we find ourselves in hearty disagreement with the whole point of view it reveals; nevertheless we find it amusing, which is the main point. Since the demise of the old *Masses* and the *Freeman* we have had too little thunder on the left; the tumult and the shouting have lacked their old-time zest. So, although the editors seem to have an infinite capacity for being wrong, good luck to them, and long may they rave.—From an Editorial in *The World, New York*.

\* \* \*

That bull about consulting your readers is old stuff. You could not have started the magazine again without the same rabid bunch of opinionated idea mortgagees, who would murder you for indulging in real thought. . . . Hurrah for the Cops and the Capitalists! Louis Siegel.

\* \* \*

The first issue of the NEW MASSES is a stunning number and gives great promise for the future. You have already achieved originality and power, and this means everything. Best wishes to the great adventure.

John Haynes Holmes.

\* \* \*

I had been looking forward to the NEW MASSES with such hopes that the disappointment is great indeed. . . . I felt so badly over the matter that it knocked me out for the good part of a day.

Harry Jaffe.

\* \* \*

At last the long-heralded and eagerly awaited NEW MASSES! Having been one of those fortunates who were able to secure copies of your magazine, I read your request for suggestions. It would be difficult to improve the NEW MASSES.—Rupert Cuthbert.



DRAWING BY D. BURLIUK

## SO THIS IS MIAMI!

## NEW MASSES—JUNE, 1926

Volume 1 Number 2

Single copy, 25 cents

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## EDITORS:

Egmont Arens, Joseph Freeman, Hugo Gellert, Michael Gold, James Rorty and John Sloan.

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## BUSINESS STAFF:

Ruth Stout, Manager; Helen Black, Circulation Manager; Esther Shemitz, Advertising Manager.

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## IN THIS ISSUE

## THE WRITERS

John Dos Passos is an American novelist and playwright whose most recent book, *Manhattan Transfer*, was published last year by Harpers.

Marguerite Tucker is a writer and musician living in New York.

Grace Lumpkin was on the editorial staff of the *World Tomorrow*.

Esther Lowell is one of the New York representatives of the *Federated Press*.

Arthur Garfield Hays is a well-known New York attorney who has often represented the American Civil Liberties Union in its fights for free speech.

Margaret Larkin is a young poet and playwright of Santa Fe, New Mexico, who has been acting as Secretary to Albert Weisbord during the Passaic strike.

Norman Thomas was the Socialist Party's candidate for Mayor of New York at the last election.

D. H. Lawrence, the noted British novelist, has spent many months at Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Alfred Kreymborg is a poet and playwright, first editor and founder of the magazine *Broom*, whose latest volume of poems, *Scarlet and Mellow*, has just been published by Boni and Liveright.

Chard Powers Smith's first volume of poems was published last year by the Yale University Press.

Arthur W. Calhoun is a teacher at the Brookwood Labor College.

Stuart Chase is the author of *The Tragedy of Waste*, published last year by the Macmillan Company.

John Howard Lawson, author of *Roger Bloomer*, *Processional* and *Nirvana*, is one of the most distinguished of the younger playwrights of America.

Roland A. Gibson is librarian of the Brookwood Labor College.

James Fuchs is a well-known writer for the radical press.

Jim Waters is a painter—of houses, not canvases—who works at his trade in Chicago.

## THE ARTISTS

David Burliuk is a Russian futurist painter, who has lived in America for the past five years.

Cornelia Barns is remembered for her work in the old *Masses*. She is now living in Morgan Hill, California.

Maurice Becker, cartoonist and painter, was with the old *Masses* from the start. His cartoons have been reproduced in radical papers in Europe, Japan and Australia. He was represented in the American exhibition in Paris (1924) and his work appears in the current International Exhibition in Dresden.

A. Walkowitz is an American painter who used to contribute to the old *Masses*. He is one of the Directors of the Independent Artists.



DRAWING BY D. BURLIUK

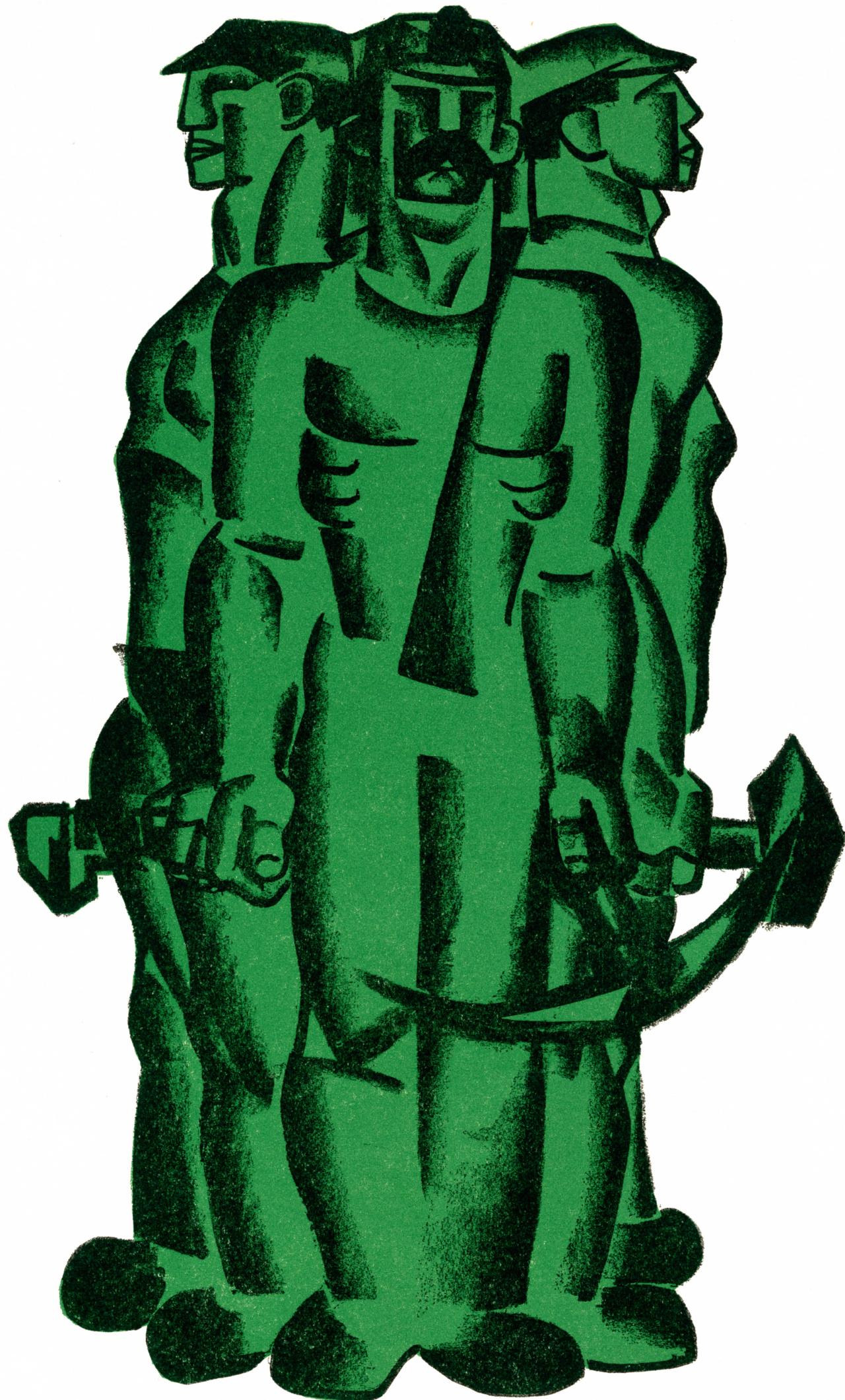
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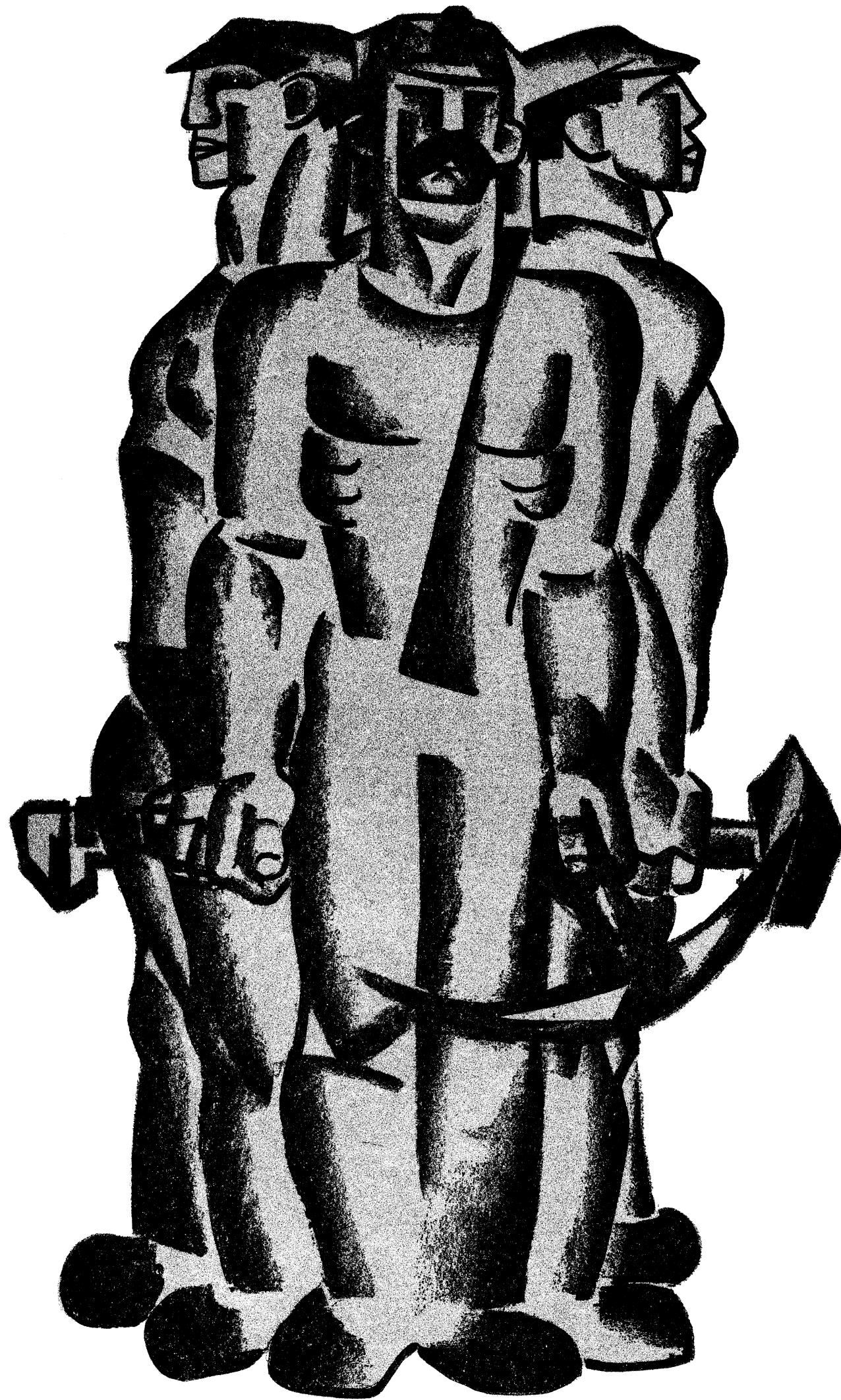
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DRAWING BY HUGO GELLERT

BRITISH LABOR

THEY STOOD AS ONE.



DRAWING BY HUGO GELLETT

## BRITISH LABOR

## THEY STOOD AS ONE.

# BRITISH LABOR WALKS OUT

By EGMONT ARENS

THE most important skirmish in the war between capital and labor since the Russian revolution has ended in a truce. As this issue of the *New Masses* goes to press the general strike of the British trade unions has been called off upon terms which save the face of the English government, but which are virtually a victory for the unions—if the government keeps its word. This, the second attempt of British labor to show its power by a general strike has proven so successful, beyond all expectations, that the English labor leaders were as completely surprised as the government. They had more power in their hands than they knew what to do with. They were confronted with a revolutionary situation for which they had no program. This is their weakness at the present moment. If the workers are betrayed by the state in the forthcoming negotiations, it will be because their leaders give half their allegiance to a government which by every logic is inimical to the workers' cause.

It is significant that while the spokesmen of the workers were honestly convinced that their action in calling a general strike had no revolutionary intent, the government was under no such illusion. When the British working people can stand together five million strong there is a new power set up in old England, and parliament and the king's ministers may twiddle their thumbs.

The king's ministers knew this, and were quite outspoken about it. They had known it for some time. The dreaded combined action of the Triple Alliance—miners, railwaymen and transport workers—had been threatened so many times in the past fifteen years that it had become a bugaboo which mocked at the security of the constituted British Empire. It is true that one great manifestation of solidarity collapsed on what is now known as labor's Black Friday, in April, 1921, but that debacle taught a lesson by which British unionism profited well. In place of the Triple Alliance the Workers' or Industrial Alliance was formed, which included the Miners' Federation, the Transport and General Workers, the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the Workers' Union, the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, the Locomotive Engineers and Firemen and the Electrical Trades Union. And the British Trade Union Congress and its General Council had been perfecting a centralization of power involving over six million workers. No wonder that Downing Street was a bit alarmed by developments at Eccleston Square.

Recently the world was greeted

W. N. Ewer, foreign editor of the *London Daily Herald*, in a Federated Press despatch dated May 12th:

The end of the general strike came with dramatic suddenness today. Following informal conversations initiated on government suggestion by Sir Herbert Samuel—chairman of the Coal Commission—the General Council this morning saw the premier and several other ministers. They gave informal, honorable undertakings that the government was prepared to adopt suggestions contained in the Samuel memorandum on the proposed settlement in the coal industry.

Thereupon, the Trades Union Council being of the opinion that this provided a "fair deal" to the miners, agreed to call off the strike. If the pledges given by the government are broken, Baldwin is not only guilty of a flagrant breach of faith, but renewal of the struggle is inevitable.

The net result of the strike has been to compel resumption of the negotiations, extension of the subsidy, the immediate beginning of the reorganization of the industry, abandonment of the proposed drastic wage cuts which were presented as an ultimatum.

Psychological effects are likely to be even more far-reaching. Labor learned by experiment of its own power—the enormous power of the strike weapon. Labor gained these days new inspiration, new enthusiasm, new energy. On the other hand, the governing classes have been nervous, bewildered, and obviously losing confidence in their grip on affairs as never before. That moral effect is likely to be an even more important effect in the next decade than the terms of the settlement itself. The feeling is, in fact, that the strike has been a tremendous tryout with results which may mean May 1926 marks a very definite epoch in the history of this country.

by the sublimely amusing spectacle of a labor premier at the head of a capitalistic and imperialistic government. That didn't work for reasons which to this day are not quite clear to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and his "constitutionalist" colleagues, who are still hoping to dissolve oil in water. But it proved again that there was a fast growing power in the land which would have to be reckoned with sooner or later.

That power made itself felt last July when Premier Baldwin surrendered to the threat of a general strike by granting a ten million dollar subsidy to make it possible for a living wage to be paid to the miners without cutting into the mine owners' profits. The subsidy was a rickety make-shift designed to preserve the divine rights of the coupon clippers, and the government knew it, but at that time it did not dare face a show-down with the workers.

But now, nine months later the government was ready with its strike-breaking organization, perfected by Joynson-Hicks the home secretary. Mobilization plans had been secretly prepared as against a foreign foe. Included in the forces which the government had at its disposal were the military and navy and the Army Supplemental Reserve. In addition unofficial bourgeois strike-breaking forces had been organized, such as the Organization for the Maintenance of Supplies (O. M. S.), the National Citizens' Union,

the British Empire Union, the National Guard and the British Fascisti.

Baldwin and his colleagues decided to make a stand, and to break for all time (if they could) the growing power of the unions. The government refused to continue the subsidy to the coal industry, and the miners went out on strike against a ten per cent reduction of near-starvation wages. Then when the General Council of the Trade Union Congress threatened a general strike in protest against the government's action, Baldwin forced the issue. An "outlaw" strike of printers on the *London Post* (who refused to print an editorial denouncing the miners), was used as a pretext by the premier for breaking off all negotiations. He flatly refused to resume parleys until the threatened general strike had been called off. He considered the ultimatum of the Trade Union Congress as nothing less than a threat to "the basis of organized government." And he was a good deal nearer to the truth than those parliamentary pussyfooters who have been assuring us that labor would not think of using its power against the government even if it could. The answer was that labor could and did.

Capitalist papers in the United States were not slow to see the implications. The *New York Herald-Tribune* said editorially: "If for example, Mr. Baldwin

should presently lose courage and surrender to these strikers, what would be the result? It would be equivalent to an announcement to the world that the king and his elected ministers had ceased to be rulers of Great Britain and that above them had been placed a super-state, a supreme cabinet, composed of this group of union leaders."

And that was exactly the case, in spite of the soft words of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. Cook, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Pugh.

So we have seen the spectacle of one of the most conservative labor groups in the world forced inevitably to the left by the logic of events. The main efforts of the Trade Union Congress were devoted, not to keeping the men on strike, but to keeping the "second line" men, those who had not yet been called out, at work. The rank and file were more eager for the strike than were the leaders. Now that labor has felt its power, it remains to be seen whether it will be satisfied with such conservative leadership. The truce just called leaves the British working man a bit stronger than he was. He has tasted the bread of revolutionary power. Will he be forever satisfied by the doles handed out to him by a parliamentary government? The answer to that question should prove very interesting to students of social change.

