

# NEW MASSES

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A MAGAZINE FOR REBELS

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JUNE, 1928

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# DANGER!

*[See Inside Cover—]*

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HUGO  
GELLERT

# DANGER! DANGER!

There was no May issue of the *New Masses*. Your subscription will be extended.



Egmont Arens has resigned. Michael Gold is now the Editor, and Hugo Gellert is art editor.



Every radical magazine has a deficit. This should not be any more surprising than that every camel has a hump. Our deficit is small; but the Garland fund, which has met it until now, has decided to put us out in the snow.



We are not too worried. We believe in our readers. We believe there are a few thousand people in this lonesome big country who like the *New Masses*. We believe they will send us five and ten dollar bills. We believe they will try to get us subscribers.



The magazine is running on a starvation basis. No writers or artists are paid; and the office staff lives on coffee and crullers. No matter, though; the magazine can go on indefinitely. BUT OUR READERS must send in money and subs.



Skeptics and fainthearts can never believe that a magazine like this has a chance in America. And yet there has been a *Masses*, *Liberator*, and *New Masses* since 1913. Help us carry on the tradition of John Reed.



The last generation is tired. But there is a new one springing up. Help us keep the *New Masses* alive for the young Jack Londons and John Reeds.



The *New Masses* does not compete with the *Mercury*, the *Nation*, the *New Republic* or any other magazine. It is unique. It takes a chance. It is the voice of the lowbrow, the failure, the rebel, the boy worker, the factory poet, the tenant farmer, the poorhouse philosopher, the men and women at the bottom. Writers for other magazines wear high hats; our writers have to pan-handle their meals.



Danger! Danger! Danger! The *New Masses* calls upon its readers to rally to its support. Send all your loose dollars to the *New Masses*, 39 Union Square. Get your friends to subscribe; it's easy.



## The New Masses Must Carry On!

WE NEED \$1,000 TO TAKE US THROUGH THE SUMMER!

# Danger! Danger! Danger!

# NEW MASSES

VOLUME 4

JUNE, 1928

NUMBER 1

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## CHICAGO RED—By DUDLEY NICHOLS

THE elevated leaves the loop and meanders on its steel stilts into south Chicago, past miles of junkyards, junk both dead and living, and finally a spur twines off from the trunkline into packing town. Like a grimy mouse the short train crawls over the crooked steel spine of packing town, till plaintive lowing floats up from the pens below, acres of pens daubed now and then with the barnyard colors of animals.

Here is the harvest of the plains, sheaves of beating blood to match the prairie wheat.

With a rocking slam the train pulls up among the tall brick boxes where steers turn beef, pigs pork, sheep mutton. . . . As you enter a brick skeleton whose bone-white walls are continually being scraped clean of flesh, the gaunt clean factory fairly sandpapers the eye with its hard brightness. And in the air is a wiry tenor sound suspended, thin but arresting. You advance, it pierces more sharply, an uneasy sound, more than machinery, that makes hair crawl at the back of one's neck for some peculiar reason. . . .

"That's where the hogs come in," says the department head with a wave to the left. "A long rest first so they're in a good mood. Then shower—washed clean as kings."

Sure enough, there were the voluptuaries emerging from their bath, like fat Romans going to the trough, dripping and grunting, trundling their meaty little tails smugly as they slog indolently towards the open gate.

"Next—" begins the department head . . . That high wire-edged song, first like an Italian tenor dying romantically on a top note, swelled into a din of fear, squealing incessant, without rest or quaver, a solid agonizing sound that screwed into one's ears like tungsten steel. There was the iron hoisting wheel with short bull-chains on the perimeter, and as each pig lolled through the gate a man plucked hold of a hind leg, wedged the hoof in the end-link and in a trice an astonished and expostulating swine was being drawn inexorably into the air.

His grunt grows to an awful clamor as at the top of the wheel his bull-chain is switched to a ceiling track and he slides along on his pulley, head down, towards the knife.

There on the backwash of track a dozen hogs hang up-ended, a dozen dangling fears, fat terrors, and all converting terror into ear splitting sound. There is pain as well as terror in that chorus. For it is no joke for a bag of living lard to hang by one heel. Wagging all together in a compact mass of hairy meat, they resemble the inflated bladders of some monstrous kind of bagpipe, with drones and chanters all pitched on one shrill key. Where in the world, where in the world of swine and men do they get enough air to blow out all this noise? . . . Now the smell of blood reeks up to their hanging snouts and dwarfish eyes bulge with the pressure of their full arteries, their red life all running down into throat and head, gravity accessory to the butcher.

He is a big man, the butcher, with a body as thick as the hog's before him, and in his left hand he holds a steel, in his right a long knife with an edge that catches the light like a burning thread, a knife worn thin with frequent sharpening. Each time he turns

away and strokes the burning edge three times across the steel, as a smalltown barber, then mechanically turns to the body hanging before him, a body whose little black eyes are riveted on him with terror.

The bagpipe of many throats is screaming as loudly as ever when the man reaches out slowly, the burning thread is extinguished in a fat throat, and as it is deliberately withdrawn, cooled to a cherry red, the bagpipe all at once blows blood instead of air, all the din miraculously transformed into spurting red.

Blood fascinates, a funny moist odor that arrests somehow, that makes the stranger throw up his head and sniff. The color is exciting, that original Roman purple gushing hotly out upon the cold cement. The man with the knife is really working rapidly. It had seemed slow because one watched with such frozen intensity. No waste motions for him: whet—feel—in and out—push along—next—whet—feel—in and out. . . . On his left that many bladdered bagpipe of piercing sound, on his right so many fat trumpets of blood, dangling along the ceiling track down towards the boiling vats, each a spot that splatters beautifully along the concrete and gurgles into clotted gutters. Life, the beautiful, is pouring out of them, the crass life they so lardily cherished and hoarded behind a fat witted squeal; life, the beautiful, is running down into the gutters with death.

"In the drains?" echoes the department head. "You're crazy. That's money!"

"How?"

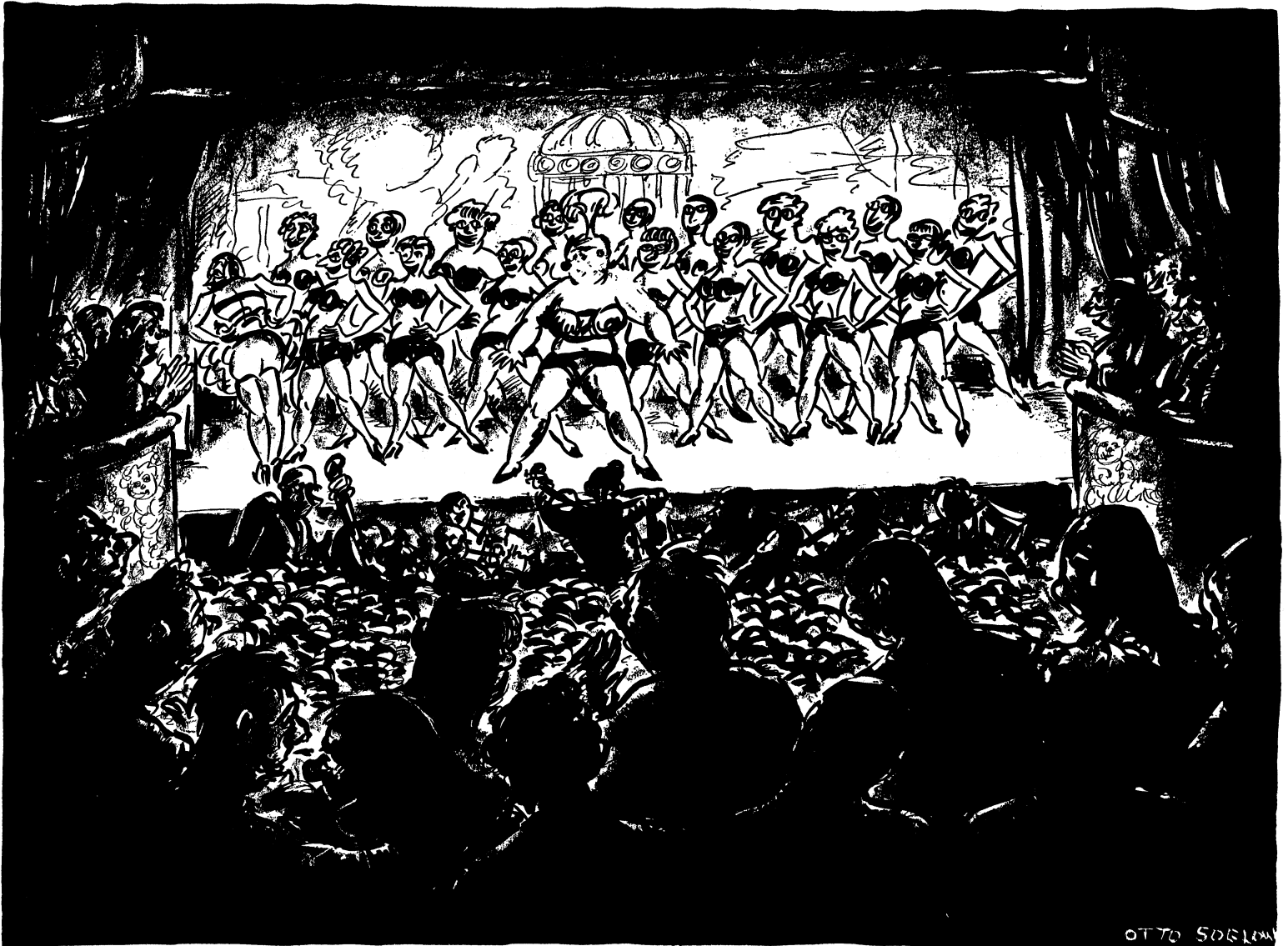
He touched the button on one's coat. All this red trumpeting and a man in New York next week may button his jacket against the wind.

"He kills 250 hogs an hour," volunteers the department head. "On good days two men work there and handle 500 an hour."

This everlasting outpouring of blood is as hypnotic as a serpent's eyes. Blood, primordial life, rich in color, alive with heat and motion. . . . Beyond, the corpses come out of the boiling vats and dehairing machines white and bloodless, hardly more interesting than firkins of lard. . . . Through the machines they go on their maze of ceiling tracks, through chutes and blades and cleavers, through the multifarious machines of the endless factory, so many of them on human legs; and finally into the packing rooms they go as lard and ham and bacon, so remote from the life they left at the other end of the factory in the gutters . . .

Sheep die differently. Sniffing that moist funny odor beyond the secretive gate they back away timorously. At that point a goat has a life job and Judas is his name. He ambles through at the head of the flock, which files after, and then Iscariot sneaks back through a trapdoor while the butcher tends to the sheep. Swung aloft by their heels their throats are slit and they die convulsively, the red life tossing out reluctantly and the wool soaking up a scarlet collar. The whole business is wistfully silent, with not a bleat or murmur, the timid life leaking timidly out and flowing down into the gutters . . .

Still further on are the cattle. You see them down below your



OTTO SOGLOW

Drawing by Otto Soglow

## THE RISE OF AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

feet as you stare over the railing of the visitors' scaffolding. The butcher reverses his two-pound sledge and bunts the steers on the back with the long hickory handle, prodding them through the belly-wide runway and into the stun-pens.

Steers cannot look over the runway walls but they have eyes in their swollen nostrils which snuff the red pool just beyond. In a panic they jib and buck, the butcher pounding and prodding. Theoretically the steer is driven alone into a pen and given the sledge but this time the slaughterman got three in at once.

That helped wedge them still in the small space. Up swung the hammer and down swung the hammer, square on the forehead, there was a funny hollow *spuck* and 1500 pounds of living meat flopped galvanically to the ground, as if gravity had been switched on with a snap, and just looking at that blow made the onlooker's head feel sudsy all at once.