One other aspect of the strike deserves attention. Just as the government was inevitably forced into the position of defending capital against the new economic power of labor, so was labor the world-over drawn to express allegiance to the worker's cause in Great Britain. Messages of good will and gifts of money poured in upon the Trade Union Congress from labor organizations in every part of the globe.

A proclamation issued by the Red Labor International in Moscow indicates the general tone of these:

"The struggle has begun. Millions of the English proletariat have risen as one man against the exploiters.

"Facing the development of this gigantic struggle, when for the first time in British history class rises again class, all differences among the workers must be sunk. All workers, regardless of factions, must stand with our struggling brothers and give them full and unqualified aid.

"Not one ton of coal for England! All countries, boycott British coal orders and refuse to deliver any foreign merchandise to England! Wage a merciless fight against strike-breakers!"

So the foundations of a Workers' World are slowly built.

# ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN IN LOS ANGELES

By JAMES RORTY

THE night was chilly, and the pavements were damp and slippery, but the bare feet of J. Armistead Brophy, Apostle of Oom, the Higher Law, pad-padded the concrete with vigorous, unshivering confidence along the north side of the Square. Midway, he turned and took the diagonal across the park toward the fountain. It was eight o'clock, and because of the chilliness of the evening Pershing Square was almost deserted. At the fountain the Apostle paused, and in obedience to one of the three principles of his Being (the other two being Raw Food and Concentration) inhaled a long draught of pure cold water.

Plop! Something fallen from a height into the fountain scattered water into his face. He looked up and thought that he noticed a stir and quiver in the upper branches of the overhanging locust tree, but he could not be sure. He peered into the fountain to see what it was that had fallen, and—yes, it was unmistakably the nibbled remnant of an ice cream cone. A look of pained resignation shadowed the face of the Apostle. Even so, he thought. Even so the little Jewish boys stoned Stephen. Apprehensive of further attacks, he looked up cautiously—and suddenly the Apostle fell to his knees in an attitude of prayer. He had seen—Glory Hallelujah! what had he seen? He looked again. The upper branches of the locust tree swayed and trembled. Two great wings fluttered briefly and folded them-

selves about a body of dazzling whiteness.

The Apostle had meditated greatly. He had experienced many mysteries. But he had never before seen an angel. Especially a female angel. Indeed, he was not prepared for a vision of such surpassing loveliness. Yet how right, he thought, that she should appear to him clad only in the garments of the spirit. So dazzled was he by the soft glow which wrapped the celestial visitor as in a sheath of glory that his eyes could scarce note the perfect details of that stately figure. Not of the flesh was this radiance—surely, not of the flesh. There came over him a feeling of pride and gratitude that to him this exquisite revelation should have been granted—to him, J. Armistead Brophy, Apostle of Oom. The very shoulders of his Apostleship straightened, the blood of his dedication flowed faster through his veins. How strange, how wonderful. He felt himself at once more of a man and more of an apostle. Afraid no longer, he raised his head and gazed directly into the face of the angel, who in turn regarded him with mild and curious eyes. Beautiful eyes, thought the Apostle. Suddenly the angel clasped both hands across her face.

“I—I beg your pardon,” stammered the Apostle, blushing furiously.

Whereupon the angel unclasped her hands, exclaiming merrily, “Peek-a-boo!”

What could one reply to that? The

Apostle could think of nothing, and dropped his eyes meekly to the ground.

“Are you a Christian?”

The Apostle looked up, startled. But there was no avoiding the question, nor the frank and insistent gaze of his questioner. At the same time he became aware of a murmur and rustle in the higher branches of the locust tree. The apparition was not alone, then. There must be two, or even three angels, he decided, as he drew himself up and prepared to answer as best he might.

“I trust that my beliefs do not essentially conflict with those of the great founder of Christianity,” began the Apostle. “But to be strictly accurate I should be obliged to answer; no, I am not a Christian. I am an humble disciple of the great Brown-Rama. In so far as my poor powers permit, I adhere to Oom, the Higher Law—”

The Apostle paused. To his surprise, he found himself suddenly without an audience. The angel had swung herself hastily out of sight among the branches. The Apostle peered and listened. Had he been dreaming? No, there in the fountain was the fragment of ice cream cone. And now and then, as he held his breath and strained his eyes upward, he thought that he could distinguish a glint of wings and hear a murmur, as of doves, issuing from among the shadows. But that might be only the wind.

The Apostle felt suddenly very desolate and deprived. The pavement chilled his feet as he continued along the diagonal to the other side of the park. Look for the Apostle and you may still find him expounding Oom, the Higher Law in the public squares and in certain obscure halls of the City of the Angels. The Higher Law has changed somewhat. It now includes four principles: Pure cold water, Concentration, Raw Food, and—Ice Cream Cones. If you ask him, the Apostle will explain why.

## II

It was nearly eight o'clock in the evening when James Aloysius arrived, and Mrs. Johnson, leaning anxiously over the porch rail greeted him with indignant reproaches.

“James Aloysius! What do you mean by coming home at such a time! I've been worried almost to death, and your dinner's stone cold.”

Grasping James Aloysius by the arm, Mrs. Johnson started to haul her offspring up the steps.

“Ma!” shouted James Aloysius, beginning to cry, “Ma, I seen three angels in Pershing Square.”

“What! You saw—nonsense! You'll go right to bed this moment. What have you got in that blouse? It's dripping wet. Good gracious! Six ice cream cones! James Aloysius, you stole those. Don't try to tell me different—”

“I didn't, ma, honest I didn't,” protested James Aloysius, now dissolved in tears. “The angels give 'em to me.”

“They was three of 'em and they was all up in the trees, and they didn't have any clothes on at all—”

“What?”

“No Ma. Honest. They was like”—James Aloysius groped painfully for an image. “They was like sister Agnes when she takes a bath. Only wings—big ones.” James Aloysius illustrated graphically. “Oh, they was beautiful, ma. But the wings was all gummed up with something black and sticky, and they couldn't seem to fly very well.”

“Humph! Couldn't, eh? Well, go on. What did they say to you?”

“One of them sort of—sort of hopped down to the ground and says, 'Leetle boy! Leetle boy!' She couldn't talk very well, ma. I don't think they was American angels, ma.”

“Yes, yes.”

“And then she asked what are you eating, and I says I only had one, and how they only give *one* ice cream cone at the festival this year instead of two like last year. And one of them—the tall, dark one—says something to the other two, and then she run over to the corner where the hoky-poky wagon is, and come back with a whole pile of ice cream cones and give 'em to me. She said they was for *me*, ma. The Eyetalian run away when she come, and she said he couldn't eat all those ice cream cones himself anyway, so



DRAWING

BY A. WALKOWITZ



DRAWING

BY A. WALKOWITZ

why not? . . . Ma! Ma—she said they was for me, Ma—"

"Yes, yes. Why, the child must be out of his head!"

"She asked me where had I been, and I said the Christian Endeavor ice cream festival at the Institute, and that seemed to please 'em and she asked me was the people at the Institute Christians, and I said they was Baptists and she said what? and I says Baptists, and they shook their heads and talked to each other and I remembered you said to come home early and one of 'em—the sort of plump light haired one—kissed me. And they all three of 'em says I was to have *all* the ice cream cones—honest, ma. . . ."

### III

Citizens strolling in Pershing Square that evening saw nothing and heard nothing, except an occasional cooing sound, as of pigeons. But if they could have climbed the largest of the locust trees which surrounded the fountain at the center of the Square, and parted the branches which made a thick crown at its top, this is what they would have heard:

"Did I not say that it is among the savages that we have come, Carmencita? That leetle boy—you remember what he say? Not Christians—no—he say Baptis'—something like that. And this old man. Is he a Christian? No, he is a Doom. He say it himself. Probably he is a cannibal—the Baptis' too for that matter. Oh! Oh!"

The plumpest of the three angels sobbed outright. Her dark-haired sister, whose brow was knitted in concentration upon the practical aspects of the problem, patted her arm absently in reply.

"But what can we do? What *can* we do?" demanded Celeste impatiently.

"One thing is certain—we can't stay here," replied Carmencita decisively. "If only we hadn't got messed up with this oil."

The wings of all three angels were spotted and streaked with a dark, viscous liquid. Therese, the youngest of the three, wept softly, as with much labor and little success she attempted to cleanse her soiled and trailing pinions.

"We should have known better than to have alighted first among those great towers!" sobbed Therese. "If we cannot fly, how can we return? We are lost. And soon the Baptis' will come to eat us."

Indeed, angels—young and beautiful angels especially—are little fitted to cope with the vicissitudes attending an earthly sojourn. Who will blame them, therefore, if in their distress, Therese and Celeste clung to each other in utter despondency?

Carmencita, however, was made of sterner stuff. Mounting to one of the topmost branches of the locust tree, she gazed out over the lights of the city. In the belfry of the Zion Institute on the other side of the Square, a shadow stirred and swung. The voice of a deep-throated bell spoke suddenly in the quiet of the upper air.

Carmencita rejoined her sisters. "This is impossible," she said, briefly. "Come, we will go to the Baptis'. We will throw ourselves upon their mercy."

### IV

The evening service in Zion Institute had progressed as far as the offertory. The members of the congregation, still trembling as a result of the anxious introspection induced by the Reverend Smithers' powerful sermon, rustled their programs and observed that the

### V

After a sleepless night passed in the women's dormitories of the Institute, during which a shocked matron tried repeatedly but unsuccessfully to induce them to don the neat blue denim night robes of the institution, Carmencita and her sisters, convinced that

air. Twice she circled over the city, and some say that the names "Celeste" and "Therese" were wafted faintly to the ears of the upward-gazing crowd. Soon she vanished, a wavering point in the blue air.

The sexton returned to the church and rang the bell for half an hour steadily—just why, he was not able to



DRAWING

BY A. WALKOWITZ

offertory solo would be sung as usual by the contralto, Mrs. James Bidwell Bronson. Listening to Mrs. Bronson, one could not help feeling that the eminence and security of her social position had somehow found expression in her voice, especially the deep and resonant notes of her lower register. The six elders bearing the collection plates started down the aisles, led by Mr. T. Calvin Copeland, chairman of the Board, and in civil life, cashier of the Citizens' Home Bank. The organ, the third largest pipe organ in the world, gift of Mr. Israel Mather, President of the Universal Oil Company, pealed and rumbled through an impressive prelude, and Mrs. Bronson, standing four square and full-bosomed behind the choir rail, poured forth her rich gifts of song in the opening phrase of the offertory:

"Joy everlasting, or gloom forevermore?" sang the accomplished contralto, "Eternity, where?"

The entrance door opposite the center aisle swung inward softly. Mr. T. Calvin Copeland, whose discreet tread and deprecating bow was nearing the rear pews, stopped in his tracks and for the first time in his life, spilled the contents of the collection plate over the red plush carpet. The minister, peering down from the pulpit—but there, how do you expect us to describe what happened at this juncture? Again her great wings beat the

only destruction awaited them, took to the fire escape.

At seven o'clock a real estate subdivider on his way to work so far misconceived the situation as to turn in the fire alarm. In the general hurly burly Celeste and Therese became frightened and retreated into the church. But Carmencita, unaware that her sisters had deserted her, fled across the park, closely pursued by the realtor, the matron of the institution, the sexton, two church wardens, an Italian ice cream vendor, the secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, and a score or more of miscellaneous citizens. At the corner of Fifth and South Hill Streets, a motion picture camera man joined the pursuit, and its final episodes are recorded, for the consternation of the skeptical, in fifteen hundred feet of exciting film.

Breathless, but still running strongly, Carmencita had maintained a twenty yard lead over her pursuers, when, with a terrifying roar, a fire engine rushed out of a side street. With a despairing cry, the frightened angel extended her long pinions, from which the clinging oil had now partially melted, and in a series of beautiful soaring leaps, reached the top of the steep bluff. There she paused, and those who led the pursuit declare that they saw her hand lifted in a gesture of denunciation. Again her great wings beat the

explain. The motion picture camera man took a taxi, and so efficient was the organization of his studio that the following week "The Angel's Flight" was a feature of the news releases at all the leading motion picture theatres. The realtor, profiting by the miracle which the crowd had just witnessed, found his prospects willing to believe anything, and had an excellent day.

### VI

There remain the blonde and beautiful Celeste and her sister, Therese. What became of them? Fortunately I can answer with my personal testimony.

In a side street, close to one of the main traffic arteries of the City of the Angels, hangs a sign which reads: "Arcadia Dairy Lunch." There are many such establishments in Los Angeles. In the trade directory, the proprietors are listed as "Winship & O'Halloran." But this is obviously a blind, as I discovered the first time I went there.

Celeste, the elder of the two beautiful girls who supply the wants of the customers, is blonde, of an agreeable plumpness, and her hands, as she spreads a paper napkin and arranges the knives and spoons at your place, are incomparably soft and gentle. Therese, the younger, is small and slight of figure, and her slender love-  
(Continued on page 27)



DRAWING

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# A PASSAIC SYMPOSIUM

## SNAPSHOTS OF THE TEXTILE STRIKE

### PROFESSIONAL Patriots

PROFESSIONAL "outside agitators" for the RED-WHITE-AND-BLUE also horned in on the Passaic strike. The cops, the magistrates, the German mill owners and other monopolists of Americanism greeted them with loud hosannas and hallelujahs. Rotary, Kiwanis and Chamber of Commerce extended them a warm and a glad mit.

Like the Gideon brethren distributing black-bound Testaments came first the United States Patriotic Society with copies of the CONSTITUTION in Slavonic, Hungarian and Arabic. They came to save the souls of the heathen strikers from red, rank Bolshevism. They came—their expenses paid by their "founder," Mr. Jacob Cash,—to teach a constitution which omits the Bill of Rights, the clauses about free speech, assemblage, unreasonable search and seizure, excessive bail. An expurgated constitution with the objectionable, indecent and revolutionary passages clipped. This is their remedy for low wages and long hours. They also distribute "Founder" Cash's little idyll—"What America Means to Me"—which is calculated to make the clubbed, gassed and half-starved workers think well of our INSTITUTIONS and swear allegiance to the government of Zober, Preiskel & Co.

There also came the patriotic and uplifting National Security League with its 100 per cent Wall Street support. It placed articles in the local press glorifying the American Cossacks. Its orators addressed luncheons of business men and painted Weisbord scarlet. They advised the civil and military dictators during the days of the terror. They cooperated with mill stool pigeons and provocateurs in arresting, enjoining and framing up the strike leaders.

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*This Passaic strike that America has been reading about was precipitated when the millionaire employers tried to cut the wages of their workers ten per cent—the wages of family men and women earning only \$12 to \$20 an overlong working week.*

*The strike has lasted for nearly three months, and has become one of the heroic epics of American labor history, like Homestead, Ludlow, Cabin Creek, Lawrence and Seattle. It will never be forgotten, nor will the brave workers who have marched on its picket-lines.*

*The Passaic strike may be settled when this issue of the NEW MASSES reaches its subscribers. But the problems of the million workers in the textile industry will not have been settled. They are still living in foul tenements, eating scant food, raising starved families on pauper wages. They are still at the mercy of boss-owned judges, mayors and police. They are still unorganized and helpless.*

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### 300 N. Y. AGITATORS REACH PASSAIC

THE people who had come from New York roamed in a desultory group along the broad pavement. We were talking of outrages and the Bill of Rights. The people who had come from New York wore warm overcoats in the sweeping wind, bits of mufflers, and fluffiness of women's blouses fluttered silky in the cold April wind. The people who had come from New York filled up a row of taxicabs, shiny sedans of various makes, nicely upholstered; the shiny sedans started off in a procession towards the place where the meeting was going to be for-

den. Inside we talked in a desultory way of outrages and the Bill of Rights, we, descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers, the Bunker Hill Monument, Gettysburg, the Boston Teaparty... Know all men by these presents... On the corners groups of yellowish grey people standing still, square people standing still as chunks of stone, looking nowhere, saying nothing.

At the place where the meeting was going to be forbidden the people from New York got out of the shiny sedans of various makes. The sheriff was a fat man with a badge like a star off a Christmas tree, the little eyes of a suspicious landlady in a sallow face. The cops were waving their clubs about, limbering up their arms. The cops were red-faced, full of food, the cops felt fine. The special deputies had restless eyes, they were stocky young men crammed with pop and ideals, overgrown boy-scouts; they were on the right side and they knew it. Still the shiny new doublebarrelled riot guns made them nervous. They didn't know which shoulder to keep their guns on. The people who had come from New York stood first on one foot then on the other.

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Five minutes later, the picket line streamed along the Passaic river. The Botany Mills on the opposite side looked like an arsenal. Thousands of empty cans and refuse littered the river bank.

The line strung out a mile behind us. We walked quietly two by two. Children darted in and out like dusty little butterflies, faces full of cheerful anxiety; young girls with glittering eyes and strong white teeth, burst into revolutionary songs. At one moment, the entire line took up the transport workers' song, "Hold the Fort," and sang to the beat of rhythmic feet. We turned the corner leading past the Forstmann & Huffmann mills. A quiver, like the ripple down a snake's back, ran through the line.