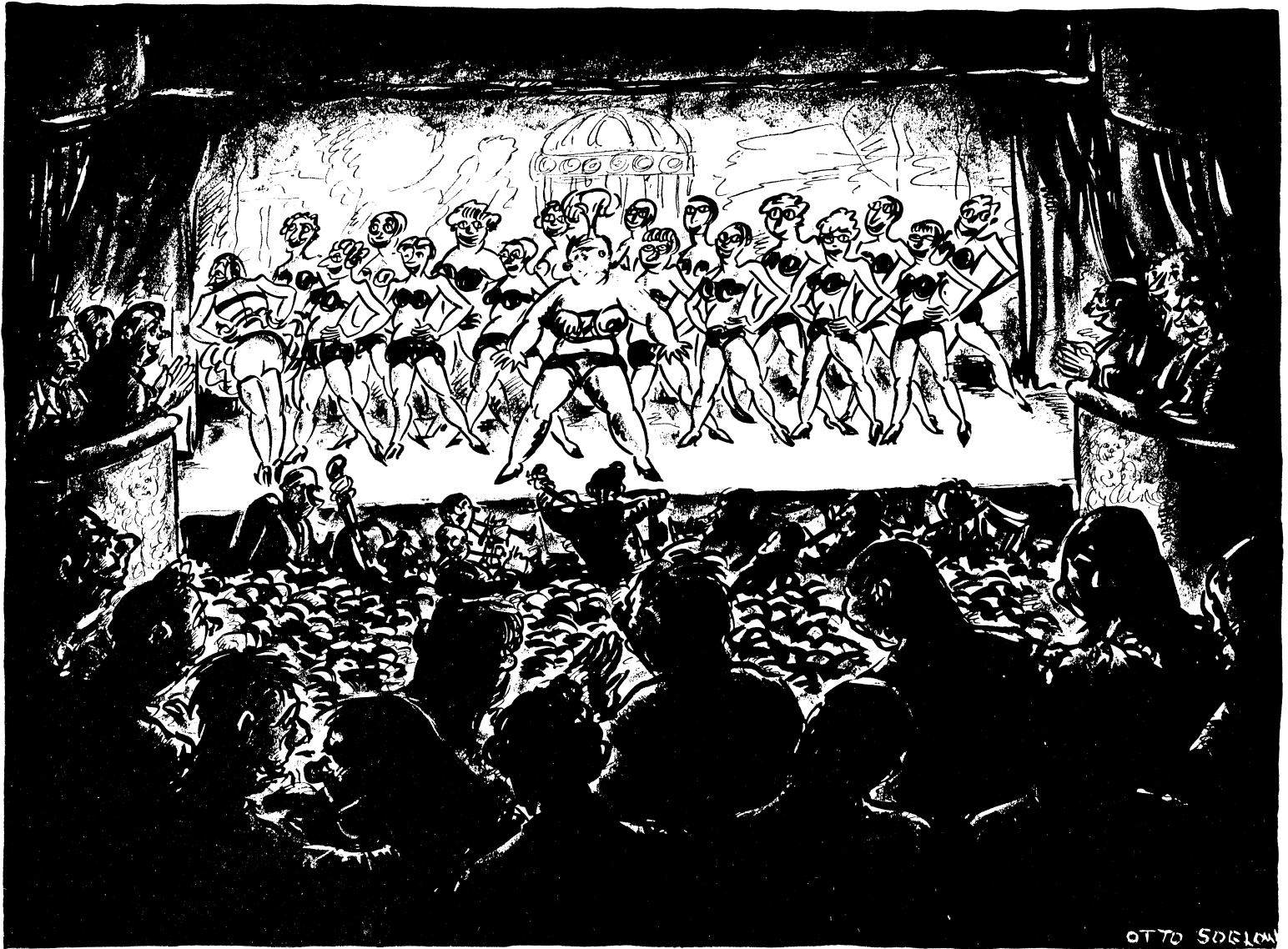
The hammerman felt for the second steer, dazed with terror and the smell of blood but wedged in place. The sledge went up and fell in a glancing blow that caught the muzzle, and the great head juked and jerked. The big body trembled but there was no hope, it was wedged tight by its belly. The hammer fell again but the blow was badly aimed. Was the butcher rattled? A third time the sledge swung and there sounded the funny hollow impact, though the blow was still fairly bad and the animal fell in a half daze. The man turned to the third with better aim. . . . A lever grated, the side of the pen slid up, the floor tilted over and the three bodies rolled out on the floor beyond, three great brown spots on a bright-running carpet of scarlet. . . .

And while knives in the hands of handsome muscled Negroes played like razors the brown coats were deftly slit up and removed and the red life flushed over the wide floor and curdled in the gutters.

## ANARCHIST NIGHTSONG

*teardrop from my nose should show how cold the night.  
6th Avenue L vertical prison-bars blackly compel me.  
they move darkly into the past, intimate the future  
with close ever-more-distant and precise conjunctions.  
I drink the dark, press close to it with sexual ardor.  
terror subtly underplays a vast and tragic symphony.  
my sigh is gobbled whistlingly up by the wind.  
the vague sharp outlines of grandeur point skyscrapers  
against the inertia of black fog and nescience.  
Union Square is now a dreary stark desert,  
where evil lurks, seeps from the ground . . .  
shines a pavement grin,  
stares fixedly in sadist mania from out the subway signs.  
strike down, O Lord of desolation and bleak murder  
strangle this sick asleep chorus-girl city, smash,  
press your thumb down lightly, smudge into nothing  
the gross abomination of men's possessions—  
answer the circumscribed and lightheaded jest—  
return the facile sneer of men with interest—  
kill the lousy bastards in their beds as graves!  
wreck the damned machines to which all men are slaves!  
let me know no more new york!  
smashing, rending havoc be your work—  
O Lord!  
O Lord of loveliness and ugly death:  
let all nights cease upon your last, chill breath!*

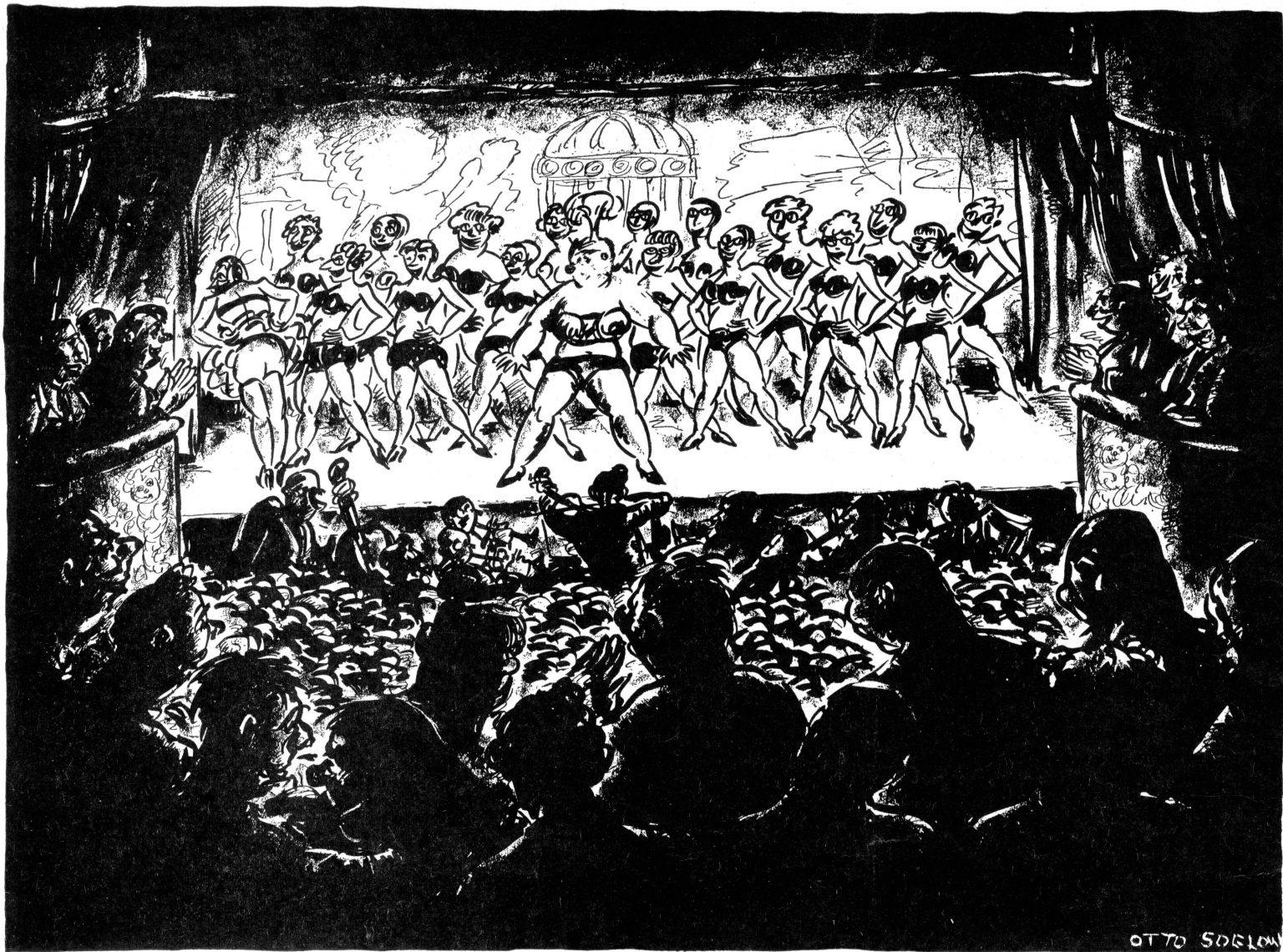
HERMAN SPECTOR.



OTTO SOGLOW

*Drawing by Otto Soglow*

**THE RISE OF AMERICAN CIVILIZATION**



OTTO SOGLOW

*Drawing by Otto Soglow*

**THE RISE OF AMERICAN CIVILIZATION**

# HAVING A BABY

By DOROTHY DAY

ON WEDNESDAY I received my white ticket, which entitled me to a baby at Bellevue. So far I had been using a red one, which admitted me to the clinic each week for a cursory examination. The nurse in charge seemed very reluctant about giving out the white one. She handed it to me, saying doubtfully, "You'll probably be late. They're all being late just now. And I gave them their tickets and just because they have them they run into the hospital at all times of the night and day, thinking their time is come, and find out they were wrong."

The clinic doctors acted very much disgusted, saying, "What in the world's the matter with you women? The wards are all empty." And only a week before they were saying, "Stall off this baby of yours, can't you? The beds are all taken and even the corridors are crowded."

The girl who sat next to me at the clinic that day was late the week before and I was astonished and discouraged to see her still there. She was a pretty brown-eyed girl with sweet full lips and a patient expression. She was only about eighteen and it was her first baby. She said "Ma'am," no matter what I said to her. She seemed to have no curiosity and made no attempt to talk to the women about her; just sat there with her hands folded in her lap, patient, waiting. She did not look very large, but she bore herself clumsily, childishly.

There was one young Greek who was most debonair. She wore a turban and a huge pink pearl necklace and ear rings, a bright dress and flesh colored stockings on still slim legs. She made no attempt to huddle her coat around her as so many women do. She had to stand while waiting for the doctor, the place was so crowded, and she poised herself easily by the door, her head held high, her coat flung open, her full figure most graciously exposed. She rather flaunted herself, confident of her attractions. And because she was confident, she was most attractive.

When I got home that afternoon, thinking of her I put on my ivory beads and powdered my nose. I could not walk lightly and freely, but it was easy to strut.

There was another woman who was late, a great gay Irish wench who shouted raucously as she left the doctor's office. "The doctor sez they are tired of seeing me around and I don't blame them. I rushed over three times last week, thinking I was taken and I wasn't. They sez, 'the idea of your not knowing the pains when this is your third!' But honest to Gawd, look at me. Could I be any bigger? I ask you! But I'm damned if I come in here again until they cart me in."

So just when I was philosophically preparing myself to hang around a month, waiting for my child to knock on the door, my pains started, twelve hours earlier than schedule. I was in the bath tub reading a mystery novel by Agatha Chrystie when I felt the first pain and was thrilled, both by the novel and the pain, and thought stubbornly to myself, "I must finish this book." And I did, before the next one struck me fifteen minutes later.

"Carol!" I called. "The child will be born before tomorrow morning. I've had two pains."

"It's a false alarm," scoffed my cousin, but her knees began to tremble visibly because after all, according to all our figuring, I was due the next morning.

"Never mind. I'm going over to the hospital to exchange my white ticket for Tamara Teresa"—for so I had euphoniously named her.

So Carol rushed out for a taxicab while I dressed myself haltingly and a few minutes later we were crossing town in a Yellow, puffing on cigarettes and clutching each other as the taxi driver went over every bump in his anxiety for my welfare.

"Do you remember that long taxi ride to the south side of Chicago when we were going to the Mad Hatters' Ball?" asked Carol, her teeth chattering. "That mince pie tasted so good." We had had an impromptu picnic in the cab, after passing a bakery from whence came the hot steamy smell of fresh baked things.

"This is another kind of joy ride," she went on. "I suppose people looking in the cab as we pause for traffic think we are going some place to have a good time." Carol has a strong sense of the dramatic. It helps her through much.

The taxi driver breathed a sigh of relief as he left us at Bellevue and so did we. We sat then for half an hour or so in the receiving room, my case evidently not demanding immediate attention, and watched with interest the reception of other patients. The doctor, greeting us affably, asked which of us was the maternity case which so complimented me and amused Carol that our giggling tided us over any impatience we felt.