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The line was broken. Armed deputies with sawed-off riot guns were driving the workers to a vacant lot. Policemen with clubs pushed threateningly. The patrol wagon stood at a corner. One by one our friends

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### JERSEY JUSTICE

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## GOD!

DRAWING BY HUGO GELLERT

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"I am going to read the Riot Act."

It would be cruelty to animals to compare his face, at this moment, to an animal's. He looked like a hideous mask; venom and hate flowed over his countenance. He finished. . . .

"God save the state. . . . Sweep 'em up." He emphasized the command with a furious gesture to the policemen.

Like automatons, they swept into the line with ready clubs. Blows right and left, on heads and shoulders. Women fell to the ground. Esther Lowell stooped to pick up a woman and was arrested on the spot. The sheriff spied pretty Nancy Sandowsky, girl picket leader, who had already been arrested several times. He yelled, "Arrest that girl." Nancy, speechless, was forcibly led away.

Robert Dunn was walking beside me. A man in front got a blow on the head that should have killed him. The policeman turned savagely and faced us. He scanned us hastily and rushed by us. We looked respectable, I suppose. I looked round. He was striking a man who was trying to rise to his feet. Dunn left me for a few seconds. I followed him; the next

mounted the steps, arrested for God knows what. The whole thing was over in a flash.

Unarmed strikers singing songs . . . with nothing in their pockets but their hands, marching cheerfully, and Heaven knows they had nothing to be cheerful about. The crescendo: infuriated policemen with heavy clubs plowing into them, savagely striking every head they saw. The finale: a big black wagon carrying off strikers to the jail.

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black handkerchiefs tied round their chins; young girls, fresh and beautiful despite what the mills have done to them; mothers with babies in their arms; men standing at the back of the hall, muscled, solid, quietly attentive. They follow every word of the speakers and friendly applause shakes the building at irregular intervals. They love their leader, Albert Weisbord. He is young, rather small of stature, with a sensitive face and a modest manner.

This strike has power and not only

### FACTORIES

Buried in one-eyed dungeons where the walls  
Stare out on other walls through window panes,  
A grinding mechanism squats and chains  
Each arm and leg to slavish rituals,  
The while monotonous privation hauls  
Dark bodies to and fro down prison lanes  
Where no soft light nor open door remains  
To proffer freedom from such funerals.

The eye that peers from out each socket there  
Reflects a roving madman in a cave  
Striving and straining to burst the stony shell:  
The look makes every cell begin to glare,  
The very walls to shudder and to rave,  
As each grim puppet earns his bread in hell.

Alfred Kreyemborg

have been friends ever since Teddy went into the mill three years ago when he was fourteen and Chester, two years older, showed him the ropes.

They went on strike together the first day of the strike and every day since they have gone to the picket line. One morning they were stopped by five cops. The cops grabbed Teddy and began to search him. Chester knew that in America cops can't search people on the streets unless they have a search warrant, so he edged in to "give 'em an argument." "You can't do that," he said. "Oh, can't we!" said the cops. "You're under arrest."

"What for? I didn't do nutten," said Chester.

"Yeh didn't, hey?" cried another cop, and swung his club down, "blunk-blunk" on Chester's head.

Chester was carried to the patrol wagon. When he regained consciousness the police took him to the hospital to have stitches taken. When he was nicely bandaged up he was solemnly charged in open court, in the face of all the evidence, with "interfering with an officer in the performance of his duty," and sentenced to ten days in jail.

Nancy Sandowsky was arrested for the third time as she marched by on the picket line. Everybody in the court room had a hard time keeping from

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DRAWING BY  
OTTO SOGLOW

## I'LL LICK EVERY DAMN JEW IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

laughing when the judge sentenced Nancy to ten days in jail for shouting "Two-four-six-eight! who do we appreciate? Weisbord! One-two-three-four! what are you going to yell for? Union!" and for saying, "I don't care" five times when threatened with arrest.

Frank Sorno learned something about courts for strikers one afternoon. When the thugs that are deputy sheriffs in Bergen county told the picket line to "shut up that Solidarity song," they began to sing another one. "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty," they sang, and if the tone was a bit derisive, whose fault was that? Frank Sorno was arrested on the word "liberty." He began to learn something of the amazing celerity of "Jersey Justice" for strikers. Before his friends could telephone the news of his arrest to headquarters, he had been hauled up before a Justice of the Peace, arraigned and tried without counsel for his defense, found guilty and had begun serving a thirty day jail sentence! "They didn't waste any time," said Frank philosophically.

The Passaic strike runs its own newspaper. The strikers are proud of "The Strike Bulletin" and many of them write for it—short, direct, skele-

ton-like stories that are more telling than many an elaborate narrative. Frank Vacarro and Joseph Sinichuk were giving out free copies of the *Bulletin* one day. "You're under arrest." The usual hustling and manhandling. After Frank and Joe got to the station it was found that they really had been committing a heinous crime. "Found guilty of distributing advertising without a permit," said the Judge.

Andy Bokowsky was arrested. He tried to tell his story to the Judge. He wanted to tell how he had been hit over the head, how all the strikers in the first ranks of the line had been abused as they were arrested, for nothing except for being in the front ranks. When he came before the Judge he was not allowed to tell it.

The cop testified. He told a smooth story. Andy had refused to move on, Andy had cursed him, Andy had tried to strike him; everything that the cop had done to Andy he swore that Andy had done to him. Nobody interrupted the cop. "Oh Jez, how that cop lied," said the other boys. Andy stood at the bar "of justice," forbidden to clear himself, and the bitter realization of his own helplessness overcame him. He

didn't mind being arrested, or being cursed, or being hit, or going to jail. It was the exasperation of being convicted by a lying cop that upset Andy. He burst into tears. "Poor Andy, he couldn't stand it the way that cop lied," said the boys. But the Judge was convinced that a striker who cried when the cops told lies about him must be demented. He ordered Andy held ten days in jail "for observation."

Jack Rubenstein, picket captain, hero of many a tactic that has outwitted Passaic cops, was arrested for the fifth time, refused counsel at his arraignment, hustled off to jail, and held under heavy bond. His offense was a major one. It read otherwise in the complaint, but it may be summarized in three words, "good picket captain." While he was in jail he fell into new crimes. A dispute in the bull pen in which he interposed earned him the usual reward of the peace maker. The jail keeper rushed in, saw Rubenstein leaning on the door of his cell and decided to fix the blame on him. "What's the trouble here?" he cried, and without waiting for an answer began to kick and pummel Rubenstein. "No use fighting back in jail—they've

got you licked already," said Rubenstein. "I just backed away from him. I wish now I'd hit him, since they got me for assault anyway." Rubenstein, after being beaten up, was charged with assault and battery.

Perhaps you think that "recourse can be had to the courts" when strikers are beaten by police after their arrest, when they are arrested on silly complaints, when they are arrested illegally, when they get misdeals in the courtroom, high bails from Justices of the Peace, and justice nowhere at all.

Hear Police Judge Davidson of Passaic when sixteen warrants against police officers on charges of atrocious assault were demanded by attorneys for the American Civil Liberties Union. "I will not allow any warrants to be issued against police when strikers are the complainants," said the Judge. "Will you accept the complaints of these three people who are not strikers and allow your clerk to issue warrants?" asked the attorney. "I will not allow any warrants whatsoever to be issued against the police if the charges involve things they did while on duty in keeping order," was the answer of Judge Davidson.

Margaret Larkin.

DRAWING BY  
OTTO SOGLOW



I'LL LICK EVERY DAMN JEW IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

## GOD SAVE THE STATE!

**S**AID the policeman, swelling out his chest and swinging his club suggestively—

"What are you doing here?"

"Picketing," answered the boy.

The big man's red, puffy face vibrated angrily to the staccato of his words. He said:

"Now, young man, you can lead this line down two blocks to your right and on back to town, but you can't picket! You can choose to go away or you can choose trouble!"

The youngster turned around. I was just behind him and saw his eyes. They had fear way back in them, but he had whipped his lips into a twisted smile. He went down the line and spoke to the strikers.

"Fellow workers, he says we'll have to go away or expect trouble. What do you say?"

The people answered.

The boy came back to the front of the line, looked at the policeman and said:

"We'll picket."

He turned to go back down the sidewalk and the long line began to follow. We took a step or two and found policemen with uplifted clubs barring our way, and behind them men with guns. Suddenly the sheriff appeared. He gathered the police about him, read the riot act which ended with the words, "God save the state." Then, with a great sweep of his arm, he screamed:

"Sweep 'em out, boys!"

The police rushed toward the strikers. The air became thick with clubs, with cries of pain and misery, with the sound of clubs striking against human bodies. A woman and a child lying silent on the ground, a policeman standing over them, his club raised. Another woman screaming as a bluecoat struck her down. These things are unforgettable.

A law of 1864 for workers of 1926. A law enforced by great blue arms swinging clubs against human, quivering flesh. God save the state, and to hell with human beings.

Grace Lumpkin.

## IS THIS LIBERTY?

**O**NE cannot conceive of a greater state of organized tyranny and disregard of law than exists in Passaic, Garfield and the rest of the strike territory. Under-Sheriff Donaldson, with apparent confidence in his position, asserts that there will be no public meetings, orderly or disorderly, in Garfield. It is almost impossible even to test the right, where twenty or thirty armed men prevent an assemblage. In spite of constitutional provisions that excessive bail should not be demanded, the courts have asked, not excessive, but exorbitant bail. For acts which at most would amount to disorderly conduct and for which men are ordinarily fined \$10 to \$25, bail of \$5,000 to \$30,000 is demanded, when the individual happens to be of any importance, or a leader in the strike. The arrests and bail have little to do with the acts because, in such cases, the acts are all the same. The obvious purpose is to break the strike by jailing leaders. A

fortunate consequence is that people in this country may gradually come to realize that guarantees of liberty are gradually disappearing. I am optimist enough to believe that when the people realize this, there will be a great wave of indignation.

Arthur Garfield Hays.

## AN OLD FIERCE MOTHER

**H**ERE'S to the Passaic strikers, the workers themselves, heroes of the fight, backbone of the world! I remember this about them:

A bright brown-eyed girl stands close to the platform at the strike meeting, holding a heavy boy of four, her pale face lit with a lovely smile. Night work is making her old at twenty-five.

A stocky man with an undersized boy perched on his shoulder, listens with elephantine patience.

A sturdy man with glasses and drooping moustaches offers "a twelve-room house for the first strikers put out by bad landlords," his Italian tongue twisting the English words.

Stalwart young Negro picket captains command the mixed white and black line of strikers marching to the dye works. Soft Negro voices: "Fellow workers, keep a straight line!" An older colored man bewildered by white workers accepting colored leadership.

Glowing with the glamor and drama,

thirteen-year-olders stay from school to help the fight of their fathers and mothers, their sisters and brothers. "My mother broke her finger in the mill and my sister lost hers in the machinery a week later, so my father doesn't want me to go to work there," says a girl. Some one comments: "She ought to go on to high school. She's the smartest girl in the class."

Dark passageway into bedroom, kitchen and living room of a shy little Polish widow wearing a gay old-country kerchief on her head. Five children depend on her meagre earnings—\$16 weekly when the mills are busy. Take out \$16 a month rent for those three dark bits of space!

"I got nine child," a lanky German Hungarian father says. "Oldest boy, eighteen, work in stove cleaning for \$15 a week." The baby was a seven-months child, now nearly three years old, and the thin nervous mother sick mostly since. "When this one come I work up to the last week," she says, pointing to her scrawny son of five, or seven. "By this other boy, I work three months after." Mother in the spinning department at night; father in finishing by day.

Worn-looking widow feeding a young baby on chopped cold boiled potato in a dark, damp back room. Daughter striking; no housework out now for mother; boy of 16 has just got a job delivering at \$14 a week.

Big Polish peasant mother, nursing

her ninth unconcernedly. "When I bring home \$20, my wife say, 'big pay this week,'" says the husband. Six weeks layoff from the wash house before the strike and a boy in the hospital. "What we gonna do?" he says. "Worker gotta fight—all strike together."

Old Italian mother: drudging years have left her still keen and bold, old-world gold and turquoise earrings swinging as she mocks fiercely at the cops. She mimics, in the jail cell as we wait, how they beat her. She warms my cold hands between her own. "Good bye, missus," I manage to stammer when they let me out of jail, and she, the old fierce mother was left behind. . . .

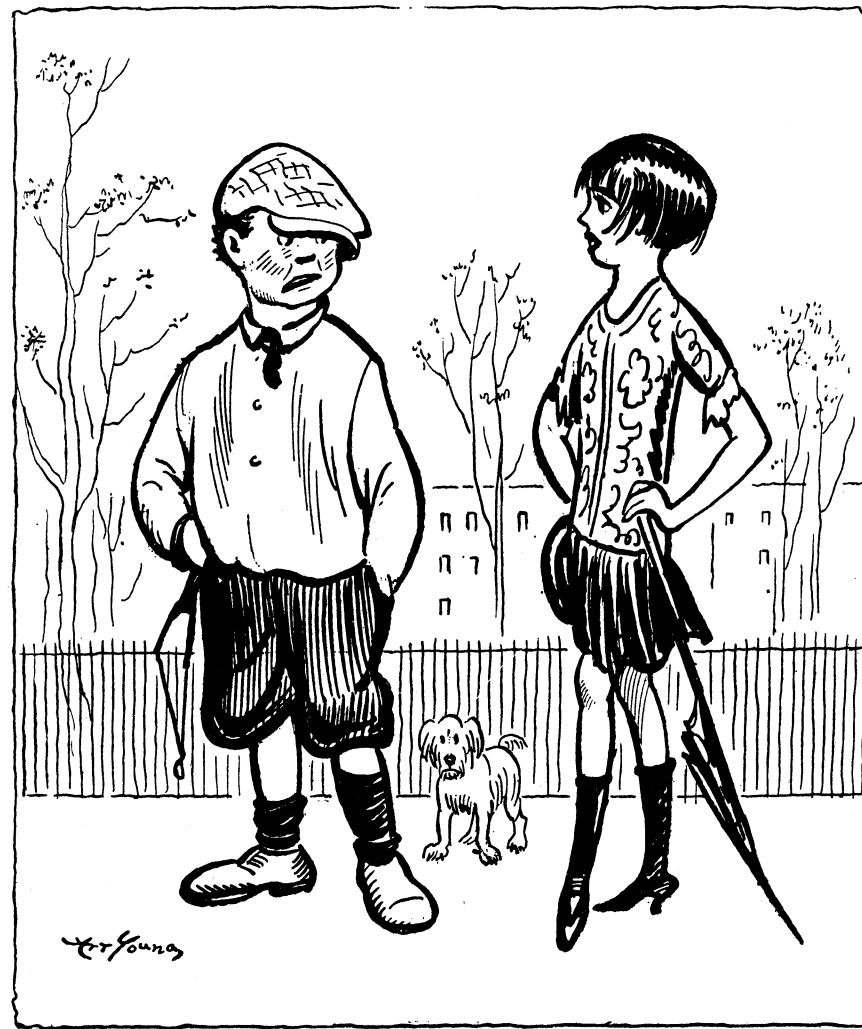
Esther Lowell.

## LESSONS OF PASSAIC

**A**S one who had almost come to believe that the American people, including some parts of the American labor movement, were beyond caring what happened with regard to public questions, I have been encouraged by the interest aroused by the Passaic strike, especially in its civil liberties aspects. Here I should like to say a good word for the A. F. of L. Individual unions and individual unionists have supported the strike liberally. President Green has issued the most clear-cut statement I ever read from any A. F. of L. official denouncing the wrongs of strikers not yet connected with the A. F. of L. This holds out some hope for the future. Perhaps the labor unions will now tackle more vigorously the job of organizing the unorganized textile workers which is essential to further progress. Indeed the final measure of the success or failure of the Passaic strike will be its contribution both to the determination to organize and the strategy of organizing the unorganized wage slaves who form so large a part of America's labor army.

The Passaic strike will serve a doubly useful purpose if it impresses upon the workers one of the most flagrant evils of the capitalist system. I refer to the concealment of profits by stock dividends and the capitalization not of the savings of investors but of the legal right to exploit both consumers and wage workers. The whole woolen industry has been the greedy beneficiary of a subsidy that all of us have helped to pay by reason of tariff rates. (And yet they have the nerve to call us outsiders when we begin to inquire into the nature of the industry we have subsidized!) The industry pays tragically low wages and expects the brunt of industrial depression to be borne by these underpaid workers. Yet in its years of prosperity the Botany mills alone increased their stock from 34,000 to 497,000 shares by a clever process of reorganizing the industry and dividing up its past surplus. It is on this swollen capitalization that the bosses seek to pay profits wrung from the workers. A contemplation of this basic fact may have greater educational value than the more colorful incidents of the strike which I have omitted. Anyway, here's to the strike and the ultimate victory!

Norman Thomas.



DRAWING BY ART YOUNG

**GIRL: YES, AN' SOME DAY I'M GONNA ACT IN THE MOVIES.**

**BOY: GOWAN! YOU AIN'T GOT NO SEX APPEAL.**



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**GIRL: YES, AN' SOME DAY I'M GONNA ACT  
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**BOY: GOWAN! YOU AIN'T GOT NO SEX APPEAL.**

# SMILE—A STORY

By D. H. LAWRENCE

HE had decided to sit up all night, as a kind of penance. The telegram had simply said: *Ophelia's condition critical*. He felt, under the circumstances, that to go to bed in the *wagon-lit* would be frivolous. So he sat wearily in the first-class compartment, as night fell over France.