There was a colored woman with a tiny pickaninny, born that morning, brought in on a stretcher. She kept sitting up, her child clutched to her bosom, yelling that she had an earache, and the doctor kept pushing her back. Carol who suffers from the same complaint said that she would rather have a baby than an earache and I agreed with her.

Then there was a genial drunk assisted in with difficulty by a cab driver, and his fare kept insisting that he had been kicked by a large white horse. His injuries did not seem to be serious.

My turn came next and as I was wheeled away in a chair by a pleasant old orderly with a whiskey breath, Carol's attention was attracted and diverted from my ordeal by the reception of a drowned man, or one almost drowned, from whom they were trying to elicit information about his wife, whether he was living with her, their address, religion, occupation, and birthplace—information which the man was totally unable to give.

For the next hour I received all the attention Carol would have desired for me—attentions which I did not at all welcome. The nurse who ministered to me was a large, beautiful creature with marcelled hair and broad hips which she flaunted about the small room with much grace. She was a flippant creature and talked of Douglas Fairbanks and the film she had seen that afternoon, while she wielded a long razor with abandon.

Abandon. Abandon! What did that remind me of? Oh yes, the suitor who said I was lacking in abandon because I didn't respond to his advances.

Thinking of moving pictures, why didn't the hospital provide a moving picture for women having babies. And music! Surely things should be made as interesting as possible for women who are perpetuating the race. It was comforting to think of peasant women who take lunch hour to have their children in, and then put the kids under the haystack and go on working in the fields. Hellish civilization!

I had nothing at home to put the baby in, I thought suddenly. Except a bureau drawer. But Carol said she would get a clothes basket. But I adore cradles. Too bad I had been unable to find one. A long time ago I saw an adorable one on the east side in an old second hand shop. They wanted thirty dollars for it and I didn't have the thirty dollars, and besides, how did I know then I was ever going to have a baby? Still I wanted to buy it. If Sarah Bernhardt could carry a coffin around the country with her there is no reason why I couldn't carry a cradle around with me. It was a bright pink one—not painted pink, because I examined it carefully. Some kind of pink wood.

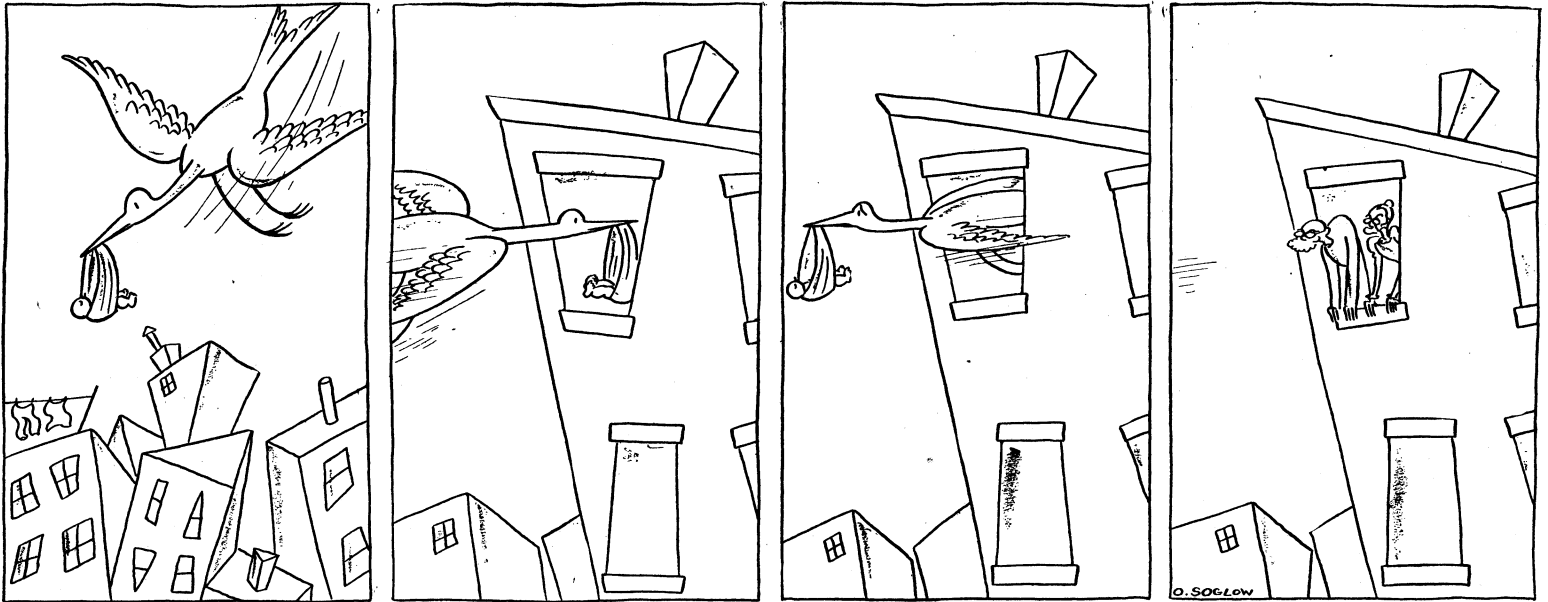
The pain penetrating my thoughts made me sick to my stomach. Sick at your stomach, or sick to your stomach? I always used to say "sick to your stomach" but William declares it is "sick at your stomach." Both sound very funny to me. But I'd say whatever William wanted me to. What difference did it make? But I have done so many things he wanted me to, I am tired of it. Doing without milk in my coffee, for instance, because he insists that milk spoils the taste of coffee. And using the same kind of tooth paste. Funny thing, being so intimate with a man that you feel you must use the same kind of tooth paste he does. To wake up and see his head on your pillow every morning. An awful thing to get used to anything. I mustn't get used to the baby. I don't see how I can.

Lightning! It shoots through your back, down your stomach, through your legs and out at the end of your toes. Sometimes it takes longer to get out than others. You have to push it out then. I am not afraid of lightning now but I used to be. I used to get up in bed and pray every time there was a thunder storm. I was afraid to get up but prayers didn't do any good unless you said them on your knees.

Hours passed. I thought it must be about eleven o'clock and found that it was two. Every five minutes the pains came and



## A STORY WITHOUT WORDS



Drawing by Otto Soglow

in between I slept. As each pain began I groaned and cursed, "How long will this one last?" and then when it had swept over with the beautiful rhythm of the sea, I felt with satisfaction "it could be worse," and clutched at sleep again frantically.

Every now and then my large hipped nurse came in to see how I was getting along. She was a sociable creature, though not so to me, and brought with her a flip young doctor and three other nurses to joke and laugh about hospital affairs. They disposed themselves on the other two beds but my nurse sat on the foot of mine, pulling the entire bed askew with her weight. This spoiled my sleeping during the five minute intervals and mindful of my grievance against her and the razor I took advantage of the beginning of the next pain to kick her soundly in the behind. She got up with a jerk and laying my violence to my extremity she obligingly took a seat on the next bed.

And so the night wore on. When I became bored and impatient with the steady resistlessness of those waves of pain I thought of all the other and more futile kinds of pain I would rather not have. Toothaches, earaches and broken arms. I had had them all. And this is a much more satisfactory and accomplishing pain, I comforted myself.

And I thought too how much had been written about child birth—no novel, it seems, is complete without at least one birth scene. I counted over the ones I had read that winter—Upton Sinclair's in "The Miracle of Love," Tolstoi's in "Anna Karenina," Arnim's in "The Pastor's Wife," Galsworthy's in "Beyond," O'Neill's in "The Last Man," Bennett's in "The Old Wives' Tale" and so on.

All but one of these descriptions had been written by men and with the antagonism natural to a woman at such a time, I resented their presumption.

"What do they know about it, the idiots," I thought. And it gave me pleasure to imagine one of them in the throes of child-birth. How they would groan and holler and rebel. And wouldn't they make everybody else miserable around them. And here I was, conducting a neat and tidy job, begun in a most business-like manner, on the minute. But when would it end?

While I dozed and wondered and struggled the last scene of my own little drama began, much to the relief of the doctors and nurses who were becoming impatient now that it was almost time for them to go off duty. The smirk of complacency was wiped from me. Where before there had been waves there were now tidal waves. Earthquake and fire swept my body. My spirit was a battleground on which thousands were butchered in a most horrible manner. Through the rush and roar of the cataclysm which was all about me I heard the murmur of the doctor and the answered murmur of the nurse at my head.

In a white blaze of thankfulness I knew that ether was forthcoming. I breathed deeply for it, mouth open and gasping like that of a baby starving for its mother's breast. Never have I known such frantic imperious desire for anything. And then the

mask descended on my face and I gave myself up to it, hurling myself into oblivion as quickly as possible. As I fell, fell, fell, very rhythmically, to the accompaniment of tom toms, I heard, faint above the clamor in my ears a peculiar squawk. I smiled as I floated dreamily and luxuriously on a sea without waves. I had handed in my white ticket and the next thing I would see would be the baby they would give me in exchange. It was the first time I had thought of the child in a long long time.

## II.

Tamara Teresa's nose is twisted slightly to one side. She sleeps with the placidity of a Mona Lisa so that you cannot see the amazing blue of her eyes which are strangely blank and occasionally ludicrously crossed. What little hair she has is auburn and her eyebrows are golden. Her complexion is a rich tan. Her ten fingers and toes are of satisfactory length and slenderness and I reflect that she will be a dancer when she grows up, which future will relieve her of the necessity for learning reading, writing and arithmetic.

Her long upper lip which resembles that of an Irish policeman may interfere with her beauty but with such posy hands as she has already, nothing will interfere with her grace.

Just now I must say she is a lazy little hog, mouthing around my nice full breast and too lazy to tug for food. What do you want, little bird? That it should run into your mouth I suppose. But no, you must work for your provender already.

She is only four days old but already she has the bad habit of feeling bright and desirous of play at four o'clock in the morning. Pretending that I am a bone and she is a puppy dog, she worries at me fussily, tossing her head and grunting. Of course some mothers will tell you that this is because she has air on her stomach and that I should hold her upright until a loud gulp indicates that she is ready to begin feeding again. But though I hold her up as required I still think the child's play instinct is highly developed.

Other times she will pause a long time, her mouth relaxed, then looking at me slyly, try to tickle me with her tiny red tongue. Occasionally she pretends to lose me and with a loud wail of protest grabs hold once more to start feeding furiously. It is fun to see her little jaw working and the hollow that appears in her baby throat as she swallows.

Sitting up in bed, I glance alternately at my beautiful flat stomach and out the window at tug boats and barges and the wide path of the early morning sun on the East River. Whistles are blowing cheerily and there are some men singing on the wharf below. The restless water is colored lavender and gold and the enchanting sky is a sentimental blue and pink. And gulls wheeling, warm grey and white against the magic of the water and the sky. Sparrows chirp on the windowsill, the baby sputters as she gets too big a mouthful, and pauses then a moment to look around her with satisfaction. Everybody is complacent, everybody is satisfied and everybody is happy.

# A POORHOUSE ANTHOLOGY

By AN INMATE

**H**ALF THE WORLD doesn't know how the other half lives. The observer who coined that phrase didn't linger long at the foot of his class, I'll wager. I haven't seen everything, but I've seen plenty, and I've often wondered, why is a poorhouse? Or "pogie," as we call it? And the "pogie men," the inmates? Why have they neglected to obtain finances sufficient to enable them to live independent of the county?

Well, when I see these men and women, who are old, poor, sick, weak, broken, repulsive, hideous, insane, mean, vile, and pitiful, deserted by relatives and friends, I tell you I feel mighty bad. Sometimes I think life a little cruel, hard and inhuman; a grim comedy.

Society should take care of its old workers, but it doesn't. It's just as if we were machines; when we get used up, rusty, they throw us on the junk heap. But junk hasn't got any feelings; and we have. I am sure things must be different for the workers in Russia.

Well, I will describe some of the people at my "infirmary," so you will know them for yourself, without having to live in this place.

The superintendent appears to the casual observer as mean, reserved, cynical; sometimes just a plain "hard-boiled egg." Ah, but he isn't. If he listened to all the inmates he would be reduced to their status and probable insanity. This pose is merely his protection.

Really, he has the heart of a dove. They tell me the gentleman doesn't like the sight of blood. Yet I have seen him scurrying about, rendering first aid to one, who had fallen and laid his head wide open, not because it was his duty, but simply because he couldn't bear to see anyone in pain.

Another time I've seen him get some imbeciles out of the rain, so they wouldn't take cold and suffer. I guess he is an exception among superintendents. But take my word for it, some of these inmates are hard and queer propositions, and would try the patience of Job.

Most of the inmates are childish and whimsical, and each wants something different. Some are jealous because others can eat hearty meals, walk and get about. They tattle on one another, because one snores, talks in his sleep, or coughs at night. Anything that offends them reaches the ears of the steward and they demand redress.

The sick moan and groan. The insane shriek, rave, scream and yell.

Some have to be changed as often as babies. Some filch food from the garbage cans. Some refuse to associate with another, because he has done this or that, or curls his moustache wrong.

Some boast they never took a bath before coming to the infirmary. Force is sometimes necessary to make them bathe once a week. Others say they never wore undershirts or drawers, and "by crackey" they ain't going to begin now.

The infirmary is a little world of its own. Perhaps an introduction to some of the men will show you the patheticness of it. My descriptions of these men may not be full, for their personality is gone, but these are the things you notice about them:

*John Shamel:* You couldn't drive him away with a pack of hounds. He's been here thirty years; he is malformed mentally and physically. His mania is hoarding strings, buttons, tobacco cans, food, etc.—a poorhouse Rockefeller. The food will rot, mould, drip and stink. When his cache is discovered, it is destroyed; then he sulks for weeks and starts all over again. They have locked him up, sewed up his pockets, etc., but to no avail. He sometimes does chores.

*Charlie Arnold:* Spent all his wife's money, and departed for regions unknown, to return years later, an old, sick and feeble man, who wanted his son to keep him. He used to carry food trays to the bedridden, but robbed the sick of delicacies and ate them. Now he hangs up the clothes on the line three times a week.

*J. R. Mason:* Doesn't like to work, and doesn't believe the world a bad place, is 100% American. (How naive.)

*"Shorty" Jones:* A former millionaire who let a fortune go to pot; plays cards a lot; and can't even hold a nickel without it burning him to be spent.

*"The Christmas Trees":* Ornaments himself with flashy colors and gaudy trinkets; plays the mouth organ and laughs incessantly.

*The "Kid":* Too many friends, women and bottles. A wife

and three little children struggle along without him.

*MacDonald:* Works about the kitchen, and is well read; I would call him a Socialist. Formerly a fine man and hard worker, but now unable to compete with youth.

*Harshey:* Always has eight or nine complaints, and is surly. He says, "he wants to die." However, he's always first at the table.

*Smith:* Forced out of economic competition, because old and tongue-tied. Works about the barn.

*Sam Schofield:* A paralytic. Inmate for years and years. Never goes downstairs.

*Joe Loeb:* An old coal miner, who can no longer dig coal. He tends the chickens and suffers from miner's asthma.

*Jack Sproul:* Very religious and given to exaggeration. He's turned down many beautiful women and millions in dowries. He's been every place and seen everything, and the FISH he's caught—my, my—

*Johnny Bull:* England's champion. England does this! England does that! No one ever dug as much coal or worked as hard as he has. Twenty-two children and thirty-four grandchildren are content to leave him here.

Then there is the man with the beard, the halting walk, the staring eye, who never says anything. And an old, gray-haired, hump-backed Dutchman, who is equally quiet.

*John Abel:* A giant in his day, is content to play cards and read. He isn't bothersome, or makes trouble, but he'll still fight like a tiger if imposed upon.

*Blackie, the Tramp:* Lost his leg because of a careless and cruel charity doctor.

*Mart Evans:* A paralytic. The doctors said he was going to die ten years ago, but he's too "bloody" Welsh and "bull-headed" to die, and he can still lick a dozen Irishmen, he boasts.

*The Unofficial Superintendent:* An inmate whose legs are twisted out of shape with rheumatism. Completely submerged in his own ignorance, and the most disagreeable man I've ever met. Stool pigeon.

*The Booze Fighter:* About 35, tall, good-looking, but a physical wreck.

*Billy the Barber:* He is one-legged, witty, selfish and a Swiss. Plays the accordion, solitaire, and does the barber act for us.

*F. R. Grimes:* Former county official, down on his luck. Does not leave his room, and is bothered by Indians. The vulgar mob is always peeking at him, he says. Goes to Europe in his airplane every evening after supper. Reports the institution financially sound.

*His Room Mate:* Bed fast. All one sees of him is a beard and eyes.

*Willie Little:* Red faced and red headed. Must be doing something or go mad.

*Crippled Ben:* Good hearted, but when he uses a medicine dropper to fix up eyes, drops it all over their face.

*The Wild Man:* A hermit, who had had neither a haircut, shave or bath before being taken into custody. Very arrogant and positively ignorant.

*Bill Baker:* Tall and loud mouthed, who knows the world is all wrong, down to a hair.

*The Canuck:* Just getting sobered up.

Two circus touts and a marine fireman, working for their keep until their "racket" opens up.

*Jimmy the Shakes:* 87 years old, and just waiting till it comes, and hoping it'll be damn quick, too. Won't go to bed, because he's afraid he'll stay there, once he's down.

*Brother and Sister:* The old brother, a farmer, never drank, smoked, chewed, gambled, or chased women; a hard worker. Here they are!

*Otto the Colored Man:* Fat, jolly, a paralytic, and an inmate for years. Everyone likes his singing.

*Hugh Davis:* Too old to dig coal, or maybe too smart. Carries food trays.

*Walt Milhorn:* Big, fat, grouchy, and plenty of seniority.

*The Duke:* Confined to his wheel chair. Insists there's a ghost in the room. Afraid of noises.

Another colored man, with a happy disposition, and an enor-

(Continued on page 17)

# THEY WANT RITZY ART

By JOHN DOS PASSOS

THE NEW PLAYWRIGHTS THEATRE ended its second season under a tremendous shower of brickbats from all sides. The critics of the capitalist press went into a sort of hysterical anvil chorus; nothing pleased them, not the plays nor the productions nor the acting nor the seats. One of these beaux arbiters of New York's taste even stretched professional etiquette to the point of advising people to stay away. Uptown the consensus of opinion was that the whole thing ought to be stopped. Downtown in radical circles we did not fare much better. The Daily Worker discovered "deviations." The socialist press said we were communists in sheep's clothing. If the theatre had any friends they managed very effectively to keep their mouths shut.

In the face of this whirlwind of enthusiastic disapproval why in thunder try to go on? chants the chorus of wellwishers.

Well why not? Theatrical reputation is a fickle thing, the probabilities are that the longer you keep up the more chance there is of a lucky break. Also in a moment when criticism shows a singular dearth of direction every man has to be a law to himself in matters of theatre, writing, painting. While the American Mercury and the new Ford continue to spread a thin varnish of Ritz over the whole United States there is a certain virtue in being unfashionable.

Let's see how the theatre has earned these many dishes of raspberries.

The enterprise started with a bang last spring in the mouldy barn of the 52nd Street Theatre. The first play was Loud Speaker, a social-political farce by John Howard Lawson, acted with admitted spirit on a "constructivist" setting. The play was not a worldbeater, but it would probably have been entertaining to the general public if everybody had not been so ready to gag at modernism, futurism or whatever you want to call it. The New York theatregoer and his pastors the critics express their profound unconscious dissatisfaction with the arts and their life in general by a hysterical fear of change or novelty. Their first reaction is to get up and walk out of the theatre at the first unfamiliar sight or sound; except when recent trips abroad have planted a seed of doubt. Maybe its art. So they drape it with an ism, say that they can't understand it and remain limp in their seats, profoundly bored. If the ism is translated from a foreign language they may even allow themselves to be moved. After all the utterer forms of art are a foreign language to the average New York audience, not that it is a particularly dull audience, but because it's been for years confused bullied and high-hatted by art-tasters of all kinds, critics and foreign importers. Well I suppose the public has a right to gag at an ism. It did. Flop.

The second play was Earth, by Em Jo Basse, a play about a small Negro community somewhere in the foothills, about men and women fighting the earth for a living, fighting God and voodoo and the terror of night and forest fires. The production revolved round a superb performance by Inez Clough. The play was acted and sung by Negroes. It got a certain amount of critical recognition but failed to attract much of an audience. Flop.

For the second season, in an attempt to put on productions more economically, the theatre was moved down to the little Cherry Lane Playhouse on Commerce Street. The first production last fall was The Belt by Paul Sifton, a play about the Ford system. You saw Henry Ford dancing the old-fashioned dances with his employees, all one big happy family, the automaton workers on the belt-conveyor, a riot when the factories shut down for a prolonged layoff. Some critics praised the play and the production, but the majority said rubbish, chaos, amateurishness, radicalism. By that time the big fight on propaganda was on. The underlying idea was that any play in the writing of which the author had a more serious aim than making money was high-brow or communistic or worse. Authors mustn't have opinions, particularly political opinions. The Belt did not make money for the theatre but it came near splitting even. Almost a success.

Next came The Centuries by Em Jo Basse, a broadly painted historical picture of the New York Ghetto. A few writers stood up against the by this time monotonous chorus of complaint on

the score of dullness, amateurishness, chaos and radicalism. Nobody made any million dollars out of The Centuries.

The third play last season was The International, by John Howard Lawson, a satirical pageant of world war and revolution, with a chorus that was a cross between the chorus in a Greek play and the chorus in an uptown review. That rang the bell of critical disapproval. The venerable gentlemen from the capitalist press almost had apoplexy, they foamed and lost their breath thinking up adjectives with which to vent their sour disapproval and disgust. The radical press was more friendly but hardly less disapproving. People still shudder at the mention of the play's name. Flop.

The last production was a fantasy on Harlem in the manner of old time nigger-minstrels, Hoboken Blues, by Michael Gold. All the remaining bricks in anybody's satchel came down on it. With that the season ended amid the jubilation of the critics. Flop. General comment on season: Series of flops.

Now everybody admits that the six plays so far presented have had faults, but I think that we can claim that they bear in them a germ of growth in the American theatre, and that each of the plays had an individual freshness and integrity that, several years from now, will make having produced it worth while. My personal opinion is that both The Centuries and The International will turn out to be important landmarks in theatre history.

Due to financial difficulties and the problem of working out new methods of setting production and direction, the actual presentation of the plays has been faulty in many ways. But I get the impression that people who like the theatre have gotten considerable stimulus from some of the experiments made in production. It will be impossible for an organization like the New Playwrights Theatre to turn out finished and perfect productions for many years to come, and by the time its productions are complete, it'll probably have no function to perform.

What we haven't had has been the Ritzy finish that Americans are getting accustomed to, veneering everything in this country. What even our friends don't seem to see is that this sort of finish is incompatible with growth and experiment, and that the finish that we have been, however ineptly, groping for, is a finish from the inside out, solidity.

Next season, and there's going to be a next season, in spite of the heartfelt prayers of our many wellwishers, we are opening with a production of Singing Jailbirds by Upton Sinclair, to be followed by Airways, Inc., by John Dos Passos. The third production will probably be Picnic, by Francis Faragoh, and the fourth will be chosen from a number of plays that are at present under consideration. Among these is The American Beauty, by Paul Sifton, and Women at Four O'Clock, by Dawn Powell.

The critics will certainly be stacked against us but we hope to interest an everwidening circle of radicals, workers and plain miscellaneous theatregoers in the possibilities of such a theatre.

The main difficulty in getting such an organization under way, aiming at breadth of scope, low prices, and plays that deal with things that matter to a large and largely workers' audience, is that the whole drift of American cultural life is against it. That tendency is that experiments in thought and presentation are for a few highbrows and that the general public that attends prizefights and baseball games will take only the most smooth-worn routine in the theatre. It may be that the task is an impossible one. All worthwhile human institutions spring from impossible tasks.

Hopeless or not, the fight for radical thought and expression in theatres and magazines and newspapers must be kept up. One by one the rallying points of protest are drowned in the great wave of Cal Coolidge prosperity, Cal Coolidge, meanheartedness and meanmindedness. The American mind is smothered in wise-cracks, in five and ten-cent store Ritziness and in the rising imaginary billions of oil-prosperity. Still people will gamble with their money. They can be induced to take a chance with their minds and feelings once in a while. Even if they can't it's no time to abandon a theatre that at least can be a center of resistance.

# POEMS OF A SILK WEAVER

By MARTIN RUSSAK

## PATERSON

O Paterson, my home, my town, Paterson,  
With your church-spires and chimneys racing for heaven,  
With your statue of Justice on your court-house dome  
Who has lost her sword and her scales and stands  
Blindfold and helpless in the smoky air,—  
When I lie on the cliffs of Garret Rock  
Eating a bag of lunch at noon,  
And considering you spread out below,  
I could weep for myself and for you, if only  
I did not know how to curse—so I curse  
And go down the cliffs to the mill where I work,  
Paterson, my home town.

## JACQUARD FLOWERS

Beautiful, beautiful,  
In gold and green and crimson,  
Are the flowers I am weaving  
On the jacquard looms.  
Beautiful, beautiful!  
They remind me now  
Of a summer meadow in Haledon  
Where daisies shine in the sun.  
Beautiful jacquard flowers!  
They remind me now  
Where a bank on the blue Pequonack  
Yellows with black-eyed susan.  
O beautiful and sad,  
O sad flowers of jacquard.