He ought, of course, to be sitting by Ophelia's bedside. But Ophelia didn't want him. So he sat up in the train.

Deep inside him was a black and ponderous weight: like some tumor filled with sheer gloom, weighing down his vitals. He had always taken life seriously. Seriousness now overwhelmed him. His dark, handsome, clean-shaven face would have done for Christ on the Cross, with the thick black eyebrows tilted in the dazed agony.

The night in the train was like an inferno: nothing was real. Two elderly Englishwomen opposite him had died long ago, perhaps even be-

fore he had. Because, of course, he was dead himself.

Slow, grey dawn came in the mountains of the frontier, and he watched it with unseeing eyes. But his mind repeated:

*"And when the dawn came, slow and sad  
And chill with early showers,  
They softly closed her eyes: she had  
Another world than ours."*

And his monk's changeless, tormented face showed no trace of the contempt he felt, even self-contempt, for this pathos, as his critical mind judged it.

He was in Italy: he looked at the country with faint aversion. Not capable of much feeling any more, he had only a tinge of aversion as he saw the olives and the sea. A sort of poetic swindle.

It was night again when he reached the home of the Blue Sisters, where Ophelia had chosen to retreat. He

was ushered into the Mother Superior's room, in the palace. She rose and gave him her hand, in silence, looking at him along her nose. The she said in French:

"It pains me to tell you. She died this afternoon."

He stood stupefied, not feeling much, anyhow, but gazing at nothingness from his handsome, strong-featured monk's face.

The Mother Superior softly put her white, handsome hand on his arm and gazed up into his face, leaning to him.

"Courage!" she said softly. "Courage, no?"

He stepped back. He was always scared when a woman leaned at him like that. In her voluminous skirts, the Mother Superior was very womanly.

"Quite!" he replied in English. "Can I see her?"

The Mother Superior rang a bell, and a young sister appeared. She was rather pale, but there was something naive and mischievous in her hazel eyes. The elder woman murmured an introduction, the young woman demurely made a slight reverence. But

Matthew held out his hand, like a man reaching for the last straw. The young nun unfolded her white hands and shyly slid one into his, passive as a sleeping bird.

And out of the fathomless Hades of his gloom, he thought: What a nice hand!

They went along a handsome but cold corridor, and tapped at a door. Matthew, walking in far-off Hades, still was aware of the soft, fine voluminousness of the women's black skirts, moving with soft, fluttered haste in front of him.

He was terrified when the door opened, and he saw the candles burning round the white bed, in the lofty, noble room. A sister sat beside the candles, her face dark and primitive, in the white coif, as she looked up from her breviary. Then she rose, a sturdy woman, and made a little bow, and Matthew was aware of creamy-dusky hands twisting a black rosary, against the rich, blue silk on her bosom.

The three sisters flocked silent, yet fluttered and very feminine, in their volumes of silky black skirts, to the bed-head. The Mother Superior leaned, and with utmost delicacy lifted the veil of white lawn from the dead face.

Matthew saw the dead, beautiful composure of his wife's face, and instantly, something leaped like laughter in the depths of him, he gave a little grunt, and an extraordinary smile came over his face.

The three nuns, in the candle glow that quivered warm and quick like a Christmas tree, were looking at him with heavily compassionate eyes, from under their coif-bands. They were like a mirror. Six eyes suddenly started with a little fear, then changed, puzzled, into wonder. And over the three nuns' faces, helplessly facing him in the candle-glow, a strange, involuntary smile began to come. In the three faces, the same smile growing so differently, like three subtle flowers opening. In the pale young nun, it was almost pain, with a touch of mischievous ecstasy. But the dark Ligurian face of the watching sister, a mature, level-browed woman, curled with a pagan smile, slow, infinitely subtle in its archaic humour. It was the Etruscan smile, subtle and unabashed, and unanswerable.

The Mother Superior, who had a large-featured face something like Matthew's own, tried hard not to smile. But he kept his humorous, malevolent chin uplifted at her, and she lowered her face as the smile grew, grew and grew over her face.

The young, pale sister suddenly covered her face with her sleeve, her body shaking. The Mother Superior put her arm over the girl's shoulder, murmuring with Italian emotion: "Poor little thing! Weep then, poor little thing!" But the chuckle was still there, under the emotion. The sturdy dark sister stood unchanging, clutching the black beads, but the noiseless smile immovable.

Matthew suddenly turned to the bed, to see if his dead wife had observed him. It was a movement of fear.

Ophelia lay so pretty and so touching, with her peaked, dead little nose



BEAUTY SHOP

DRAWING BY CORNELIA BARNES

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DRAWING BY CORNELIA BARNES

BEAUTY SHOP



DRAWING BY CORNELIA BARNES

**BEAUTY SHOP**



**CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY**

DRAWING BY BOARDMAN ROBINSON



DRAWING BY BOARDMAN ROBINSON

**CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY**

sticking up, and her face of an obstinate child fixed in the final obstinacy. The smile went away from Matthew, and the look of super-martyrdom took its place. He did not weep: he just gazed without meaning. Only, on his face deepened the look: I knew this martyrdom was in store for me!

She was so pretty, so childlike, so clever, so obstinate, so worn—and so dead! He felt so blank about it all.

They had been married ten years. He himself had not been perfect—no, no, not by any means. But Ophelia had always wanted her own will. She had loved him, and grown obstinate, and left him, and grown wistful, or contemptuous, or angry, a dozen times, and a dozen times come back to him.

They had no children. And he, sentimentally, had always wanted children. He felt very largely sad.

Now she would never come back to him. This was the thirteenth time, and she was gone for ever.

But was she? Even as he thought it, he felt her nudging him somewhere in the ribs, to make him smile. He writhed a little, and an angry frown came on his brow. He was not *going* to smile! He set his square, naked jaw, and bared his big teeth, as he looked down at the infinitely provoking dead woman. "At it again!"—he wanted to say to her, like the man in Dickens.

He himself had not been perfect. He was going to dwell on his own imperfections.

He turned suddenly to the three women, who had faded backwards beyond the candles, and now hovered, in the white frames of their coifs, between him and nowhere. His eyes glared, and he bared his teeth.

"Mea culpa! Mea culpa!" he snarled.

"Macche!" exclaimed the daunted Mother Superior, and her two hands flew apart, then together again, in the density of the sleeves, like birds nesting in couples.

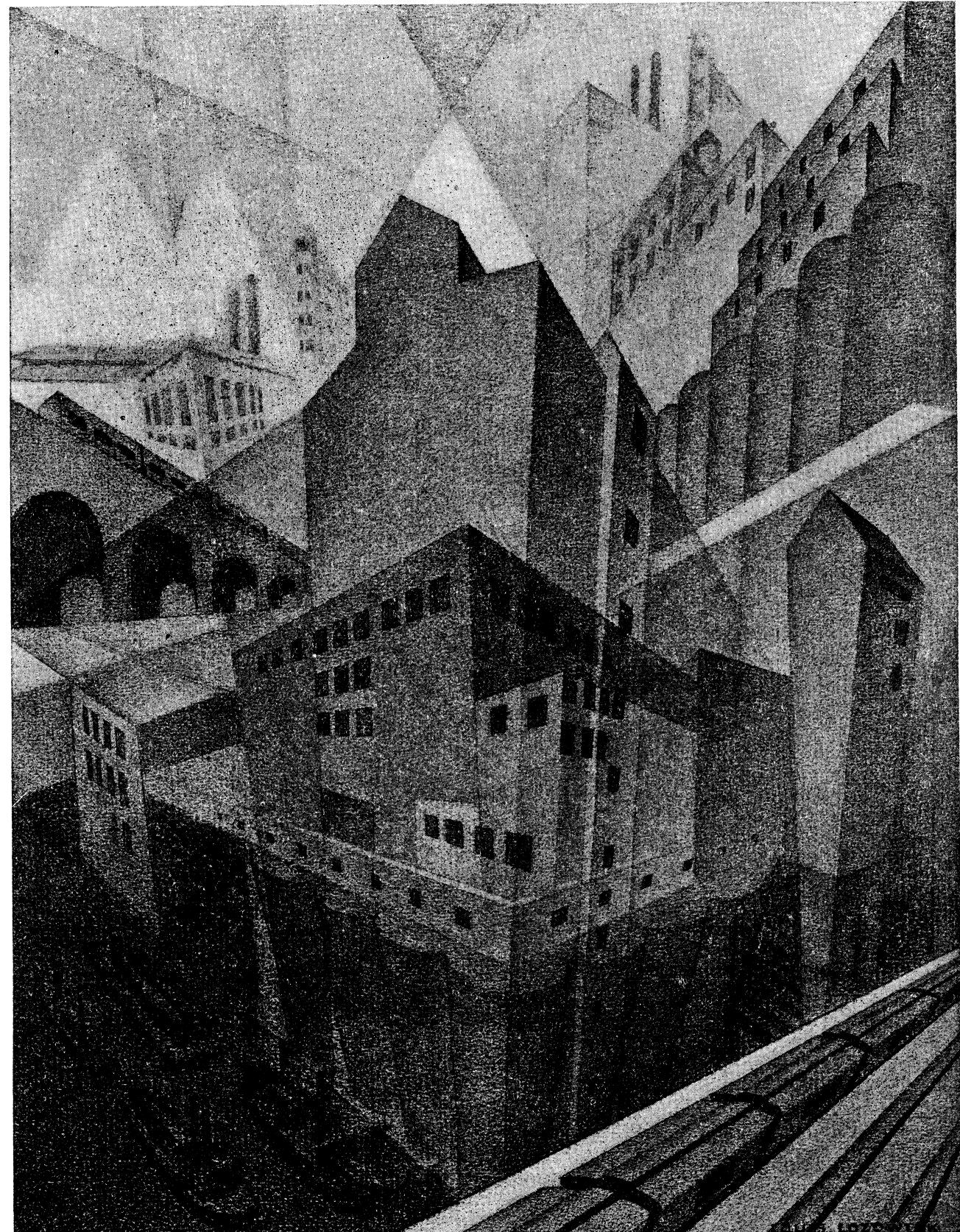
Matthew ducked his head and peered round, prepared to bolt. The Mother Superior, in the background, softly intoned a *Pater Noster*, and her beads dangled. The pale young sister faded further back. But the black eyes of the sturdy, black-avised sister twinkled like eternally humorous stars upon him, and he felt the smile digging him in the ribs again.

"Look here!" he said to the women, in expostulation. "I'm awfully upset. I'd better go."

They hovered in fascinating bewilderment. He ducked for the door. But even as he went, the smile began to come on his face, caught by the tail of the sturdy sister's black eye, with its everlasting twinkle. And he was secretly thinking, he wished he could hold both her creamy-dusky hands, that were folded like mating birds, voluptuously.

But he insisted on dwelling upon his own imperfections. *Mea culpa!* he howled at himself. And even as he howled it, he felt something nudge him in the ribs, saying to him: *Smile!*

The three women left behind in the lofty room looked at one another, and their hands flew up for a moment, like six birds flying suddenly out of the foliage, then settling again.



DRAWING BY LOUIS LOZOWICK

## STEEL AND CONCRETE

"Poor thing!" said the Mother Superior, compassionately.

"Yes! Yes! Poor thing!" cried the young sister, with naive, shrill impulsiveness.

"Gia!" said the dark-avised sister.

The Mother Superior noiselessly moved to the bed, and leaned over the dead face.

"She seems to know, poor soul!" she murmured. "Don't you think so?"

The three coifed heads leaned together. And for the first time, they saw the faint ironical curl at the corners of Ophelia's mouth. They looked in fluttering wonder.

"She has seen him!" whispered the thrilling young sister.

The Mother Superior delicately laid the fine-worked veil over the cold face. Then they murmured a prayer for the anima, fingering their beads. Then the Mother Superior set two of the candles straight upon their spikes, clenching the thick candle with firm, soft grip, and pressing it down.

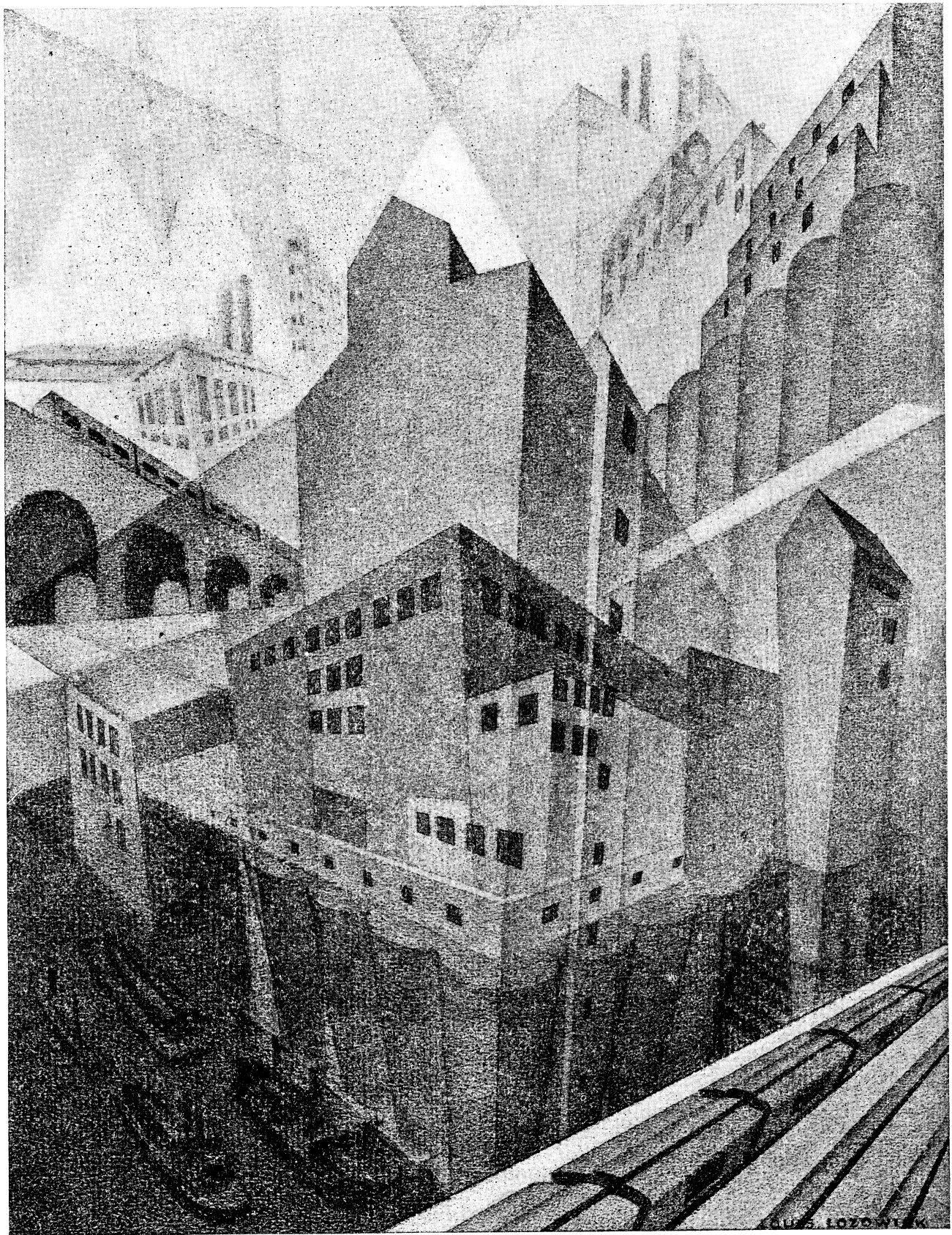
The dark-faced, sturdy sister sat down again with her little holy book. The other two rustled softly to the door, and out into the great white corridor. There, softly, noiselessly sailing in all their dark drapery, like dark swans down a river, they suddenly

hesitated. Together they had seen a forlorn man's figure, in a melancholy overcoat, loitering in the cold distance at the corridor's end. The Mother Superior suddenly pressed her pace into an appearance of speed.

Matthew saw them bearing down on him, these voluminous figures with framed faces and lost hands. The young sister trailed a little behind.

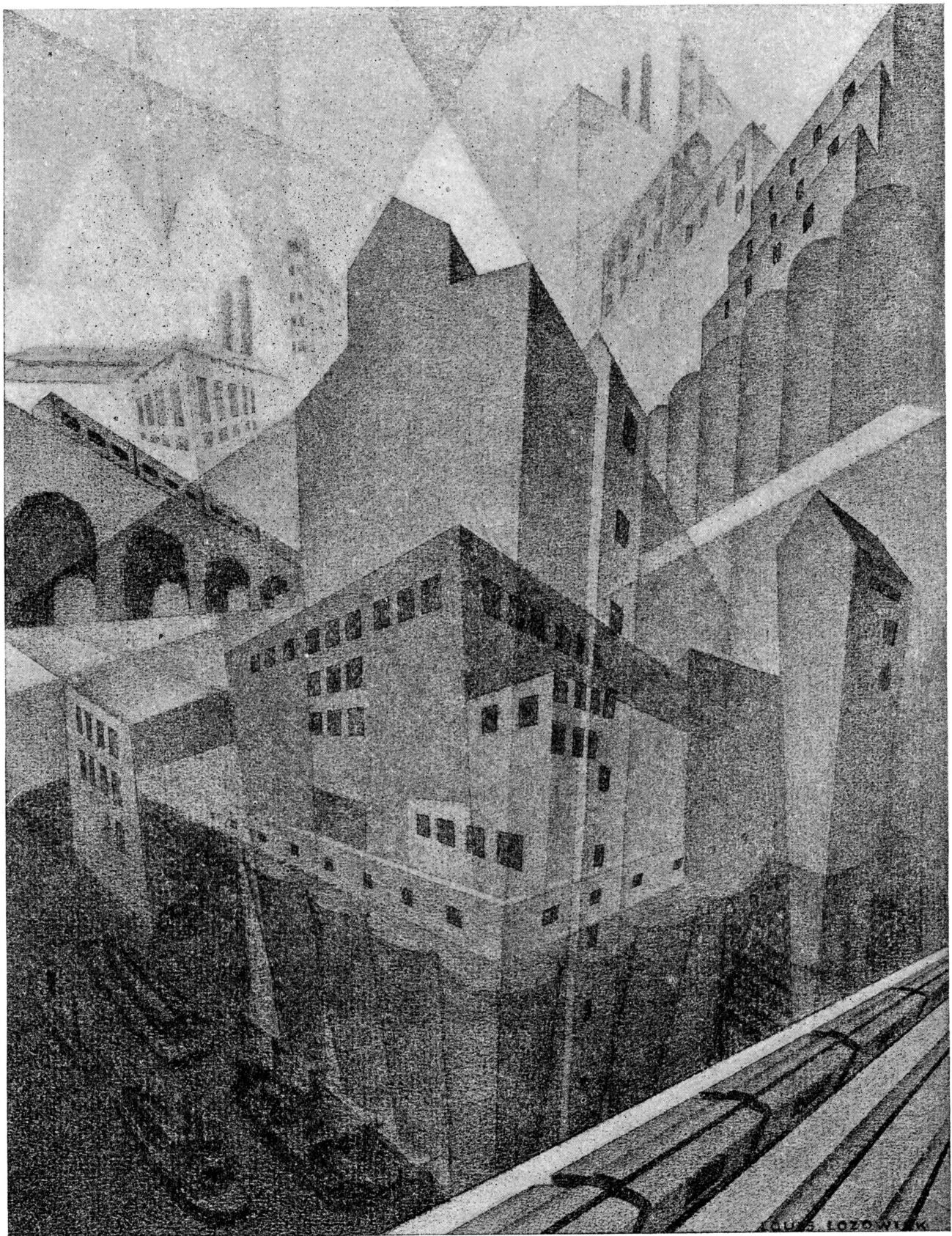
"Pardon, ma Mere!" he said, as if in the street. "I left my hat somewhere—"

He made a desperate, moving sweep with his arm, and never was man more utterly smileless.



DRAWING BY LOUIS LOZOWICK

**STEEL AND CONCRETE**



LOUIS LOZOWICK

DRAWING BY LOUIS LOZOWICK

**STEEL AND CONCRETE**

# IT'S A HELL OF A GAME

By JAMES (SLIM) MARTIN

WELL, I'm an ironworker. I build skyscrapers and walk steel beams sixth of a mile up in air. Sure it's dangerous. A hell of a game. If a man had any sense he wouldn't be at it. But guess a guy just has to follow out his natural bent. Some folks aspire to reach the top of Everest; or find Cathay. Most young janes have their heads full of a trip to Paris, or a hitch-hike thru New England. All looking for a kick, a thrill. That's what attracts men to this savage pastime and invariably keeps them there for a lifetime at hard labor.

You travel plenty. When a job is topped out you're done, and have no more interest in it. You look for the next to go up. A loft building in New York, an industrial plant in Cleveland, a theatre in Miami, an oil refinery in Tampico, docks in Panama, a bridge in China,—anything, any place. If it's steel they need you, and they need you badly. You get a chance to throw your feet in most any State, or country. Tell me another game that's as good thataway.

Wouldn't you just enjoy John Barrymore trying to play Hamlet in Tokio? Sure, he can't speak Japanese. But neither could the bridgemen who went over to Japan to rebuild modern steel structures after the earthquake.

Yes, thrills in plenty. Always something new. No one day like another. A man doesn't go to sleep at this game. You are up on the steel on your own two feet. Or maybe doing a piece of rigging at the masthead, with your tail wrapped around it,—you know, one hand for you and one for the company. Steel is bouncing around, and so are you, as if you were wearing two pair of rubber heels. At the least a mistake costs time and money. But more generally a trip to the hospital or morgue for a buddy or yourself. You are handling tonnage in motion, and it keeps you busy out-guessing all the things that may trap you.

Most birds think it takes a sort of super man to be a bridgeman. And they forever question, "Don't you get dizzy way up sixteen or twenty floors on those narrow beams?" The answer is *no*, if you did you wouldn't be there. You are damned conscious you are up there, every second. Your subconscious mind never lets go of that fact, and when you get in a jam it's your subconscious mind that told you which way to move.

But you haven't time to think. Hell! the STEEL don't think! When a derrick wrecks it doesn't have a mind full of malicious thoughts as it picks out a bunch of ironworkers to come down on. Something snapped. A guy parted, or the topping lifted, or it was overloaded, and down she comes right now! Guys snap like cold fiddle strings and writhe and lash over the deck like snakes. Whole bays of steel are carried away. The derrick weighs about five tons.

Can you stand up in that hell of havoc and think? No indeed, you

James "Slim" Martin was for years a wandering migratory worker, a harvest hand, lumber jack, and member of the I. W. W. Then for thirteen years he was a structural iron worker, and helped build many a New York skyscraper. Recently he branched off into acting, and played in "Outside Looking In," at the Greenwich Village theatre, and in some of Eugene O'Neill's proletarian dramas.

Now Slim Martin has taken to writing, after much urging by the editors of the NEW MASSES. This is his first composition. It tells of the life and feelings of the man who walks steel beams hundreds of yards into the sky.

This is a specimen of the kind of worker's art the NEW MASSES is mining for. Is there more of it in the country? Sit down, you bricklayers, miners, dishwashers, clothing workers, harvest hands, cooks, brakemen, and stone-cutters: wrestle with pen and paper and send us in the results—however bad they seem to you. Write us the truth—it is more interesting than most fiction.

have it put away in your mind to run for a column and get on it. If things fall on one side of the column crawl round on the opposite side. If the column goes out, you ride, that's all. You go to work every morning of your life with the knowledge you may be killed or crippled, any time from 8 to 4.30. But you figure you won't be.

Even when you pick them up all broken up. Legs cut off, backs broken, fractured skulls, a couple of fingers gone, with leg and arm bones sticking right out thru the flesh, you figure it might have been you,—but it wasn't. And you go back. Why not? It takes men for this business. And you have the know how. Of course you haven't a brain in your head to do it. But it's the only game that has the real kick in it.

And it's not bad you know, to look out over a town like New York and see a Queensboro Bridge to the South and a Hell Gate Bridge to the North, a tower like the Shelton Arms sticking up, and the morning sun striking the marvelous buildings of the garment

center throwing them into an artist's dream of light and shadow and haze. And to feel you are one of the birds who do it. It's a continual pain to listen to the squawk of some would-be painters or actors claiming they are artists, because they create. Wonder what us bridgemen are. These creators, god save the word, claim that you create nothing!!! The architect and engineer had the dream, and figured it all out on paper, and gave it to a group of draughtsmen who put it into blue prints. So,—the job was created.

Maybe. For if that was the way of it, where all these great buildings now stand, and are going up, would still be only the bald rocks that I remember as a kid in this burg, and the architects could feed those blue prints to the wise sadfaced billygoats that played on those same rocks.

We are a race of genii that are making the biggest dreams of the greatest engineers of all time come true. We are doing a wondrous thing raising this fairy land out of the drab brick buildings of the older New

## SUBURBAN

I've often wondered who it is  
Who lives in every town I know—  
A new brick house, white cornices,  
Well out side-streets, where dahlias grow,  
And homes rise fast, and I walk slow.

Neat little house with shades not drawn,  
Cozy, and income not all spent,  
Where dear meets dearie on the lawn  
In suburban advertisement,  
Two collies, and clean children in a tent.

On some far, smug, millenial day  
I'll meet that man. Oh, I have been  
In some such houses, where they play  
And drink to keep the seen unseen—  
But they are not the ones I mean.

Chard Powers Smith

York. Its chimney pots are so far below. And we know they are all to come down soon to make way for these greater buildings. The bridges, the docks, the subways, the power houses that are necessary to make all these great buildings possible; we build them too.

Still, let the actor have his way; he creates,—if the playwright gives him a line and a situation, and the electrician gives him a spot light. The dauber paints if he can buy color made by workmen in tubes. He'll paint a masterpiece. A study of a group of New York buildings high up in the morning sunlight, with their lower floors lost in haze that the sun has not yet dispelled. Oh, yes. Will he borrow the architect's blue prints for his inspiration? No, he paints what we made, but it's only a daub on canvas, just the same. He can't paint the job we reared in steel, and brick, and marble and tile, with sweat and aching muscles, our maimed and killed, and a nickel's worth of brains.

Isn't it queer, now, the man who has a white collar job holds himself superior in intelligence to a mechanic? Even if his little niche is only the operating of a Burroughs adding machine, or a Smith-Premier. If he makes a mistake he tears up a letter and starts over again. If an ironworker makes a mistake he may start a buddy or a bricklayer ten floors below on a trip to the hospital, with no start over again. The white collared bird puts in a day that's a week long. Ours seems about two hours long. Who has the more brain work, and interest in his occupation? Let the white collared guy answer. Let Penn Station, Brooklyn Bridge, the Singer Building talk if they will for us. If not, we build them. That pleases us enough.

What does a man think of when he is up in the air? He thinks of his work. All the time. Always. Every second. What's coming next. What he has done. If anything was not made safe, he goes back and makes it so. Safety first and last. He may not step on a loose beam, or a protruding plank, but some one else will. And they depend on your work, just as you have to depend on theirs.

Aren't we afraid of falling? Sure. Are we saps? But we don't just walk out on the iron and fall off for fun, you know. When some Johnny Come-lately is catfooting around the iron nervously, it gives you a pain. Move out. You can run on it. Don't be afraid of falling buddy, hell, I couldn't knock you off from here. It's true. You need just as much space to stand erect and still as one foot can cover. Try it on the sidewalk. Stand on one foot. You can do it? That's all you need anywhere. That's a lot. Try standing on something about three inches wide. Easy? Walk a straight line three inches wide. Anybody can do that. Why not up aloft?

Of course as the derrick works the building sways a little. And if the wind blows, you must lean against it



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a little. That's no worry if it blows steadily. The squalls are hell tho. You lean against them, and like a flash they drop and just as you get straightened up they hit you again and push you off balance the other way. Or you are carrying a plank and a sudden squall makes a sail of it. That's no fun. Somebody drops a wrench and knocks a riveter into the hole. The load sways out and knocks a connector over board. A million things to cause you to fall, except your own deliberate falling. Hell, you want to stay up there, you have to be knocked off.

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DRAWING BY WILLIAM GROPPER

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Isn't it a joke? Who built the Shelton Hotel? The ironworker. Who owns it? Arthur Brisbane, the bird who was one of the foremost bellyachers against the "outrageous" demands of the men in the building trades. You have your little piece of property, Arthur, hope you are not forced to live too impecuniously. But I'll bet you my gold tooth, the one that's loose, against your shanty, that the overpaid ironworkers that built it, have not had, 8 out of 10, a wardrobe trunk in all their lives. Their fortunes never bought clothes enough to fill one!

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# ON THE DEATH OF A POET

## By LEON TROTSKY

TRANSLATED BY BESSIE WEISSMAN

WE HAVE lost Yessenin—such a fine, fresh and genuine poet. And how tragically have we lost him! He went at his own choosing, writing farewell with blood from his veins to an unknown friend, perhaps to all of us. Remarkably tender and delicate are those last lines of his. He left life without any noisy offense, without a pose of protest, or any slamming of the door behind him, but quietly closing it with his hand, from which was oozing blood. At that moment the poetical and human image of Yessenin blazed forth in a last unforgettable splendor.

Yessenin wrote the brazen poems of a hooligan, imparting an inimitable Yessenin melody to the harsh strains of Moscow's taverns. He took pride in insolent gesture and rough word. But under the crust of his affected brazenness throbbed the peculiar tenderness of an unshielded, undefended soul. With this half-simulated roughness Yessenin was only trying to protect himself from the harsh period into which he was born. But he could not protect himself. I can bear it no longer, said the vanquished poet on December 27. He said it with no challenge, no reproach. Yessenin had apparently always felt himself as one not quite of this world. This is not spoken in praise of Yessenin, for it was because of this unearthliness we lost him; but it is not said in condemnation either. Is it conceivable to pursue our most lyrical poet with reproaches merely because we could not save him for ourselves?

Our time is severe, perhaps one of the severest in the history of so-called civilized humanity. A revolutionary born for these decades is possessed of a furious patriotism for his era, his fatherland in time. Yessenin was not a revolutionary. The author of "Pugachev" and "Ballads about the 26" was a lyrical poet. Our era, however, is not lyrical. This is the main reason why Serge Yessenin, of his own free will, has left us and his epoch so prematurely.

Yessenin's roots are deeply national, and his nationalism, as everything in him, is real and genuine. And this is most unmistakably shown, not in his poem of the national insurrection but rather in his lyrics:

*Quietly, against the juniper thicket on the slope, Red, mare Autumn scratches her mane.*

This image of Autumn, as many other of his images, in the beginning shocked us as baseless audacity. But the poet has forced us to feel the peasant roots in his images and to absorb them deeply into our marrow. Fet would not have said it so, and still less Tiutchev. The peasant background, purified and refracted through his creative art, is very strong in Yessenin. But the strength of this peasant back-

(Serge Yessenin is known to Americans chiefly through the fact of his marriage to Isadora Duncan, the American dancer, with whom he paid a brief visit to this country in 1924. The poet, one of the most talented of the literary "fellow-travellers" with the revolution, committed suicide several months ago. Trotsky's tribute to Yessenin was written in a letter to the All-Russian Union of Writers, on the occasion of its memorial evening for Yessenin in the Moscow Art Theatre. It was published in the Communist newspaper, Pravda.)

Those who know Trotsky only as an economist and revolutionary general, will be surprised to read this tribute, which reveals him also as a deep lover of poetry.)

ground constitutes the real weakness of Yessenin's personality: he was uprooted from the old without striking root in the new. The city did not strengthen him, but only shattered and covered him with bruises. His travels through foreign countries, through Europe and across the ocean, did not strengthen him at all. He reacted with immeasurably greater depth to Teheran than he did to New York. In Persia the lyrical quality indigenous to that ancient soil was more akin to him than were the cultural centers of Europe and America.

Yessenin was not hostile to the Revolution, and by no means alien to it. On the contrary, he always aspired to it—in a special manner in 1918:

*Native land, mother mine,  
I am a Bolshevik.  
In another sense—these last years:  
Now in the land of the Soviets  
I am the most furious poputchik.\**

The Revolution forced itself both into the structure of his verses and his imagery, at first heavily slagged, but later purified and refined. In the shipwreck of the old world, Yessenin had lost nothing and had nothing to lament about. No, the poet was not aloof from the Revolution. He was simply not akin to it. Yessenin is intimate, tender and lyrical; the Revolution is public, epic and catastrophic.

\*Literally fellow-traveller: One of a group of non-Communist literary men who have supported the Soviet Revolution.

That is why the brief life of the poet ended in a tragedy.

It has been said by someone that every person bears within himself the spring of his fate, and that life expands this spring to the end. This is only partially true. Yessenin's spring expanded, but it caught in the facets of his time and was snapped off.

Not a few of Yessenin's precious lines are saturated in our time. The epoch winnows through his entire creative activity. But at the same time Yessenin is not "of this world," is not a genuine poet of the Revolution.

*I will accept all of it,  
as it is,  
I accept everything.  
I am ready to follow the beaten steps  
I will give all my soul to October  
and May  
But my beloved lyrics I will not give up.*

His lyrical spring could have expanded to the end only in a society alive with song, harmonious and happy, in which not struggle, but friendship, love and tenderness rule.

Such a day will come. After this period, in whose womb are still concealed many ruthless and fruitful battles of man with man, other times will come, the very times being prepared in the present struggle. The human personality will blossom forth into wonderful colors, and with it—lyrical poetry. The Revolution, for the first time, will conquer for every man not only the right to bread, but also the right to lyrical expression. To whom did Yessenin write in his last hour with blood? Perhaps he was only crying out to the friend who has not yet been born, to the man of the approaching future, whom some prepare through battle and whom Yessenin was preparing through song.

The poet perished because he was not akin to the Revolution. But for the sake of the future the Revolution will adopt him forever.

Yessenin aspired to death almost since the very first years of his creativeness, realizing his inner lack of defense. In one of his last poems Yessenin bids farewell to the flowers:

*Well, my darlings, what of it,  
what of it,  
I saw you and I saw the earth,  
And this grave-like shiver  
I will, like a new caress, accept.*

Only now, after his suicide, all of us—those who knew the poet little or not at all—can fully appreciate the sincerity of Yessenin's lyrics, in which almost every line is written in the blood of a baffled heart. All the more poignant seems his loss. For even in the fullness of life, Yessenin continued to find melancholy and touching consolation in the premonition of his swift departure from life:

*And my beloved, perhaps with  
another lover,  
While hearkening in the stillness  
to the song  
Will think of me as of a meteorically  
vanishing flower.*

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"THERE'S NOTHIN' YOU CAN GIT YOUR BABY  
AIN'T GOT!"