## WORM CYCLE

In China now the innocent worms  
Are spinning the precious envelopes of silk  
Which men will gather and bring to a city in Jersey,  
And throwsters and winders, warpers and quillers and twisters  
Will prepare them for me, those thin weak threads of price;  
And I shall be plowing the warps with my sharpened shuttles,  
And I shall be weaving the crepes and the splendid satins  
Which men will preciously gather and sell to men  
In China, Ireland, or Argentine.

## MY FACTORY

Here once my grandfather  
Wove silk in his old age.  
Here once my father  
Wove silk for a dozen years.  
Here once my mother  
Wove silk when times were hard  
And coal was needed for winter.  
They shall lack no monument;  
This is the living tomb of those I love.

## A WEAVER'S FUNERAL

He wove enough silk  
To cover the city  
With a gossamer rainbow roof.  
But now he will lie  
Under a different roof.  
A roof of mud and worms,  
A low-ceiled roof indeed.  
And though he created  
Several fortunes,  
I must now beg you, fellow-weavers,  
Each for a few pennies  
That we may bury him decently.

## SUMMER

You cannot frighten us, priest,  
With your stories of burning hell:  
We work all summer in the mills.

## WILLIAM BLAKE

What greater loss than the sunlight of the day?  
What bitterer disgrace than labor for coins of money?  
What mightier curse than the cowed eyes of an old weaver?  
What bloodier wrong than the pale face of a factory girl?

## FACTORY POET

One voice out of many,  
One voice that must speak  
For the many that have no speech;  
One voice that is strong  
And loud and unlovely  
With the burden of the sorrow of many,  
With the burden of the anguish of many  
Dumb and they cannot clamor  
Out of the depths to the world above.

## THE HAPPY LAND

Far, far away, far away  
Somewhere, somewhere,  
Lies the happy land,  
Lies beautiful, forbidden.  
The blue hills never  
Were trod by feet of man;  
The silver field never,  
The mild valleys never,  
Were trod by feet of man.  
Somewhere,  
Deep in time and space,  
It is waiting  
For the passion  
That will bare it to the sun,  
Lies the golden treasure  
Of joy and of peace,  
Stored safe and waiting  
In time, in space.

## THE LIGHTNING PRAYER

Let lightning strike  
The roofs of the city,  
Let the cliffs of Garret Rock  
Crash upon the mills below,  
Let the cliffs of Monument Heights  
Come tumbling on the mills below,  
Let the terrible thunder answer  
Forever the factory whistles,  
Let the sun forget once and for all  
To pass over the City of Silk.

## PATERSON

O Paterson, my home, my town, Paterson,  
With your Syrians, Polaks, Italians and Jews,  
All hating each other and living apart,  
With your dismal streets and stinking river—  
Some of us dreamed once to make you over,  
Crushing you first to death like a snake,  
And breathing new breath into fairer clay,  
But the time is not yet—  
O Paterson, my home, my town, Paterson.



It's in Spring the seven million prisoners of New York feel their worst, and itch, fret, worry and dream their foolish perennial dreams of escape: of "a little farm somewhere," or of an enlistment in the navy.

Revolutions are made in the Spring, but New Yorkers come to the Battery, instead, and look at the fishes.

From Hell's Kitchen, from the Bronx and Little Italy and Little Palestine and Black Harlem they come. All week they've wrestled pots and pans, or juggled with steel girders and adding machines and sewing machines. Now it's Sunday, the bars are down; hoop-la, for the fishes in the Aquarium!

Battery Park is like a kid's drawing with its bright toy balloons and popcorn stands. The sky is an infantile blue, the prison grass a lovely unreal green, and there's a breeze offshore, that chops the bay into diamonds, and flutters the pink tabloids in the gutters like leaves.

Men sprawl on the benches, smoking pipes and Lucky Strikes, watching the girls' legs dreamily and the Bay and the Statue of Liberty.

Inside the Aquarium there's a green twilight, like a submarine church. The mobs of people, sweating with spring fever, surge in and out of the doors, as at a bargain sale or fire, and they stare at the cool fishes.

The fishes stare at them. Both sides are miserable with the spring. They swim about, the dogfish, the carp, the fat seals, the sharks, suckers and sombre morays, and feel miserable under all these frantic staring eyes.

Yes, the poor fish inside the tanks, and the poor fish outside, are self-conscious with the spring. In their dim brains these products of Evolution feel the stirring of racial memories; whiffs of river and ocean, blasts of forgotten storms and wild freedoms, memories of the great world's life before men had created prisons for fishes, birds, animals and Man.

# JEWS WITHOUT MONEY

(From a Book of East Side Memoirs)

By MICHAËL GOLD

GENTILES believe every Jew is born with a racial secret that teaches him how to make money. This is an old belief; Jews have been crucified, mothers' breasts torn off, Jewish children have been split on Cossack spears for this Gentile belief.

A lie. The Rothschilds are rich, but the Jews are poor. The vast horde has no money, its only secret is poverty. Poverty is in our blood; poverty is in the eyes of Jewish babies ripening in the womb.

Jews are greedy, fearful, grasping, they haggle, they buzz with nervous clutching excitement, and lack of poise and pettiness and scramble; they have no manners. No drowning or starving man has good manners. The Jews have been drowning and starving for twenty centuries. Jews are racially desperate, they must fight or die.

## 1. Yelling For Bananas

My Uncle Herman was no fighter; my mother's brother, arrived from Hungary with a timid little wife and two children; to escape from poverty. They lived in our crowded home; tented on the floor, or stuffed into bed with the rest of us. Later they rented two rooms that had no windows. My Uncle Herman was gentle and tall, his sad pockmarked face looked like the young Lincoln's.

He and his plump little wife were two children lost in America. He seemed to have no luck. He worked in a sweatshop for a while, then contracted tuberculosis. The doctor ordered that he live outdoors, that he eat well, rest, breathe deep, or die.

So my Uncle Herman took to peddling bananas.

I met him by accident near Cooper Union one winter dusk. I was returning from an errand for my father. There was a wet bad clinging snow. The work crowds were home from factories. Uncle stood there, frozen and sad, in an old overcoat fastened by a safety pin. He saw me. His face lit with his beautiful lonely smile, Charlie Chaplin's smile.

"Well, well, it's little Mikey, so far from home, come here and eat a banana," he said. He smiled, and held out a banana.

I refused it. I knew too well about his poverty, it was crucial that he sell his bananas, not give them away. But he thought I was shy, and coaxed and joked, so I ate the banana smelling of wet straw, and stood with him in the snow. The workers pushed home morosely over the pavements. The rusty sky darkened over New York, the tall lamps came up, wagons and street cars rattled by. After I ate the banana, I felt I must remain there and pay for it by helping my uncle.

"You haven't sold many bananas today, Uncle," I said anxiously.

"No," he said, "nobody wants my bananas, Mikey."

Among the people streaming past us in a mystic river of faces nobody seemed aware of our pushcart. We did not exist. It was like being a ghost; we shivered and were miserable.

"I ought to yell, I was advised by other peddlers to yell and make a big noise," said my Uncle mournfully, "but my throat gets sore. Anyhow I'm ashamed of yelling yet, it's like making a fool of yourself."

"I know how to yell good," I said, "I'll yell for you, Uncle."

"Nu, yell then, Mikey," he said doubtfully, "it wont hurt your throat, will it, and maybe, with God's help, we'll sell the bananas."

So I yelled and yelled bananas, while my uncle admired me, but no one else paid any attention, for the army of workers was weary and wrapped like soldiers after a defeat in desperate dreams of home. Nobody halted to buy our spotted bananas.

Elevated trains crashed, the Cooper Union clock burned above us (a civilized moon), the sky blacked, the wind poured, the slush burned our feet. There were thousands of mystic human faces, bubbling on the sidewalks in snow. It was cold, it was heart-breaking: I yelled and yelled; nobody heard me.

My Uncle tried to stop me at last. "Nu," he said with a smile to cheer me, "that was good, Mikey dear. You're a wonderful yellor, but its plain we're unlucky. Let's go home."

But I was determined and frantic, and almost in tears, and I yelled and yelled, but nobody wanted to buy our bananas. At last, long after nightfall, we covered the bananas with an oilcloth, and started for the pushcart stable. My Uncle shook his head as we plodded down Second Avenue.

"You see how it is, Mikey, even at selling bananas I'm a failure in this country," he said. "At cloakmaking I get consumption, at banana selling I have no luck. When you grow up, you will not have it so hard; you will have luck. You are an American, I am a greenhorn. It is a rich country, but I see I will always be poor here. Don't be poor when you grow up, Mikey dear, it's better to be dead. My bananas are good bananas, yet nobody will buy them. And your yelling was good, and the prices are cheap; is there a trick to selling bananas? I have asked other peddlers, but they say it is just luck."

All that night in my sleep, I was yelling bananas, bananas, and weeping because a great snowy gloomy city of strange faces whirled in spirals and refused to buy bananas. Elevated trains crashed through me, and the Cooper Union clock bobbed and grinned like an idiot's sinister face.

## 2. All Jews Have Relatives

There was always somebody arriving from Europe in search of the new luck; endless caravans of bustling cousins and their families, bunches of uncles and aunts and distant and near relatives, *landsleute*, village neighbors of Hungary and Roumania, friends of our friends, frightened children, misers, optimists, solemn graybeards in fluttering alpaca robes, dipping snuff, rosy young girls, melancholiacs, army deserters, witless fools fallen out of a familiar nest like fledgling birds, madmen scheming for money, tall sombre men in caracul conical hats and peasant boots, ruff-raff and dreamers and rats and eagles and timid baby mice.

(Did I hear the Mayflower mentioned so proudly? There have been thousands of Mayflowers; my parents, too, were Pilgrims, daring for liberty to uproot themselves, and to conquer a wild dangerous land.

(Who preached the gospel of America to them? Letters came from lucky fools here; or the legend grew in dark ghettos and squalid villages that Messiah had risen in America, or steamship agents spread a madness, so that whole communities sold house, land and market stall, and bought tickets and followed the shrewd steamship liar to his America.

(Can you see the Jews? Can you see the vast melancholy international migrations of a pauper race for twenty centuries, plodding on foot and in rags from Asia to Europe, from Europe to America, losing hope on the way, losing God and virtue and peace, finding in each new paradise the plains cropped short, the water wells dry, the grass gone, so the tents were folded again, the herds gathered, the children strapped on women's shoulders, the tribe moves again to the west?

(Always defeated; never defeated.

(There was no steerage on the Mayflower; all were poor and equal. But my people came like cattle; did not their hearts sink when they saw the foul steerage bilgewater, and the roaches, and the decayed food, and the hard-eyed stewards jabbing at them like stockyard cowboys? This was their antechamber to America; did they not know what to expect of the promised land?

(No.

(After Ellis Island on land in the city there were robber Americans waiting with hacks, to steal your money, to steal your luggage, to take you to robber dens, and yet my people hoped. But the Indians had been kinder to the British pilgrims. They brought them pumpkins and turkeys, and listened mildly to their Christian preachings.

(The land was free then; you could freely dig and build, but now you came from a sunlit village of sunflowers and cows to a rathole in a tenement, where a landlord cursed you on rentday, and you slept five in a bed.)

When I woke of a morning, I was never greatly surprised to find and smell and see a new family of immigrants beside me, sleeping in foreign baggy underwear, pale and exhausted, all of them stinking of Ellis Island disinfectant, a smell that sickened me like castor oil. Around the room were strewn and piled all their wealth, all their striped calico bags, and monumental bundles of featherbeds, pots, pans, fine peasant linen, embroidered towels, queer blanket clothing.

Every tenement home was a Plymouth Rock like ours; the hospitality was taken for granted until the new family rented its

own flat. The immigrants would sit around our supper table, and ask endless questions about America. They would tell the bad news of the old country (the news was always bad). They would worry the first morning as to how to find work. They would be instructed that you must not blow out the gas (most of them had never seen it before). They would walk up and down our dismal East Side street, peering at policemen and saloons in amazement at America. They would make discoveries; they would chatter and be foolish.

After a few days they left us with thanks. But some stayed on and on, eating at our table. Don't think my mother liked this. We were too poor to be generous. She'd grumble about someone like Fyfka the miser, grumble and curse and spit and mutter, but she'd never really ask him to move out. She didn't know how.

### 3. A Crazy Man

Imagine the kind of man this Fyfka the Miser was. We did not even know him when he came to us from Ellis Island. He said he was the friend of the cousin of a boyhood friend of my father's, and he had our address and the name of this distant, mythical and totally unknown friend of the cousin of a friend in Roumania. Nothing more; and we didn't like him from the start; but for seven months he ate and slept at our home—for nothing.

Squat as a snail; with a glum black muzzle, and nostrils like a camel, and a thatch of black uncombed hair down on his forehead, and small eyes, too bright and too morbid, like a baboon's; one arm was twisted, and he never smiled, he never said a pleasant word, and he was always scratching himself, never cleaned his nose.

He got a job in a pants factory a week after he arrived; good pay for an immigrant, eight dollars a week. He worked from six a. m. to seven at night. Every morning he bought two rolls for a penny. One roll and a glass of water was his breakfast. For lunch he ate the other roll, and a three-cent cut of herring.

Every night, time exactly right, just as we were finishing supper, he came home. He sat himself gloomily in the same chair in the corner of the room, and watched us as we ate; didn't say a word, just sat and watched. It got on your nerves; your food choked you as you felt that dumb, gloomy, animal face in the room.

When the tension became too great, and all conversation had been dampened by the silent stranger, my father would spring from the table.

"Nu, Fyfka," he would say bitterly, as if defeated in a contest, "draw up and eat something, for God's sake. There's still some soupmeat left."

So Fyfka drew up his chair, and would eat, gobble and grab, with a slinky look at us out of the corner of his eye, like a dog.

All this took place every night in the same way, like a well-rehearsed farce at a theatre. It's a wonder neither Fyfka nor my parents sickened of the farce. My mother gently suggested to him once that he move, and he began to whine and cry and say he had no money. My father (in private) threatened to take Fyfka by the collar and throw him out some day, but he never did.

Fyfka paid us no rent; he never changed his shirt or the clothes he had worn in the steerage; he went to no picnics, parks, or theatres; he didn't smoke, or drink, or eat candy; he needed nothing.

Thus out of eight dollars a week he managed to save almost two hundred dollars in the months he sponged on us. He had heard of Rothschild. He wanted to go into business in America. Poverty makes some people insane.

Do you know how he finally came to move from our house? His money was stolen from him; I will tell about it later.

### 4. I Never Touched Her

And this thing, this Fyfka the Miser, this yellow somnambulist, this nightmare bred of poverty; maggot yellow dark ape with twisted arm and bright, peering, melancholy eyes; human garbage can of horror; fevered Rothschild in a filthy shirt; madman in an old derby hat.

This perfection had a flaw, this monster needed women.

This Caliban was tortured, behind his low puckered forehead, by a ghastly conflict between body and mind.

Our East Side, as I have said, was then administered by Tammany Hall as a red light district. My childhood street was a noisy marketplace of loud, painted women in kimonos, transacting the oldest business in the world. Stores, tenement flats, furnished rooms and even hallways waited for Caliban's body's peace.

He watched the busy women night after night until he could endure it no longer. He came to know some of the women, clutched at them, stole contacts, grovelled before them to be kind. He came to be the joke of the neighborhood—the madman who wanted

a woman, but was too stingy to pay the regular price of fifty cents.

"Yah, yah!" Mendel Bum jeered him at our supper table, "Fyfka tried to touch that fat Sarah in the hallway tonight, and she slapped him, and screamed. The pimps will yet stab you for this, Fyfka!"

"It's a lie, I never touched her!" the monster muttered. "I don't care for women. All they want is your money."

"Don't talk of such things before the children," said my mother.

"Nu, give the girls money, then!" said Mendel laughing, as he winked at my father. "That's what money is for, hay, Fyfka; not to be hidden in a corner, for the rats to eat. Money was made for fun; look at me, how fat and healthy I am, because I spend my money!"

Fyfka glared at him. Hate for the jovial Mendel made the big cords swell in his neck; the miser trembled with hate.

"It's a lie; I've got no money; I don't save money; why do you spread such lies about me? You're a liar! and a bum! a bum!"

"Sure I'm a bum," said Mendel cheerfully, "so everyone likes me, Fyfka, but you're a miser, so you everyone hates. Yah!"

"Gerarahere, mind your own business!"

Fyfka snarled like an ape, everyone laughed at his grotesque rage, he got up from the table.

"Don't talk about such things before the children," said my mother.

But everything was talked before us, we heard everything, and knew the strange world at seven.

### 5. Mendel the Bum

Mendel had been a sailor; an anchor was tattooed on his strong left arm; but tattooing is forbidden to Jews; the body must be returned to God as he created it. Mendel also freely ate pork and ham, forbidden to Jews; and one winter, he did a terrible thing. He went the rounds of the Bowery missions; and permitted each in turn to baptize him. For this he received money, sacks of potatoes, suits of clothes, various jobs, a chance to learn the cornet.

My mother was horrified when she discovered how Mendel had earned the groceries he brought her.

"Take them at once out of my house," she said, "those Christian potatoes!"

"Are'n't all potatoes good when you're hungry?" said Mendel, slyly.

"No. To sell your Jewish soul for a sack of potatoes—to be baptized—it's a sin, Mendel! Your momma in Hungary would die if she knew about it."

"How will she know about it, will I tell her?" said Mendel. "And who says I'm baptized? No, momma, you're wrong; I wouldn't give up being a Jew for anything. This is just a way of making a living; I am out of work, so why should I starve? Those Christians, a black year on them, are so crazy to have Jews baptized they even pay for it. So what do I do—I fool them. I let them sprinkle their water on me—and all the time, under my breath, I am cursing them, I am saying, to hell with your idol! To hell with your holy water! When they are through, I take my potatoes and go—but I am the same Mendel still, a Jew among Jews!"

My mother, like everyone else, was bewildered by the flow of Mendel's glib charlatan logic.

"And the baptism doesn't mean anything, you're still a Jew, Mendel?"

"Certainly, of course I'm still a Jew, a firm Jew, a good Jew, and these are my potatoes now—they're Jewish potatoes. But I won't be baptized again, I promise it," he said.

Mendel lived with us about twice a year, when his bum's luck had failed him elsewhere. He did everything—peddled needle threaders, acted in a burlesque show, enlisted in the Spanish-American war only to desert before the fighting began, he had been with cowboys and Indians out west, a miner, a barber in Rio de Janeiro, a prisoner in Chattanooga, Tennessee, a lemonade vendor with a circus, a Turk at Coney Island, runner for a gambling house, a thousand other things.

Everyone liked him, even my mother. He was husky, cheerful, with red hair, blue eyes, and a humorous face like an Irishman's. He brought gales of bold life into the stale bedrooms of the East Side. It was amusing to Jews that Mendel could fool Americans with his tricks. It was flattering to Jews to know that he often passed himself off as a real American, yet talked Yiddish and was loyal to his race.

# HIM AND THEM

By ROBERT WOLF

THE badness of the performance of *Him*, by E. E. Cummings, at the Provincetown Playhouse was so overwhelming that it fills me with rage to attempt to review it.

*Him* is a play about a play—it is also a play about a woman having a baby. If you think this play is a failure, then perhaps the baby is an abortion; the text is sufficiently equivocal so that either notion will serve. But equivocation with Mr. Cummings never means vagueness—there are two or three meanings, or sometimes five or six, each illuminating, supplementary, surprising—full of humor, charm, irony, and in the case of *Him*, occasionally a note of pure and unforced emotion that Cummings has rarely attained before.

The action of *Him* is concerned with a young playwright who is trying to write a play—this play—and his girl who is trying to keep him from writing it, in the way that women generally do. In other words, it is concerned with Creation, male and female. She thinks she is helping Him . . . As a matter of fact she is. If it were not for the woman, and her somewhat inevitable contact with reality, the playwright would be writing a play about a play about a play about a play, and so on ad infinitum: it is she who keeps his feet on the ground. . . .

She wants him to write another play—a play to make money—and that play is accordingly written too, the "other play," a series of amusing parodies upon Eugene O'Neill, John Howard Lawson, Ernest Hemingway, Freud, George M. Cohan (I imagine), modern Italy, modern Austria, modern Paris, and in general the terribleness of life. Through all these helps and hindrances, and the further one of a woman whom he loves and who needs to be made love to, the artist proceeds, whimsical, defensive, ironic, self-knowing—and in fact knowing little else—writing a play that can not be written, and that the audience only realizes has actually been written when the final curtain rings down. The action of such a play as this, naturally, occurs entirely in the playwright's mind.

It also occurs, from a more valid point of view, entirely of the woman, Me by name, who throughout the performance is undergoing an operation under an anaesthetic, while the three Fates knit before her sleeping body and talk the nonsense they usually do. I judge that there is one more parody concealed here, which perhaps was unconscious for Mr. Cummings—the parallel with the dream scenes in *The Beggar on Horseback*, where the doctor plays all roles, is close. Like the world of *The Beggar on Horseback*, the world of *Him* is a mad, mad world, as this review may possibly have indicated—but it is logically mad, as the world must be for any artist who tries to do honest work in western Europe or America today. Since the whole show—the outside show—is a hoax and a mockery from start to finish, the artist who reflects it must be somewhat of a quack and a charlatan, and the better artist the more charlatan—hence Mr. Cummings and Mr. Joyce. The only possible escape from which dilemma is the escape from art into politics, which deals with things not as they are, but as they ought to be. . . .

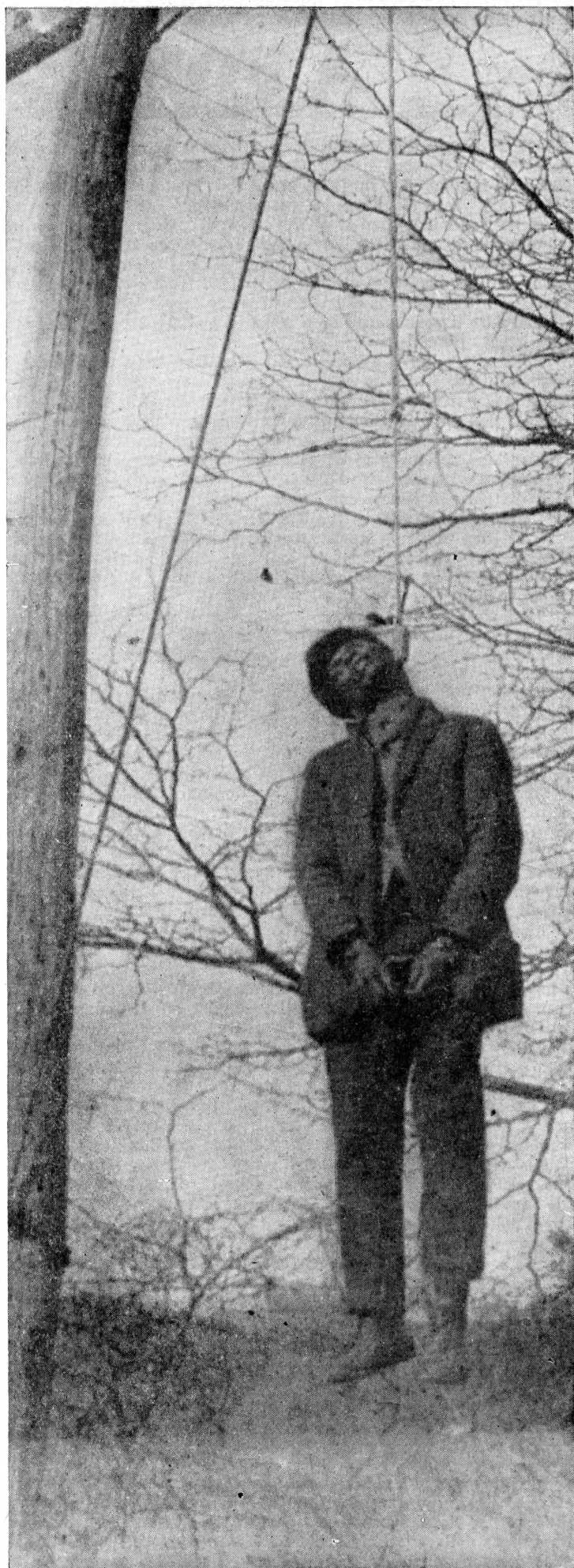
Now this mass of equivocation, of whimsy, of innuendo, including obscene innuendo, (which Cummings like Joyce can handle with rich poetic fervor), is performed at the Provincetown in a vein of broad melodrama and farce. Where the hero ought to offer a remark half-heartedly, or with a twinkle, he glares and hisses—the girl that should be wise, stupid, superficial, hard-boiled, and wrung with reluctant intensities, is played as though she were some virgin from the cornbelt, instead of the latest mode of supersophisticated Paris and New York.

As for the other play, however, the parody play, which the playwright might have written and didn't, this, ironically enough, is staged quite successfully and intelligently. It is apparently closer to what the theater needs. Its scenes, in the acted version, were much more successful than appeared from the book. The more simple-minded the material, the more effective the performance. Will and Bill were good, Mussolini was better. Two Passengers best of all. But the climax of the entire evening—the real triumph, both for playwright and producer—was Act II, Scene 5, consisting of nothing but a group of remarkably capable negroes singing the good old nursery rhyme *Frankie and Johnny* in almost a totally unexpurgated version straight through from beginning to end.