DRAWING BY WILLIAM GROPPER

**"THERE'S NOTHIN' YOU CAN GIT YOUR BABY  
AIN'T GOT!"**

## THE SPIDER'S PARLOR

A hundred years ago, the stirrings of American Labor took the form of a demand for free public schools. The workers' demand was not at odds with the logic of events. It did the ruling class no harm to let the workers chase after a will o' the wisp, and the outcome of the public school system has shown that education is as true a tool in the hands of American predation as in the hands of British greed.

A year or so ago, a field representative of the Workers' Education movement in this country succeeded in launching a labor college in a town with a strong record for radical working-class action, especially in politics. The project was made possible by the enthusiasm of a number of professors from a near-by university,—men of pronounced views, supporters of the La Follette ticket or otherwise committed to social experiment. As soon as the scheme came to the attention of the president of the university, he immediately took it over and designated a group of "safe" professors to conduct the courses. Workers' Education to be sure! Education of the Workers!

A few months since a gathering was held in New York (one of a series of similar meetings held throughout the country) with a view to launching an Adult Education Association. It was attended by representatives of various agencies,—schools, museums, libraries, motion pictures, Americanization movements, etc.—seemingly acting in a simple-minded fashion, in entire good faith. But the sponsor of the campaign was the Carnegie Corporation—a concern of such dubious repute that the New York State Federation of Labor is on record demanding its dissolution.

The program was cut and dried and put through in spite of a rather bewildering uncertainty in the gathering as to what the whole thing was about. The only sure thing was that while the Carnegie Corporation took pains not to bind itself formally to finance the movement, it took just as great pains to make the members of the conference certain that it wanted to do so and would do so if the enterprise proved worthy of such hallowed dollars.

This same Carnegie Corporation, built on the wealth extracted from the exploitation of the steel workers, wealth stained with the blood of Homestead,—this Universal Busybody, has just extended a large grant of money to the most outstanding workers' education agency in the United States, and this money is to be used for the publication of books for workers' classes.

The Carnegie dollars are running true to form. A generation ago they began to establish libraries in which men that had worked the twelve hour day and had no money to buy books of their own might while away a few of their leisure hours communing with the great spirits of the ages! It is reported that a visitor to Skibo Castle toward Carnegie's end came away with these words ringing in his ears: "I would give all my wealth, if I could shut from my hearing the cries of the men that were shot down at Homestead." Evidently the cries are still



DRAWING BY JOHN SLOAN

HER FEET BENEATH HER PETTICOAT.  
LIKE LITTLE MICE, STOLE IN AND OUT.  
AS IF THEY FEARED THE LIGHT.

SIR JOHN SUCKLING (1620)

audible; and surely the soul of the iron-master as it sails the Styx will be somewhat eased by the pour of workers' education literature made possible by his endowment.

The story all hangs together. When it is no longer possible to keep the workers in stark ignorance, public schools are grudgingly conceded and then converted into instruments of obscurantism and reactionary propaganda. A few undismayed spirits from the working-class strive upward into college and university; and then censorship has to be applied with proper diligence in this loftier realm.

Then appears the Workers' Education movement; in it the mind of the worker threatens to come of age, and to menace the capitalist system. So the Carnegie Corporation goes to work again spinning its web.

There are other ante-rooms to this

spider's parlor. There are workers' education projects framed with the civic viewpoint, regarding the workers primarily as "citizens." It may be that the sponsors of such soothing syrup do not realize that citizenship, civic loyalty, is a narrow and outworn concept—that it is but spurious patriotism, loyalty to the capitalist state. It may be they do not understand that the only noble, the only saving loyalty there can be in the world today is loyalty to the emerging working class, the vicar of humanity in the struggle for the future.

But whether they know or not is not the question. "By their fruits ye shall know them." And if these "civics" begin by ruling out educational ventures conducted by class-conscious groups without the sanction of official trade unionism, and if they go on to

join hands with the representatives of the major exploiting interests, and if these agencies of plunder so far approve the past activities of the would-be leaders of workers' education as to subsidize their future projects, then it is time for us to be on our guard.

The American working-class is charged with the responsibility for the world's deliverance. Inasmuch as American capitalism is the supreme ruler of the world, and inasmuch as the American working-class stands in the most favored material situation of all the world's workers, the choice must be made whether American Labor will lend itself as a tool to the master-class for the complete enslavement of mankind or whether it will rise to the occasion and bear manfully the burden laid upon it for the freeing of the world.

Arthur W. Calhoun.



DRAWING BY JOHN SLOAN

HER FEET BENEATH HER PETTICOAT.  
LIKE LITTLE MICE, STOLE IN AND OUT.  
AS IF THEY FEARED THE LIGHT.

SIR JOHN SUCKLING (1620)

# THE NEW MASSES I'D LIKE

By JOHN DOS PASSOS

Mike Gold is responsible for these notes, for their existence if not for their disorder and scatterbrainedness. The other night he made off into the underbrush after calling me a bourgeois intellectual before I had a chance to argue with him. The salutary truth has rankled and finally come out in a rash of generalizations concerning professional writers, the labor movement in America, the NEW MASSES and people in general. Admitting that generalizations are worthless, here they are.

First a restriction about proletarian literature. It seems to me that people are formed by their trades and occupations much more than by their opinions. The fact that a man is a shoe-salesman or a butcher is in every respect more important than that he's a republican or a theosophist; so that when he stops earning an honest living and becomes a writer, agitator, poet, idealist, in his actions if not in his ideas he becomes a member of the great semi-parasitic class that includes all the trades that deal with words from advertising and the Christian ministry to song writing. Whether his aims are KKK or Communist he takes on the mind and functional deformities of his trade. The word-slinging organism is substantially the same whether it sucks its blood from Park Avenue or from Flatbush.

And at this moment it seems to me that the word-slinging classes, radical and fundamentalist, are further away from any reality than they've ever been. Writers are insulated like everyone else by the enforced pigeonholing of specialized industry. As mechanical power grows in America general ideals tend to restrict themselves more and more to Karl Marx, the first chapter of Genesis and the hazy scientific mysticism of the Sunday supplements. I don't think it's any time for any group of spellbinders to lay down the law on any subject whatsoever. Particularly I don't think there should be any more

phrases, badges, opinions, banners, imported from Russia or anywhere else. Ever since Columbus, imported systems have been the curse of this continent. Why not develop our own brand?

What we need is a highly flexible receiving station that will find out what's in the air in the country anyhow.

Under the grey slag of a print-pocked crust there are veins of lava to be tapped that writers at least know nothing about, among the shuffling people at strike meetings there are tentative flickers of thought that the agitators and organizers know nothing about, under the vests of fat men in limousines there are inquietudes that mean something. In these terribly crucial years when the pressure is rising and rising in the boiler of the great imperial steam-roller of American finance that's going to try to grind down even further the United States and the world, being clear-sighted is a life and death matter. If we ever could find out what was really going on we might be able to formulate a theory of what to do about it.

Why shouldn't the NEW MASSES be setting out on a prospecting trip, drilling in unexpected places, following unsuspected veins, bringing home specimens as yet unclassified? I think that there's much more to be gained by rigorous exploration than by sitting on the side lines of the labor movement with a red rosette in your buttonhole and cheering for the home team.

The terrible danger to explorers is that they always find what they are looking for. The *American Mercury* explores very ably the American field only to find the face of Mr. Mencken mirrored in every prairie pool. I want an expedition that will find what it's not looking for.

I hope that it is not for nothing that the NEW MASSES has taken that dangerous word NEW into its name. The

tendency of the masses has always been to be more disciplined in thought than in action. I'd like to see that state of things reversed for once. I'd like to see a magazine full of introspection and doubt that would be like a piece of litmus paper to test things by. I don't mean to start with the original chaos and make a new map of the world starting from 8th Street. The receiver has got to be tuned to a fairly limited range. That range has been vaguely laid down to be the masses, the people who work themselves rather than the people who work others. Within that range, wouldn't a blank sheet for men and women who have never written

before to write on as no one has ever written before be better than an instruction book, whether the instructions come from Moscow or Bethlehem, Pa.?

But Mike says that scepticism is merely the flower of decay, the green mould on the intellect of the rotten bourgeoisie. He may be right. Anyway I don't think it is scepticism to say that November, 1917, is in the past. It shows an almost imbecile faith in the word NEW and the word MASSES.

The NEW MASSES must at all costs avoid the great future that lies behind it.

## LET IT BE REALLY NEW!

By MICHAEL GOLD

I AM an internationalist, but I stand with John Dos Passos in his declaration that American writers in general and the NEW MASSES writers in particular, ought to set sail for a new discovery of America.

Yes, let us explore this continent. Let us lose ourselves in this dangerous and beautiful jungle of steel and stone. Let us forget the past. Shakespeare, Dante, Shelley and even Bernard Shaw—for here are virgin paths their feet could not have trod in time and space. A gorgeous fresh adventure waits for us—no one has been this way before.

And what is the plan we shall follow? What compass shall we steer by? What North Star shall our eyes study as we move through the storm?

Introspection and doubt, answers John Dos Passos—those will be our stars.

Moscow and revolution—these are what he charges I would like to slip into the pilot's compass-box.

I deny that that is my answer to you, friend John.

I will not deny that Soviet Russia and its revolutionary culture form the spiritual core around which thousands of the younger writers in every land are building their creative lives, including myself.

I will not deny the World Revolution provides a *Weltanschauung* that exfoliates a thousand bold new futurist thoughts in psychology, art, literature, economics, sex. It is a fresh world synthesis—the old one was killed in the war, and long live the new!

What I deny is that I, or anyone else, demands of young American writers that they take their "spiritual" commands from Moscow. No one demands that; for it is not necessary. It is no more necessary than were orders from Moscow in the British general strike. Moscow could not have created such a strike; British life created it. Moscow could not have created John Reed, Upton Sinclair, Jack London, Max Eastman, or Horace Traubel, American life created them. It will create others like them and better. Let us forget Moscow in this discussion. Let us think of America, where you and I have spent the great part of our lives.

What is American life like in this hour?

America to-day, I believe, offers the honest young writer only one choice—Revolt!

No humane and sensitive artist can assent to this vast Roman orgy of commercialism, this wholesale prostitution of mind, this vast empire of cheapness and shallowness and hypocrisy that forms the current America.

No decent creative mind can be permanently happy worshipping the Dollar Bill, or taking "spiritual" commands from Mr. J. P. Morgan, who dictates our American environment.

Revolt is the organ-bass that softly or harshly throbs through the young literature of America today. We are not satisfied. We are not part of this American empire. We repudiate it if only in the name of art. We revolt.

Shall we revolt blindly, however, or with full, bold, hard consciousness?

John Dos Passos says blindly. And he and John Howard Lawson and others formulate a vague esthetic creed of impressionism—of sensationalism—of empiricism. They try to shut their eyes to the main drifts of American life. They try to live in the isolated sensation. They reject all generalizations, which is only another name for scientific thought. They hug chaos to their bosoms, and all the heroes of their fiction wind up in chaos and failure.

Other writers choose the same paths of "introspection and doubt." Eugene O'Neill has definitely strayed into a queer mystic universe of his own. Waldo Frank is discovering tragic "beauty" in the bull-fight and in parlor Zionism. Sherwood Anderson is still mumbling prayers before the ancient phallic gods. Carl Sandburg has suddenly become a sentimental American nationalist. Floyd Dell is busy turning out bed-room romances for the adolescent. H. L. Mencken is still hypnotizing poor driven little press-agents or advertising slaves into the delusion that they are "free" aristocrats and supermen. Robinson Jeffers offers serious epics on the solitary theme of incest. Carl Van Vechten prattles upper-class nonsense for the amusement of our *nouveaux riches*. James Branch Cabell plagiarizes from a thousand healthy folk-fantasies and weaves the results into flashy patterns for the same *nouveaux riches*.

One can go on indefinitely with the tale. A hundred younger writers express their revolt in the same blind, futile ways.

Is this exploring America?  
Is this revival of the dead horses of  
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## BESSEMER

I am a competitor of the stars and the moon.

When I thrust my red-head into the night,  
Lifting its heavy folds on crimson shoulders,  
Watch the magnetic pull of my presence.

I too, have old lovers,  
Even as the stars and the moon.

Jim Waters

## TO MOTHER JONES

There's an oak tree back home  
That stands alone on the summit of a hill;  
It has withstood the storms of many years:

The rain has beat it,  
The snow has cut it,  
The wind has whipt it,  
Yet it holds fast in its determination  
And grows more beautiful each day.  
When I think of you,  
Mother Jones,  
I think of the oak tree back home  
That stands alone on the summit of a hill.

Jim Waters



DRAWING BY MAURICE BECKER

**WALL STREET—THE GREAT LOVER**



DRAWING BY MAURICE BECKER

**WALL STREET—THE GREAT LOVER**

# A YELL FROM THE GALLERY

By STUART CHASE

I CLIMB many long flights of stairs to support American playwrights. Not the boys who furnish box office applesauce, but those who hitch their wagon to a star. Sometimes I come down those stairs with a star or two in my hand which glows for weeks and months, but more often I stumble down with a load of clinkers. John Howard Lawson's *Nirvana* I've seen, and *The Moon Is a Gong*, by John Dos Passos, and the *Great God Brown*, by Eugene O'Neill. All in ten days. And I am getting fed up with poetry mixed in half baked philosophy.

These plays are written with a fine courage and a fine sincerity. They are haunted with moments of genuine beauty. A door swings wide, and even as we catch the great light beyond, it is slammed in our faces. We squirm in our seats and try to make out how the walls of the theatre are decorated. Anything to escape those bawling puppets on the stage.

Why these dreary reaches of inattention, this baffled rage, this prayer to put the whole play out of its misery before it becomes too grotesquely terrible (which it never quite does)? What is the matter anyway? How can sound artists and authentic poets get tangled up in such an infernal skein of nonsense?

I know little of the technique of the drama, and I have no answer to these questions in technical terms. But as a sample of the \$1.65 dog—the hopeful, well wishing, and moderately intelligent dog—on whom these arts are tried, and without whom, I make bold to state, we would have no national arts and letters at all, perhaps I may be permitted a yell or two in the vernacular.

These three plays and a sad number of their blood brothers, are bad plays, and boring plays, and one fears totally insignificant plays, because their authors have chosen to submerge their very real talents for writing a story which moves, into a morass of philosophical generalities; generalities which are, on the whole, appallingly naive, or wearisomely trite, or without a suspicion of biological or psychological support, or the product of highly superficial and inaccurate observation, or a broadside of shouting to cover a plain intellectual vacuum, or a combination of all five.

To tell the cock-eyed world, that the world is cock-eyed, was old stuff in Babylon. Pharaohs yawned over it; Incas banished; and Aztecs boiled in oil. Of course it's a cock-eyed world; a cruel, blundering, pitiful world, but it does not need two hours and a lot of dim lights and dizzy backdrops to say what can be said equally well in not over ten seconds. Note the words *equally well*. It is possible to fuse this simple thought, that the world is cock-eyed, into a drama which, with a relentless inevitability and a terrible beauty, quickens us to life as we watch it. Ibsen knew how to write such dramas. But Ibsen combined with his philosophy a dramatic sequence of the highest technical skill. His characters do not stand around and

bawl about their hard luck. They move, they behave, and out of their acts, registered one by one, a majestic and awful philosophy emerges. Which to my mind is the quintessence of great play writing.

God knows, I am not looking for sweetness and light. I am not expecting, in America as yet, a flock of Ibsens. But below the level of greatness, I would like to see (1) a play which tells an honest story, which moves along, which cherishes the eternal make-believe of the theatre, and keeps its philosophy, if any, on rather simple lines (like *The Emperor Jones* for instance) or, (2) a play whose author has the wit, the penetration, and the sheer intellectual ability to make general ideas both interesting and original—as Shaw knows how to make them. I can sit through *Back to Methuselah*, and, stifling a yawn or two, get a pretty powerful kick out of it—an exhilarating intellectual kick.

Or I can always have a good time when somebody tells me a good story. And I can go up on the heights with Ibsen or Strindberg when the two are combined.

But I will be damned if I can stand an effort, no matter how earnest, which has neither story nor seasoned intelligence. The thing is as juiceless as a green turnip.

It may be objected that Messrs. O'Neill, Lawson and Dos Passos are better philosophers than I am; that the reason their interminable soliloquies seem opaque is that they are over my head. (I take it no one this side of Matteawan maintains that these plays exhibit any dramatic story.) Maybe they are over my head. But in defense of my head I would like to observe that it bears up moderately well under Shaw; that it finds almost no behaviorism, only the sloppiest kind of psychoanalysis, no anthropology, a grammar school grasp of history, hardly a trace of biology, in the whole philosophical content of the three plays cited. Though the problems which the characters face (but do not live through) are modern enough, the interpretation might have been made by Chaucer or Empedocles, for that matter. What a ghastly mess Lawson made of the ideas of modern science in *Nirvana*. He knows no science . . . . We conceal our real characters and the mask only comes off with death, says O'Neill in *The Great God Brown*. Which is not only excessively trite, but, if Mr. O'Neill will take the trouble to read *Why We Behave Like Human Beings*, he will find that it is almost totally untrue.