GEORGIA NEEDS THE MARINES, TOO





**GEORGIA NEEDS THE MARINES, TOO**

# A FORGER —By ERNEST BOOTH

CARRIED into the Marine Corps on the wave of hysteria which swept the country in 1927, George was stranded on the rocks of post-war indifference in 1919, after the flood had subsided. Not yet twenty years old when he was discharged from a Denver hospital, he was but a shadow of the stalwart young farmer who had volunteered to make the world safe for Democracy—and profiteers. Active service in three, prolonged, major engagements had exhausted his emotional reactions. Blasted from a convoy truck he had lain with both hips crushed under the debris for two days. He walked with a pronounced limp when he left the hospital, and then with great difficulty.

Possessed only of strength and a healthy body with which to win his living before the war, he had been deprived of both of these. Untrained during the period of his convalescence he faced the immediate necessity of providing for his pre-war bride and their two-year-old child. An inherent dignity restrained him from the servile prostrations necessary to procure financial aid beyond the twenty-five dollars a month "disability pension," bestowed upon him by an appreciative and benevolent government.

I met him in 1926, in the Tuberculosis Ward of a prison hospital. He lay prone on a canvas, stretched to form his bed. Encased from chest to knees in a plaster cast, his yellow hair tumbled down about his ears, he offered a wide, infectious smile to my "How goes it, old soldier?"

"Boo coo," he said, the smile mounting to light his large, clear-blue eyes. "The croaker is going to turn me loose out of this," he tapped the cast, "and I feel like a butterfly about to bust out of its shell."

He had been in prison eighteen months on a five-year-sentence for issuing fictitious checks. Seven months he had lain in the cast. T. B. had infected his injured hips. Later, we talked often, intimately. Throughout his narration, I was impressed with his constant respect for the property rights of others. Yet woven through it all was a wistfulness, a self-abnegation; particularly when he sketched the future he hoped someday to realize. His dream of a future home, and regular, honest work—when he was well.

"When she and me and the kid first got together, everything broke keen. I was working in a shooting-gallery and making enough to hold us up. But I seen too much of guns, an' the place got on my nerves, sorta. So I got a job driving a truck—then the ol' hips begin giving me hell. About a month I made myself keep going. You know, it means a lot to a guy to have his wife and kid with him, instead of just seeing them twice a week while he lays in a hospital. But one morning I couldn't get up. Was no go at all—even after I rolled off onto the floor, I just couldn't make it."

His eyes flashed as though he again lived through the event, then they cleared and were remarkably youthful in a face so lined with suffering. In an even, low-pitched voice he continued, "Well, I had about forty dollars in the bank and figured that would be enough to keep us going till I got up. But several weeks passed and I was getting no better fast. And I got scared about what would happen to my wife and the kid when we didn't have no more dough. For myself I didn't care much, and if my war insurance had been paid up I'd have bumped myself off, so they could have the benefit. Anyhow, I kept drawing checks on the bank, and one day a policeman came to my bed and told me that the bank objected to me writing checks, and I better go down and see them.

"So I managed to get up and the wife helped me stagger down to the bank, and they told me they would give me a week to make those checks good—the checks was for about eight dollars, I guess—maybe nine. I was afraid of what they might do, and I was able to walk a little, so I tried to get a job. But I got tired too quick. Then the groceryman where the last check was cashed wouldn't let us have anything more till we paid him. I don't blame him—he had kids of his own to support."

George asked for hospitalisation from the Government, was informed that he had been discharged, and when he insisted that he needed treatment he was given some application blanks to fill out.

He did everything his condition would permit, then growing alarmed at the approaching day when he must present himself at the bank, he went to a different part of the city and cashed a check for twenty dollars, taking about half of it in groceries. His speedy apprehension followed. Two months in jail—his then-expectant-wife and child objects of charity—he was released on probation.

The Veterans' Bureau secured for him a temporary award of sixty dollars and after another two months in a hospital he was again discharged—with his pension of twenty-five dollars a month. Through vicissitudes that make mockery of Job's suffering, he fought his battle for the next six months. In the end he was beaten. Two youngsters to feed, himself and his wife to clothe. Again he cashed some checks. This time, securing in small amounts the total of eighty dollars. He would leave his bed, take a streetcar into a residential district, make purchases at small stores, return to his home, and sink into a coma for the ensuing three or four days. Winter closed down on them, and the added difficulties of fuel and bedding made the famed mild climate of California alluring. Again faring forth with his checkbook, loathing himself for being forced into such a position, he eventually secured almost two hundred dollars. The newspapers raved over the "check-ring" operating in the city, and again George was hauled to jail. After considerable time, the charges against him were reduced, and he was sentenced to three months in the notoriously-unhealthy county jail.

"But I only did sixty days," George laughed. "One of the Deputies beat a hypo to death one night and I saw him. There was an investigation and the Deputy got me paroled and sent to California. Gee! Los Angeles was like heaven after that lousy jail!"

For awhile the milder climate helped him. Then the inevitable reaction. George played with the idea of getting a gun and holding up a bank; but the magnitude of the adventure was beyond his imagination. He did not want to hurt anyone—he wanted a little of the happiness he believed this world gives to a worthy seeker. Necessity forced him to issue checks as a means of sustaining himself and his family. Small checks—often he paid them back when his physical condition permitted his working for a few weeks. But each succeeding relapse was more difficult to recover from. At one time he annexed a battered Ford, and by dint of much tinkering made it serviceable. The family then lived in auto-camps or slept on blankets beneath the open sky.

Arrested in Fresno, California, for the cashing of a small check, he spent three months in jail. The Veteran's Bureau was deaf to his pleas for medical treatment. The county provided a bed for him in its hospital, and his wife and children were separated from him by a court order. He managed to escape from the hospital and rejoin them.

Throughout his story George maintained the same even voice with which he had started. There was nothing of condemnation in his observations—except when he berated himself for causing his wife so much trouble.

In Los Angeles, months later, still working intermittently and remaining in bed when unemployed, George was arrested, following a chance recognition, and returned to Fresno. His police record from Denver followed him, and with the judge berating ex-service men in general—and George in particular—for trying to live off public sympathy, George was sentenced to the penitentiary.

On the prison records he is listed as an habitual check-writer, a man with a record of crime in two states (known), a probation-violator, and an escape from a county jail.

"An exceptional case. We know all about those war cases. What you've written doesn't apply generally!"

My dear, blue-nosed advocate of capital punishment for all offenders: George's case is typical! It illustrates the "occasional" class of felons, who constitute the major portion of your so-called crime-wave. Substitute for Gorgee's actual physical disability the lack of training you have given to other youngsters, and the scene changes only locality. The fundamental cause is the same. He is as devoid of desire to commit crime as you are of an ability to understand the workings of your own, warped intellect. *And I know whereof I speak.* For you see only the police and prison blotter, and you condemn him because it is easier to do so than strain your alleged brain in comprehending the tremendous possibilities, and problems that confront him. But I have listened to him plan for the future. As I've lain in cells beside a hundred Georges, the confidence born of mutual misery has brought from their hearts the longing and desires which they could never have revealed under different circumstances; and phrased, in their illiterate, halting manner the crude philosophies upon which they hope to build—to a happiness untainted by hatred or prejudice.

# The Damn Fool Bureaucrats

By EZRA POUND

AS BRIEFLY as possible. I am not a revolutionist, if by that term one means a man who believes that a complete smash of the existing order is necessary before one can get improvement.

I think revolutions, in the bloody and disorderly mode, are produced by damn fools in government bureaux.

I think the bureaucrat and the tame legislator are the lowest manifestation of whatever one chooses to call the tendency to stench and decomposition that appears to have some function in the manifest universe. The crook and the tyrant are on a vastly pleasanter level.

The will to turn America into one vast unmitigated stench and cess pool appears to me to animate those of our "feller citizens" who support the suppression of free speech, the extension of control by idiotic paper forms, passports, fingerprints, questionnaires.

If you propose to make or keep the New Masses an open forum for general discussion, you must also admit that your darling Soviets have kicked free speech in the stomach; that they do not seem (from the distance at which we are forced to observe them) to follow Lenin very attentively, and that their difficulties are probably due in large part to their being bit by the almost universal contemporary lunacy: a blind confidence in any and every sort of paper form that leaves blanks to be filled in by the victim; forms passed out over a desk by one set of imbeciles, and "filed for reference" by another set of parasitic vermin, both sets being equally non-producers.

The interference with free-speech is but one symptom of a larger evil: the oedematous distention of government, the tendency, which socialism does not, alas, clearly and definitely combat, of allowing the state to swell, and to poke into all sorts of things that are not the affair of the state but of the individual.

It took billions of quarts of blood to "establish" the French Revolution, *i. e.*, a more or less vague idea that privilege of hereditary nobles should be limited. It has taken a good deal of energy to start, in Russia, a very amorphous idea that people might collaborate more or less.

All such ideas get very much tempered and diluted in actual practice by any large mass of humanity, existing in an indefinite extension of time.

The American people in accepting Volstead sold their birth-right for a mess of sodawater and sundaes. The question of its being about booze is of no importance. The American people will not think about ANY principle of government whatsoever. In that damnable Amendment they accept as a principle the idea that an appointed group of parasites has the right to interfere with the private citizen.

Having accepted that principle every right guaranteed by the constitution is put in jeopardy. Free speech naturally goes next. It is much more "dangerous" than free-diet.

With the radio under control the value of free speech and free press is, in any case, greatly reduced to the speaker and printer.

The other tendency to marasmus; I mean the protection of theft by law is illustrated in a very minor way by our dishonest copyright regulations.

As to being a bolchevik: it depends on whether one thinks of the bolchevik as a bloody-minded man with carving knife, or as someone trying to apply Lenin's lucidity to one's own circumstance.

Call it conservatism or a program of revolution, it seems to me that there can be no convenient social order until:

A. One drives back government into its own proper domain.

B. Establishes a clear demarcation between organization and exploitation. With, as corollary, the highest possible value set up, and reward given to, organization *as work*; and, almost as a second corollary, due sense of distribution.

C. Returning to former paragraph: it ought to be made quite clear that accumulation of functions by the bureaucracy is a disease, a pest that attacks any and every kind of state, socialist, capitalist, syndicalist state, as syphilis or any other disease attacks physical organism. And that the bureaucracy ought to be kept under constant and hostile observation.

With this proviso the American system of government decently run, and with the contradictory amendment removed from the constitution, might still make a bearable state, and permit as much general justice as we are likely to find in imperfect human affairs.

This would mean removal from power not only of certain individuals, but of an effective prejudice against certain types of people; I mean a prejudice so strong that they themselves would be allowed the personal liberty that they always try to filch from others, but that they would never be able to acquire any public office, credit, or function.

As nearly as I can make out most Americans, and 98 per cent of all American editors, writers, etc., have attended so little to modern history that they do not even see that the interesting points of Lenin's program are probably quite compatible with the American *system* of government.

Which statement must not be taken to mean that I anticipate their early incorporation into American law.

(NOTE: The New Masses disagrees violently with the following statement, but prints it because it is important. Ezra Pound is the leader of the most vital wing of younger American writers. He formulates the unformed political creed in their minds.

(Mr. Pound is irritated by all forms of the parliamentary system—by prohibition laws, copyright laws, bureaucracy and other minor eruptions. But like most literary men, he has no solid knowledge of the disease: Capitalism.

(It is Capitalism that keeps the world in mental and physical darkness; the Bureaucrat is only a pawn in the great game. When his paymaster, the Capitalist, is eliminated, the Bureaucrat will go, too.

(The most tough-minded of the capitalists are as weary of the bureaucrats as is Mr. Pound. In Italy, for instance, the industrial barons rule with the club named Mussolini, instead of with the slapstick named Parliament. Does this completely satisfy Mr. Pound? Does he want a Mussolini, and a more efficient capitalism in America?

(Yes, there are some bureaucratic lice in Soviet Russia, left there with the filth and disorder of the old tenants. But the disinfecting squads are on the job, day and night.

(Eliminate the Bureaucrat, and America "decently run," might still make a "bearable state," says Mr. Pound. This is like saying that the Civil War was not necessary, and that black slavery, "decently run," might have been made a "bearable state" for the slaves of '61. Does Ezra Pound believe that?

(Prohibition laws and copyright laws press hard upon Mr. Pound. How hard presses the real hunger and agony of millions of miners, textile workers, child slaves, Negroes, tenant farmers and city clerks? Or does Mr. Pound believe the myth of prosperity?