And so, in my \$1.65 seat, irritated, bored, delighted for an instant, baffled continuously, I yell.

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1. THE EVOLUTION OF FAITH—FIFTEENTH CENTURY

## DEBUNKING THE ART THEATRE

By JOHN HOWARD LAWSON

MR. CHASE indulges in a yell from the gallery, and then clarifies his objection in the following terms: he "finds almost no behaviorism, only the sloppiest kind of psychoanalysis, no anthropology, a grammar school grasp of history, hardly a trace of biology, in the whole philosophical content of the three plays cited." And then adds specifically in regard to *The Great God Brown*, that "if Mr. O'Neill will take the trouble to read *Why We Behave Like Human Beings*, he will find that it is almost totally untrue."

As a shout from the gallery, I should like to hear Mr. Chase yell all this consecutively and without pausing for breath. Whether or not Mr. Lawson is a good behaviorist, whether or not Mr. Dos Passos has any astronomical basis for his bald assertion that the moon is a gong, it seems to me that the only test or criterion of these three plays (or any other plays, new art or old art) is their quality as sheer entertainment. Now I gather that Mr. Chase, all things considered, is *not* amused. As one man's impression, this is important and interesting. As one who has enjoyed the inalienable privilege of acute boredom in many theatres on many occasions, I am entirely in favor of having the spectators yell "Take him out!" or "So is your old man!", "Bring on the trained seals!"—or what you will.

If that happened it would be an indication of some life in the theatre. The tendency of audiences to sit through anything, yawn and discuss philosophy, strikes me as thoroughly unfortunate.

But what, specifically, does Mr. Chase offer, a constructive thought, if I may say so, growing out of this, the winter of his discontent? He prefers Ibsen to the three plays mentioned. So do I. But when he says that "no one this side of Matteawan maintains that these plays exhibit any dramatic story," I rise to disagree. As one standing as far aloof as possible from the shadow of that melancholy asylum, it never occurred to me that these plays contained anything else.

There is a good deal of bunk and balderdash about the new school of drama. But a play always was, and I suspect always will be, a story told in plastic action. And the point of this proceeding is to move, excite and touch the spectator to a seeming or actual participation in the story unfolded on the stage. If this emotional participation is sufficiently real, the audience becomes almost a part of the play, the thing on the stage becomes almost a ritual expression of a crowd emotion. Just as the medieval church service might have been an expression of a community excitement. This sounds abstract, but you can see Al Jolson do it for brief flashes which illuminate the dim aisles and chapels of a solemn old temple of the drama known as the Winter Garden.

Of course this is not the whole case. Those of us who talk rather loosely about new life in the theatre, can see in it a possibility of a deeper excitement, a more conscious contact, than that accomplished by the occasional skill of a music hall specialist. But this is a simple idea. Where do people get the notion there is something occult, sinister and hoity-toity about the new movement in the drama? Well, perhaps this comes in part from the slightly muddled statements of playwrights, scenic designers and directors. It can be assumed that these practitioners have sometimes been led astray by disastrous press-agentry.

So a complicated and meaningless terminology has been evolved. One finds the same uncertain use of words in the field of the novel: *Manhattan Transfer* is loosely termed "a stream-of-consciousness novel," although it seems clearly to be conceived quite in the picaresque mood of *Tom Jones*. I should prefer to apply "stream-of-consciousness" to some old fogey like Henry James.

But confusion of terms is particularly dangerous in the theatre. It seems to me that what we chiefly need is clarification: let us agree that the point in concocting a play is to tell a story, to

(Continued on page 28)



DRAWINGS BY I. KLEIN

## 2. THE EVOLUTION OF FAITH—TWENTIETH CENTURY

## THE FOLK-LORE LINCOLN

*Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years, by Carl Sandburg. Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York. Two volumes. \$10.00.*

**I**F Abraham Lincoln had never existed—and certainly the American school primer Lincoln never did exist—Carl Sandburg would have had to create him. That much is implicit in Sandburg's cornfed poetry and the trend toward an American mythology revealed in his *Rootabaga Stories*. It is inconceivable that any phase of Lincoln should more strongly appeal to Sandburg than "the folk lore Lincoln, the maker of stories, the stalking and elusive Lincoln."

"Perhaps poetry, art, human behavior in this country, which has need to build on its own traditions, would be served by a life of Lincoln stressing the fifty-two years previous to his presidency" (the prairie years). Is this a program that Sandburg proposes in his preface to the present biography? I do not think so. It is merely a revelation of that phase of Lincoln expression toward which Sandburg naturally inclines. In Lincoln he sees the heroic symbol of America's pioneer history. Abraham Lincoln incarnates and makes vital for the poet the American myth created by the poet's own lyric imagination.

Choice of method should imply choice of material. Having determined to give us the folk lore Lincoln, to write biography as myth, Sandburg would have been justified, formally, in eliminating all details destructive of the symbol. But Sandburg is too engrossed in the warm complexities of a human life to achieve the unity of legend. Perhaps we are still too close to the man in point of time to create the hero. Certainly the legend which Sandburg attempts to build by the patient accumulation of significant detail is time and again put out of focus by the introduction of material petty in itself and irrelevant to the pattern. Such are the many details concerning Lincoln's marital squabbles. It is not that pettiness does not play its part in the scheme of a heroic life. But even pettiness may be inessential.

In the last analysis Sandburg has written the biography not of one Abraham Lincoln but of two. He gives us the Lincoln of American folk lore and the Lincoln of American politics. Abraham Lincoln, moreover, shares the honors with the changing America of his first fifty years. Sandburg has tried to force a synthesis of these two elements by making Lincoln the point of convergence of all those crossing lines that charted the life of his country. The only trouble is that Lincoln was not that point of convergence (what individual could be?) and as often as not is left out in the cold and seems insignificant in the gathering cyclone that was to plunge the states in the holocaust of civil war. The evidence that Sandburg submits too often shows Lincoln playing a distinctly minor role in the contemporary drama, a role that cannot be said to have impressed itself deeply upon the great bulk of the American people who formed the audience.

The political Lincoln, in brief, is in no way commensurate with the folk lore Lincoln. To be sure, this is no fault of the biographer. But it does involve a fault in the biographer's method. Nothing can be more devastating to the pioneer Lincoln legend than a plain dose of pioneer politics. So that much of what is positive in the creation of the folk lore Lincoln is negated in the delineation of the ambitious politician, "cunning as a fox." We have simply changed planes. It is disconcerting, the nonchalance with which Sandburg, intent only upon the detail, slips from a story glimpsing an intricate and essentially noble character to a story revealing a politician devoid of distinction.

The multiplication of details may complete the picture of a human being, but lacking the harmonization of vital comment, in the end it is not a human being we have after all, but merely a lot of facts about that being. Thus Sandburg reiterates his statement that Lincoln was a sad man, given to melancholy spells, even to the point of morbidity. But there is not one suggestion offered in explanation, though the biographer is very emphatic on this

point, and though the facts suggest several explanations that are possible.

It would seem from the evidence amassed by Sandburg that, in spite of this thesis, Lincoln did not make history so much as history made "Father Abraham, the savior of his country." We find the hero of the biography deficient in ideas and outclassed by many of his contemporaries on the political stage. We cannot discover Lincoln making a truly notable or historic stand on any of the most vital issues of his time. Take, for instance, the issue of slavery, upon which the Union was hurling itself to its own disintegration.

Wendell Phillips said, "Let us question Mr. Lincoln," and went on: "Do you believe, Mr. Abraham Lincoln, that the negro is your political and social equal, or ought to be? Not a bit of it. Do you believe he should sit on juries? Never. Do you think he should vote? Certainly not. Do you think that, when the Declaration of Independence says, 'All men are created equal,' it intends the political equality of blacks and whites? No sir. If this be equality, surely Mr. Lincoln's mind is as yet empty. But notwithstanding the emptiness of Mr. Lincoln's mind, I think we shall yet succeed in making this a decent land to live in."

And there is that interesting, so unplatonic bit of dialogue between Lincoln and his friend Grover, quoted by Sandburg, the biographer insisting a few pages later that Lincoln "wanted to be known as a genius for accuracy":

*When a runaway slave was captured, and A. J. Grover of Ottawa was in danger of going to jail for helping a runaway slave, he and Lincoln sat and talked over the case. The law was wrong in taking a man's liberty away without trial by jury, Grover told Lincoln, "not only unconstitutional but inhuman." And Lincoln, with his face alive and mournful, brandishing his long right arm, brought it down on his knee, saying: "Oh, it is ungodly! It is ungodly! No doubt it is ungodly! But it is the law of the land, and we must obey it as we find it." To which Grover said: "Mr. Lincoln, how often have you sworn to support the*

*Constitution? We propose to elect you President. How would you look taking an oath to support what you declare is an ungodly Constitution, and asking God to help you?"*

*It was a stinger for Lincoln; his head sloped forward; he ran his fingers through his hair; he dropped into a sad and desperate mood, and came out of it placing his hand on Grover's knee, and saying in a quizzical manner: "Grover, it's no use to be always looking up these hard spots."*

It is true that Grover was heckling Lincoln here—though I think not unfairly—and placing his friend in an extremely awkward position. After all, Lincoln was a political realist and as presidential nominee did have to think of upholding the Constitution of the United States.

He had to consider things pragmatically. We could hardly expect him to react with the acid precision of Thoreau or the fanaticism of John Brown. This must be considered in weighing all of Lincoln's political utterances. Judged in relation to the enormous crisis of his time, however, Lincoln's realism is decidedly insufficient, taking its color from the obstacles that confronted him rather than constructing programmes to overcome those obstacles.

In sum: Carl Sandburg has created the folk lore Lincoln but many of his facts are devastating evidence against the Lincoln of folk lore. As the shrewd, human-loving, joking, melancholy, lusty, rail-splitting lawyer he attains to heroic stature and can indeed stand as symbol of America's pioneer people. This is the real folk Lincoln, the elemental Lincoln, so vitally fleshing our frontier tradition. That other Lincoln of our gospel, the prophetic leader of a nation, who could speak with equal candor on the sanctity of private property and the right of a people to revolt against injustice, diminishes under the burden of evidence.

Edwin Seaver.

## THE REAL POE

*Edgar Allan Poe, by Joseph Wood Krutch. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, \$2.50.*

ONE reads this book with a growing admiration of both Mr. Krutch's method and his accomplishment. With a quiet and unpretentious style, with absolutely no attempt to play the *artist* at the expense of his subject, he produces in the end a book which stands securely on its own bottom as a work of science and of art: the best study of Poe which has been written and one of the best critical volumes of recent years.

One is particularly glad that the book is published at this time. Mr. Bazalgette, most ecstatic of the French "exaltes," has already effectively smothered Whitman and Thoreau in Gallic flowers of speech and there is nothing to prevent him from strewing his roses on the graves of other American literary heroes; nothing, except perhaps the increasing evidence that we are quite able to weave our own garlands, less lavish, but vastly more serviceable.

Mr. Krutch's method is inductive throughout. Slowly, out of the mass of conflicting documents emerges the inescapable conclusion: Poe was a

neurotic who lived only to escape from a world in which he was utterly unfitted to live and who wrote the obscure confessions of his own psychic impotence. The tales of horror were not the deliberate inventions of his vaunted faculty of "ratiocination." They were tragically real to him, if to no one else. Day after day and night after night they rose before his eyes like the mists exhaled by the "dark tarn of auber." Most of them indeed were little else than exquisitely sublimated sadism. And as for the "ratiocination" this was merely one of the numerous devices he used to postpone the ever-imminent disintegration of his tortured ego.

The dispassionate pertinacity of Mr. Krutch's scholarship is equalled only by his sensitive awareness of the human tragedy involved. The narrative follows a dramatic curve which steadily mounts in intensity. It reaches its inevitable denouement in the utter collapse of the personality months before the physical shell of the poet was deposited in that grave which his stricken and terrified spirit haunted throughout his life.

The stature of the poet is neither increased nor diminished by this treat-

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ment; with this Mr. Krutch scarcely concerns himself. Instead he traces the motivations and processes of the artist and the man and makes them both much more understandable than they have ever been before. Surely the critic can perform no more useful service.

Almost inevitably, in the concluding chapter of the volume Mr. Krutch raises the general question as to "the

extent to which all imaginative works are the result of the unfulfilled desires which spring from either idiosyncratic or universally human maladjustments to life."

We don't know. Of the critics who are trying to tell us, using the admittedly scant data of the young science of psychology, Mr. Krutch ranks as one of the most distinguished.

James Rorty.

## THE FAILURE OF LIBERALISM

"The Confessions of a Reformer," by Frederic C. Howe. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 1925. \$3.

FREEDOM is the life-illusion of the liberal; truth his goal; compromise his method. He fights for freedom in a world ruled by a class that will "do anything for the poor but get off their backs." Ever in search of new truth, he never seems to be able to grasp this simple elementary fact. Fred Howe went through struggles which should have brought a realization of this truth. In fact, he professes to have seen it, yet at the end of his Confessions as at the beginning, he declares:

"I still believe in liberalism, I believe in keeping the mind open to everything that is moving. To me liberalism is open-mindedness."

Where lies the fallacy in this doctrine of open-mindedness? Well, look at Mr. Howe's experience. He believed in every false hope that presented itself to him. First, it was Wilson's ideal of the scholar in politics righting the world and banishing corruption from government. Fred Howe found that it could not be done. He tried social work only to give it up in disgust. The Cleveland employers who supported the settlements would "help" the poor but refused to pay their employees a living wage. The more he practised law the more he realized that laws were made to protect property interests and delay the administration of justice to the poor. Even his years of lieutenancy to Tom Johnson, the single tax mayor of Cleveland, saw only the achievement of superficial reforms. As Immigration Commissioner at Ellis Island during the war and the period of red hysteria immediately after, he was able to see the injustice of our method of treating immigrants and "the hatreds and passions of which democracy was capable." Paris during the Peace Conference showed him the realities of international politics. There was no hope in that direction, not even in the League of Nations.

An aristocrat by instinct, he had always wanted the things that wealth could buy, but he was loth to get these things by "crude" methods of exploitation. He wanted "a world of equal opportunity, a world in which the wealth created would be enjoyed by those that created it." So "the new truth (always seeking after the truth, you see)—the new truth that a free world would only come through labor" was forced upon him.

He joined the crusaders for public ownership of railroads who made up the Plumb Plan League. He founded the All-American Cooperative Commission. He helped organize the

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers Cooperative National Bank. He organized the Conference for Progressive Political Action and toured the country with La Follette in the presidential campaign of 1924. Now he is living in comparative peace on Nantucket Island, entertaining in the summer a bunch of liberals who go there to air their views and enjoy the ocean scenery.

All of the ideals to which he gave his energy are dead. The single tax, apex of the pyramid of liberal economic philosophy, is taken seriously by no one. The evolution of American economic life has outstripped the politics of La Follette. Of all the things for which Howe fought, labor banking is the only one that lives. But it lives at the expense of the class conscious militancy of the working class. It has given labor leaders a banker's psychology. Profits have come to be regarded by at least one bank as more important than the interests of the workers. The Locomotive Engineers' Bank refused to sign a union agreement with the miners working in its West Virginia coal mines. Today union officials who hold the purse strings of the union's funds in their own bank are a menace to progressive movements within the union. It is possible for the union leader-bankers to break a strike of their own members, if they think the winning of the strike will transfer power to an insurgent group. Labor banking is something to be watched and checked. It is not an easy road to freedom.

I wonder if the youthful liberal of today cannot learn from the experiences of the middle-aged liberals of yesterday. Perhaps he can go through a process of recapitulation which will bring him to a fundamentally radical outlook toward modern society within a period of two years, say, instead of having to live a whole lifetime before coming to grips with reality.

The American Empire in 1926 opens up two thrilling avenues of adventure to every young person of energy. He can join the ranks of the capitalists or he can join the ranks of the revolutionary workers. Either one will give him untold opportunities for action, initiative and vision. Which one he takes will depend, of course, upon the environment in which he has been reared, the influences that have shaped his intellectual growth, and his own inclinations. If he refuses to choose one of these paths, he will be caught in the maelstrom of liberalism and his efforts to do anything constructive will be futile. His thinking will be muddled, he will be used by the reactionaries to play their game and he will be a menace to the movement for the emancipation of the working class.

Roland A. Gibson.

## THE RUSSIAN GENESIS

*Ten Days That Shook the World*, by John Reed. International Publishers, \$1.50.

In a celebrated passage in *De Rerum Natura*, Lucretius Carus tries to argue mankind out of its foolish wish for an immortality *a parte post*, by pointing out that no one ever desired an immortality *a parte ante*. Why, he wonders, should any man wish to be alive a hundred years hence, seeing that no man of the poet's generation ever expressed a wish to have been alive when Carthage was destroyed?

Whoever, in this dark and turbulent transition age of ours, desires immortality both ways, has, in a sense, his wish gratified—if he was full-grown, or nearly so, in August, 1914. All middle-aged, Western survivors of the World War are living a life that is an agglomeration, astonishing in its fortuitous and inorganic character, of three ages. They have spent their youth in the nineteenth century, within the protecting shade of an unshaken civilization; they are living now through the cataclysms and mutations of the twentieth; and the twenty-first century confronts them within the bounds of the Soviet Union. It is a Future as palpable as the Present, a Future crowding in upon the Present, a miracle of miracles threatening the Present as a portent in space, just as an ordinary Future threatens a normal Present as a portent in time!

What is the essence of this twenty-first century, which stubbornly insists upon living synchronously with the twentieth? Answer: socialism in *practice*, as unpopular in occidental countries as socialism in *theory*—or, more correctly speaking, in *theories*—is popular. Socialism in theory is popular throughout Western civilizations, because it does not rudely jostle capitalism in practice—it keeps its temper, though now and then rudely jostled by its impolite adversary. It is as pliable as socialism in practice is stubborn—and it has been known to yield to its expounders a rather handsome living, while nothing, thus far, ever came of socialism in practice save *payok*. Besides, socialism in theory, as all Western governments know, can be cheaply *bought* with words, or, cheaper still, *bullied* with words, while socialism in practice must be *fought*. The entire history of Western civilization since the Armistice is a history of open or secret warfare against it.

It is part of the logic of such a long-drawn belligerent situation, that the chronicles of this warfare, open or latent, cannot be written in a coherent, summary and translucent manner by the very people who fight the war. The protagonists of the Russian revolution, whenever prompted to put pen to paper, are what anyone of sense would expect them to be: hot controversialists, hasty pamphleteers, pleaders of urgent causes, but assuredly not reviewers and historians, for reasons too manifest to stand in need of explanation. The task of presenting to the public a synthesis of the Russian revolution and a reasoned chronicle of the new social order in its infantile stages was left to gifted

friends of alien birth and rearing. Of these, three carry the palm of high achievement: the Englishman Price, Anna Louise Strong, and John Reed—but the greatest of these is John Reed.

The International Publishers have well merited the community by rendering accessible once more, at a price within everyone's purse, *Ten Days that Shook the World*. America, not particularly notable for the extent and value of its socialist literature, may well be proud of this volume. Its abiding and altogether unimpaired quality as a source of information is a wonder in itself, in an age crowded with footnotes and postscripts to recent history. In reading and re-reading *Ten Days*, one marvels at the immense diligence of the author no less than at his luminous, orderly intellect. Consider for a moment the mere pre-requisites of sketching successfully a Genesis of the Russian Revolution: before the admirable youth to whom we are indebted for this sketch could pen his first line, he had to master Russian thoroughly—a difficult language wholly unrelated to his previous linguistic training. He had to acquire a firm hold upon present-day Russian realities; he had to study their historical roots; he had to familiarize himself with a chaotic welter of revolutionary, pseudo-revolutionary and counter-revolutionary politics, to winnow the really significant facts from an immense pile of mere chaff, and to coordinate them in his mind before presenting them to others. All this he has well and dependably done, and *Ten Days*, as a consequence, will forever maintain its place as a primary introduction to the wonder-world of the social revolution.

I recommend, to Americans not at all or imperfectly acquainted with the complexities of Russian war—and post war politics, an attentive perusal of John Reed's introductory chapter called "Notes and Explanations," as the very best guide they can possibly get hold of, through the Russian labyrinth. In John Reed's book, as in reality, the story of the birthpangs of the Russian Revolution has its unities. Time: Early November, 1917. Place: Petersburg. But these unities of time and place are not stiff, inflexible, Aristotelian ones—for Petersburg was, after all, only the centre of sensation, from which the birthpangs of the new order radiated through the entire Republic, from the German battle-lines to the Chinese wall. As a consequence, the story sticks, in the main, to Petersburg, but there are occasional excursions in all directions. *Ten Days* is by no means an unemotional account of the great catharsis, but the emotional values are in the facts rather than in the account—the book is entirely free from the sermonizing, psalmodying rant that makes Carlyle's French Revolution wellnigh unreadable. Its comment to the facts is terse and lucid rather than lyrical and expansive; names and dates are carefully supplied wherever easy verification might be of importance; lastly, the volume was written by a friend of the Soviet Republic, but an upright, independent, critical friend.

James Fuchs.

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LITTLE REVIEW

## MICHAEL GOLD

(Continued from page 20)

Bible mysticism, Greek fatalism, Roman decadence, and British snobbery what you meant by a fresh start, dear John?

Is pessimism, defeatism, despair, the fundamental chaos in your own brilliant and gifted work, the path you say leads to a new world?

I beg to differ dogmatically if you say it does, John. And I beg very humbly and diffidently to submit that perhaps some of us younger writers have stumbled into the real path.

Let us call our discovery the world of revolutionary labor. It exists in America as in Russia. It has its schools, its unions, its tragedies, its defeats, its philosophy, ethics and science. It has written plays and produced them. It has a poetry. It has painters and singers. It has an esthetic. It has great men and women to write about. It has giant new themes. It has a hopeful, unsentimental spirit. It inspires one with faith and courage. It keeps one close to the earth and life and love. Its freedom is better than the freedom of commercialism. Carl Sandburg caught glimpses of it; Jack London saw a gleam or two. John Reed poured out his rich manhood for it. It makes great and even cruel demands on its writers. But when they understand it, and live in it fully, burning all bridges behind them, it can make them great, in return.

Writers are queer, variable folk; liable to many accidents of the spirit. But it is a harsh yet kind mother who keeps these sensitive children in the main paths of sanity and greatness—as it kept Walt Whitman.

I want the NEW MASSES to explore in this world, not the other. Both worlds exist in America, but one is dying, while the other is being born.

How good it feels to be a pioneer in a world so new that even literary men deny its existence.

But how can they know it unless they become as little children and learn?

I would like the NEW MASSES to be the bridge to this world for American artists and writers, which means it will not be a magazine of Communism, or Moscow, but a magazine of American experiment—only let's not experiment in the minor esthetic cults.

And I want a conscious exploration—with a compass.

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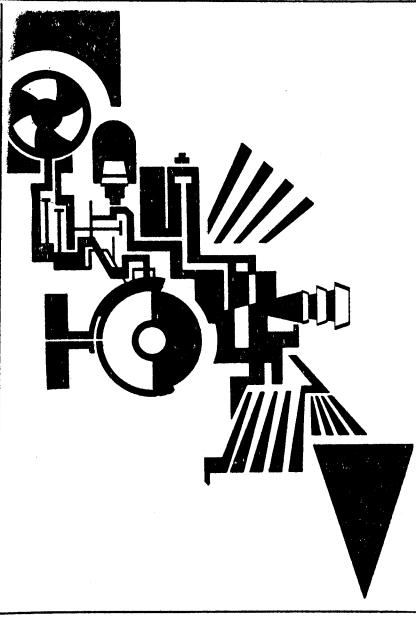
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DRAWING BY LOUIS LOZOWICK

**ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN IN LOS ANGELES**

(Continued from page 7)

liness is so appealing that it evokes the respectful gallantry of the rudest taxi driver frequenting the establishment.

Looking into the clear blue eyes of Therese, I felt the shell of my worldliness crack and dissolve. I smiled. Therese smiled—a simple, trusting smile tinged with a certain wistfulness, as if remembering other days and other scenes. When she spoke, it was as if a silver bell were lightly struck—a bell that rang a miraculous peal of joy and peace, deep in the mysterious spaces of the soul.

"Will you have a waffle with honey?" she asked.

I looked at Celeste, who presided at the waffle iron at the end of the counter. She smiled. We smiled, all three of us, in the mutual enjoyment of a secret, strange, mysterious happiness.

A waffle. A waffle with honey. A waffle with fresh honey, exquisite with the fragrance of the pink flowers of the clover.

I spoke, and hearing my own voice it seemed to me that I almost sang the words.

"Yes," I said. "I will have a waffle. A waffle with honey."

Therese turned to her sister, and it was as if a thrush called from the top of a birch tree.

"Waffle!" she sang.



And in celestial antiphone came the reply:

"Waffle!"



Go there some day. If Grace is given you, you will find the place without difficulty. And when you see Celeste and her sister, perhaps you will worship as I worshipped. Or perhaps you won't. After all, Faith is everything. It is not given all men to see angels, either in the flesh or in the spirit.

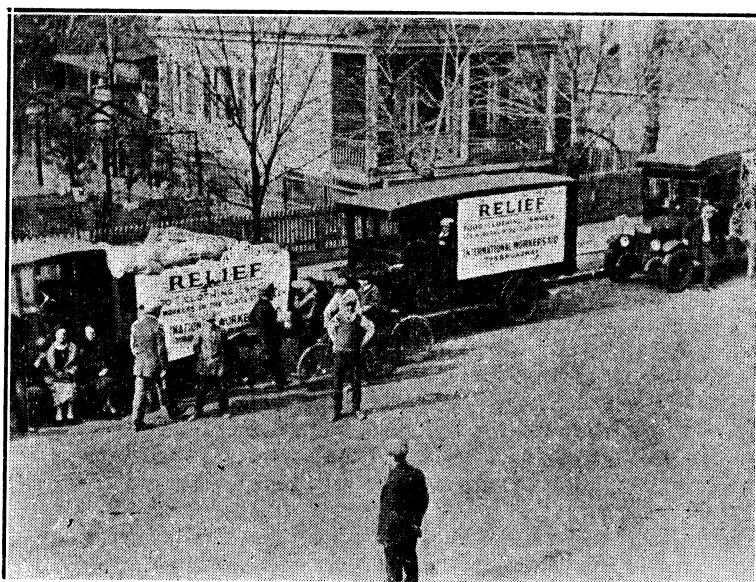
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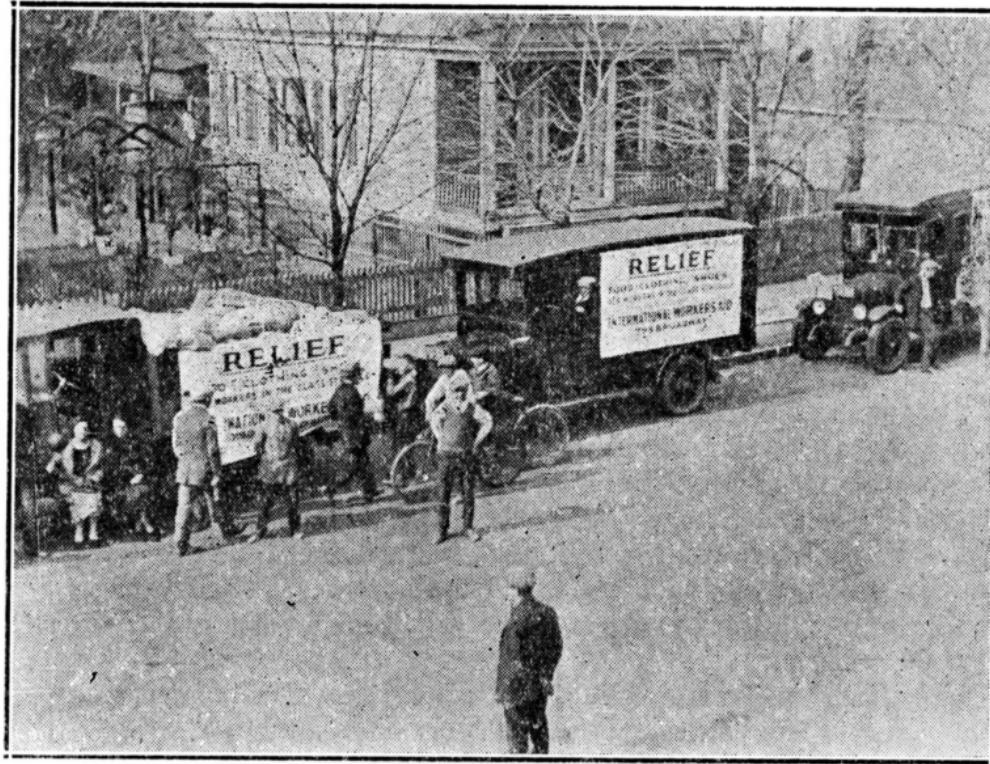
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We have received from our German publishers, the Malik Verlag of Berlin, five stately volumes, the "Collected Novels of Upton Sinclair". From Gossizdat, the State Publishing House of Moscow, we have a list of various editions of our books which have been issued in Soviet Russia; counting, not new printings, but separate publications under different titles, there is a total of sixty-nine. Michael Gold, recently returned from Russia, writes: "The sort of people who in America know Charlie Chaplin and Jackie Coogan, in Russia know Upton Sinclair." We are advised by the Japanese translator of "The Jungle" that the book has just been issued, but the government compelled the publisher to recall all copies, and cut out the last chapters, dealing with Socialism. The Japanese translation of "Mammonart" is about to appear. From Warsaw comes an offer from a large publishing house to issue twenty of our books in a cheap library, at .95 zloty per volume, about thirteen cents American. A Czechish publisher applies for all books not hitherto issued. We have a review of "Mammonart" which was broadcasted from the radio station of the Labour Party of Australia; also a letter from a Ukrainian writer, telling how our plays are being acted there, and our novels made into movies. We have established book-store agencies in London, India and South Africa, and we learn that readers are circulating our books in Java, Honduras, and Iceland. We await returns from the U. S. A.

Upton Sinclair, Pasadena, California.



## DE-BUNKING THE ART THEATRE

(Continued from page 22)

make an emotional contact. This is the age-old function of the theatre—by no means a new innovation. There are those of us who think that this contact can be made more vigorously and simply by means of a freer method than the restrained and comparatively recent technique of the drawing room play. It is my own opinion that the picture-frame technique, so-called *realism* (in the sense of the supposedly realistic well-made play) is impracticable and dull. Far from regarding this as a startling innovation, I am merely basing my opinion on the whole tradition of the theatre.

Nor is it particularly subversive to state that a dramatic story may express conflict of two sorts: the conflict of personalities, or the broader struggle of the individual with his environments. In a sense, each and every one of us stands alone, bloody and more or less unbowed in the face of a cock-eyed world. This is old stuff, the stuff of real drama. I for one do not assume that the spinning globe is particularly more cock-eyed than in the days of Aristophanes and Moliere. From your playwright's point of view, this current world is peculiarly pregnant and exciting—and his aim is to get the thrilling stuff and vibration of it across the footlights.

Now let me turn to a particular play—because in this case I can discuss the author's intentions with some authority. There is considerable scientific talk in *Nirvana*, some of it amazingly accurate, some of it less so: and why? Not for purposes of clinical discussion, but to tell a story. Because this scientific background is the integral environment which shapes and hurts the lives of a certain group of human beings. The author of *Nirvana* obscured his story in a second act which was muddled and badly written. This was lamentable. One can't explain it away by any amount of palaver and apple sauce about the depth of the theme. Much of this play hit a high and unusual pitch of excitement, but where was the plot in that middle portion? And this is a question that any reasoning author may well ask himself—seriously and often: where is the plot? When Mr. Chase raises that point, he raises an important issue.

But I beg to submit that (from my own point of view) the three plays under discussion are almost the only plays of the current season that have any pretense of story. My only quar-

(Continued on page 30)

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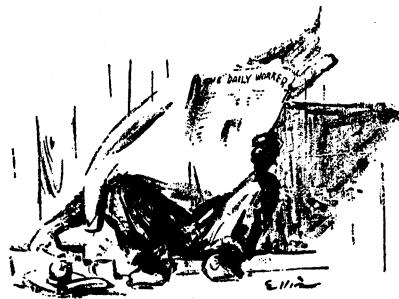


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*(Continued from page 28)*  
rel with the average Broadway offering is its entire innocence of plot. Sometimes a melodrama crashes through with a healthy mixture of rape, arson, mayhem and murder. But in the lighter type of commercial entertainment there is a studious avoidance of story. In spite of its amusing features, can you find a trace of a story in *Is Zat So?* I am unable to. *Abie's Irish Rose* is a corking piece of comic strip symbolism. But plot? Well the *Romeo and Juliet* scheme is used, but the author is careful to explain that away soon after the curtain rises. Afterward, is there any invention, any magic of events? Not a soupcon! On the contrary, in the case of *The Great God Brown*, it strikes me that this extraordinary play is nothing but story in the simplest and most eventful sense, full of suspense and unexpected turns—until the final twenty minutes when the plot is apparently lost in heavy mysticism. The fact that this mysticism is all wool and a yard wide does not save it for purposes of the play, which are *story* purposes.

My point then, is a very simple one: that it is a mistake to think of the New Art of the theatre in terms which are either new or artistic. It is an attempt to apply a very ancient form of showmanship to the needs of current and vital entertainment. It is true that this has not been accomplished. It is true that such accomplishment requires a change in the current convention of the theatre.

We require clarification. It is important to consider in simple untechnical terms, how to develop methods of writing, acting, setting, which carry out these ideas of richer story value, emotional connection; to create a theatre which touches some electrical crowd nerve. Perhaps some such simple statement or program can be discussed in a later issue of the New MASSES.

John Howard Lawson.

### ON THE DEATH OF A POET

*(Continued from page 18)*

But the poignant fresh grief of his loss is mitigated by the thought that this excellent, genuine poet reflected our epoch in his own way, has enriched it with songs in which new words are uttered about love, and the blue sky which tumbles in the river, the moon which like a silver lamb grazes in the sky, and the meteorically vanishing flower—all images reflecting himself.

In honoring the memory of the poet, then, let us say nothing that is demoralizing or weakening. The spring imbedded in our epoch is infinitely more powerful than is the personal spring in every one of us. The spring of history will expand to the very end. We must not hamper it, but help it with conscious effort of thought and will. Let us forge the future! Let us forge the future! We will conquer for every man and woman the right to bread and the right to song.

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