(Or does he think the literary man has no concern with the economic problems of the American "boobs," but ought work in his own garden—at Prohibition and the copyright laws?)



Drawing by I. Klein  
 FLUNKEY: "Hey there! Taxi!"  
 GARBAGE TRUCK: "Calling us, Mister?"



**FLUNKEY:** "Hey there! Taxi!"  
**GARBAGE TRUCK:** "Calling us, Mister?"

*Drawing by I. Klein*



## THE NEW WORLD

*A Strike Meeting in China*

### THE LATEST HEADLINES

DOUBLE MURDER IN A HARLEM FLAT.  
 CREW ARE LOST WHEN LINER SINKS AT SEA.  
 CHINAMAN BOILS RIVAL IN A VAT.  
 COOLIDGE SURE OF MORE PROSPERITY.  
 EARTHQUAKE SHAKES THE WHOLE PACIFIC COAST.  
 MORE FOLK OWN FORD CARS THAN FOLK WHO CAN'T.  
 KU KLUX WATCH ANOTHER NEGRO ROAST.  
 THE SHUBERTS ARE REVIVING CHARLEY'S AUNT.  
 MINE CAVES IN AND MEN ARE BURIED DEEP.  
 NEVER WAS A YEAR LIKE '26.  
 VALENTINO DIES AND WOMEN WEEP.  
 MISSIONARIES CROSS THE RIVER STYX.  
 OPERA SEASON OPENS WITH THAIS.  
 ABIE'S IRISH ROSE NOW IN FOURTH YEAR.  
 CAPITAL AND LABOR ARE AT PEACE.  
 GENIUS DIES WITH NO ONE AT HIS BIER.  
 CONGRESS VOTES TEN MILLION MORE FOR SHIPS.  
 CHORUS GIRL TAKES NIGHTLY BATH IN WINE.  
 TEN MILLION READERS READ OUR COMIC STRIPS.  
 DARKER GRAPES BEGIN TO DRAPE THE VINE.  
 BODENHEIM AT LAST TAKES EVERY PRIZE.  
 CAL IS CERTAIN GOD IS STILL IN HEAVEN.  
 ORANGES ARE TWICE THEIR NORMAL SIZE.  
 MORE PROSPERITY IN '27.  
 BLIZZARD SMITES NEW YORK AND TRAFFIC STOPS.  
 WASHINGTON AND WALL STREET TETE A TETE.  
 COPS ARREST POOR MAN WHEN A CORK POPS.  
 LET'S HAVE CAL AGAIN IN '28!

ALFRED KREYMBORG.

### NOT ALL

*Not all challenge the molecules of time  
 On collateral security,  
 Not all grow gnarled  
 Sifting gold-dust  
 From the ashes of the dead.*

*Once, at midnight,  
 I saw a realtor  
 Stand on the surf-pounded beach at Atlantic City  
 And weave phantom sub-divisions  
 Across the stark moon.*

CLIFTON CUTHBERT.

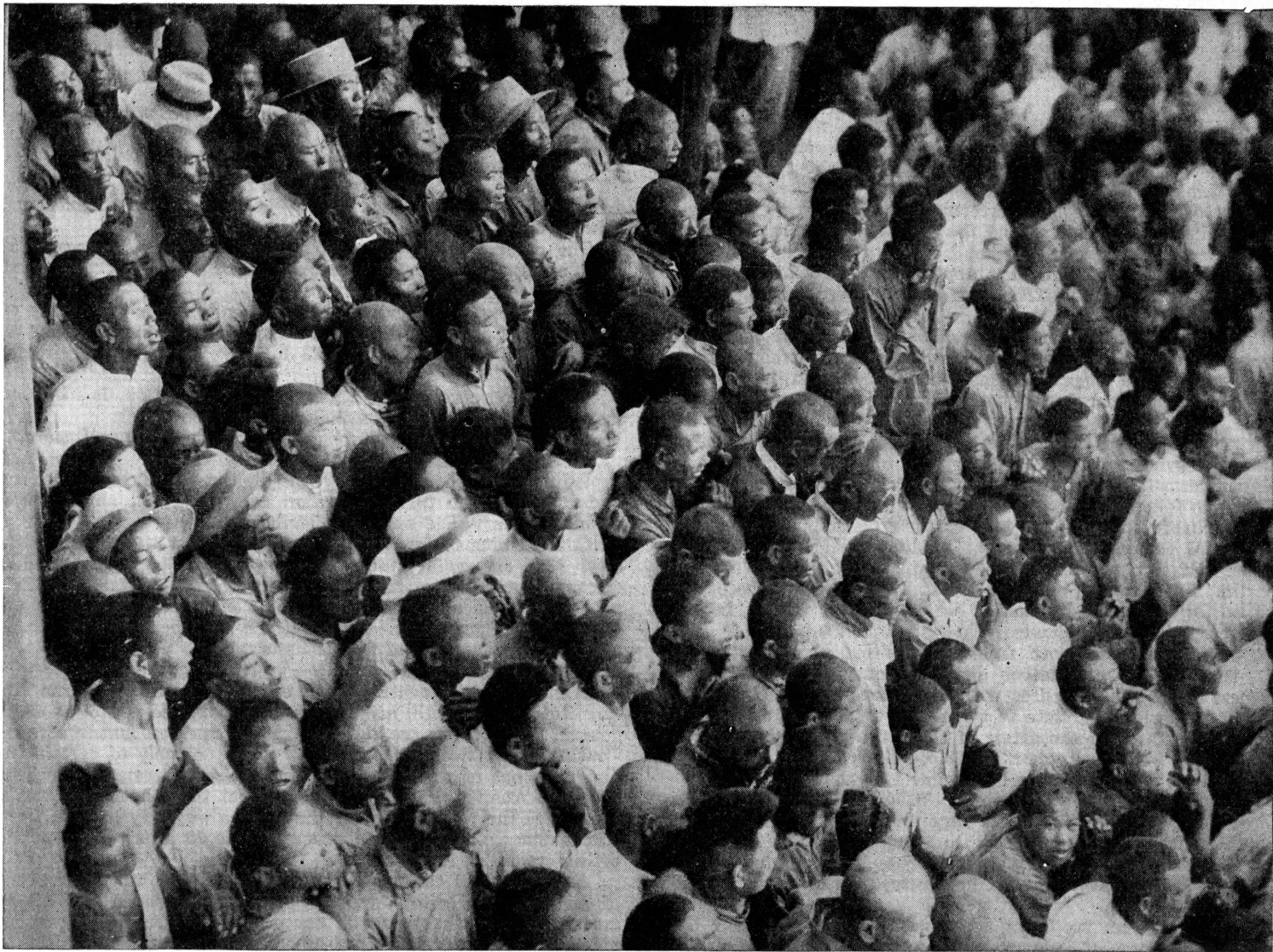
### PUPIL OF LIEBNITZ

*(To Any Rotarian)*

*All of the teachers he had ever known,  
 All of the volumes given him to read  
 Taught him to smile. Smiling became his creed.  
 "Weep," they assured him, "and you weep alone."  
 So, with determined practice, he had grown  
 A mask to serve him in the hour of need  
 Against a world of bitterness and greed  
 Where hatred was engendered in the bone.*

*The hour never came. The world forgot  
 Himself and his pretensions, even while  
 He smashed his former gods, and grimly sought  
 Expressions that could wither and revile.  
 But no; it was too late. Leibnitz could not  
 Remove the mask that carved him to a smile.*

LOUIS UNTERMAYER.



## THE NEW WORLD

*A Strike Meeting in China*

## EDITORIAL NOTES

Changes will be noted in this issue of the magazine. There is a new management.

Less literature, and more life is to be our slogan. An effort will be made to enlist the great submerged unpublished voices of America.

MARTIN RUSSAK, whose poems appear in this issue, has never been printed before. He is 21 years old, and has been a silk weaver in Paterson, N. J., since his 13th year. His father, grandfather and mother are silk weavers. We want other writers like Russak here.

The author of the POORHOUSE ANTHOLOGY lives in one of them in Ohio. He has asked us not to use his name or address.

DOROTHY DAY is a game young modernist and adventurer who has been a reporter in a dozen cities. She now lives in a Staten Island shack with her baby. As assistant nurses she has two old beachcombers and a bootlegger. She has published a novel, and written sob-sister serials for the Hearst newspapers.

DUDLEY NICHOLS is recognized as the best reporter in New York City. He is on the *World*, and has covered the Chicago pineapple elections, the Sacco-Vanzetti case, and dozens of the spiciest murders, lynchings, electrocutions, frauds, and national scandals in America. He promises to write regularly for the NEW MASSES.

We want newspapermen to consider this their magazine, and to send us their stories. We think they are the best writers in America.

ERNEST BOOTH has written a series of sketches of thieves he has known. One of them appears this month. BOOTH first was printed in the NEW MASSES, but H. L. Mencken has since "discovered" him for the *Mercury*. BOOTH is serving a 20-year sentence for highway robbery in California.

The NEW MASSES believes there are not enough magazines open to experimental writing in America, and opens its own pages to writers who deal with unorthodox subjects in unorthodox techniques. It salutes the magazine *transition* for its splendid pioneering, and wishes *transition* were in New York.

No one makes any money out of this magazine. It is a co-operative venture. Millionaires give money to hospitals and art galleries, never to rebel magazines. We count on our rebel readers.

### POOR HOUSE ANTHOLOGY

(Continued from page 7)

mous rupture got from mining. Says this is the best home he ever had in all his life.

*Mishler:* Sour on life. Wife ran off with about four other men. One of them ended here, funnily enough. Mr. Mishler introduced this unfortunate old man to the other inmates as "my wife's pimp."

*Roy Clark:* Oldtimer of west. Wants a job shearing 300 sheep, if not too far from infirmary here. Also known as the "doctor," for his various remedies for any and all complaints.

*Judd:* Little queer, too. Wants to plant everything. Is allowed his garden, but that isn't enough. Came near planting an axe between the shoulders of a steward who broke his jugs of ensilage juice. He calls the sun for dinner, and rides the moon.

*Gasoline:* Talks to a pack of imaginary dogs. Told the "Commissioners" the cook was putting gasoline in all the food.

*Tom Ford:* 73. Wonderful oldtimer, former coal digger straight as an Indian. The best man in the place. Says some day the union will take care of their old workers, and there won't be any charity about it.

.... This is all I can write now. I hope it gives you a picture. Is it any wonder, I sometimes wonder, why is Life? I urge you people outside to agitate for an OLD AGE PENSION and be less selfish to your fellow men.

## Why Wait For a Revolution

to practice co-operative living?

You can begin now—this summer—in the

### Commonwealth Cooperative Camp

at Monroe, Orange County, New York

Attend the special meeting of the Commonwealth Co-operative to be held in Room 42, Labor Temple (14th Street & 2nd Avenue) on Tuesday, May 22nd at 8 p. m., where motion pictures of the camp will be shown and the plans of the organization will be discussed.

Membership in the Commonwealth Cooperative is open to all who are not exploiters of labor. Do you qualify? Do you want a low-cost vacation and week-end retreat? Do you want to help build the co-operative movement? Write for information about membership and a booklet telling about the camp's attractions. Lots of the New Masses crowd will be up there this summer. You'd better come too.

Address inquiries to

THE COMMONWEALTH CO-OPERATIVE  
136 Liberty Street,  
New York, N. Y.

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## Salt Roots

(San Francisco)

Up on these hills there ends a town whose high  
Clean red-bricked avenues are over-towered  
By cold white buildings that have stabbed the sky  
With marbled arrogance. And these have flowered  
Out of what seed, what root? What secret stock,  
Blossoming suddenly, exquisitely,  
Put forth such mysteries of steel and rock?  
Look down the deep grooves of the streets and see  
The shacks along the water; look to where  
Black sea-scarred wharves nest the grey sea-scarred boats,  
And gulls, wind-quickenened, delicately bear  
Odd bits of garbage that green water bloats  
Up from the sewers. There amid old tins,  
Nets, and the smell of hulls, a town begins.

MARIE DE L. WELCH.

## 50-Cent Flophouse

I have walked streets where men like shadows go  
Up rickety stairs to second story rooms.  
And I have gone too, hiding in gray piles  
Of musty rags that they call sheets, and watched  
The red lights blink and men in terrible dreams  
Toss themselves and cry like children in their sleep.

I have slept nights where sleep could never be  
But the low moaning men in stupor make.  
I have passed rooms where queers have beckoned me  
And then ashamed hid in the gray dim light.  
I have paid my fifty cents; nor found the rest  
That I had asked; nor touched the warmth of flesh.

There is an end tonight, but day is night  
And night is day beside the sagging cot.  
I have seen men who never cared to rise  
And many more that never could—nor did:  
The thin-skinned boy, pretty and called a "she,"  
Whose bed was made by men with blood afire.

The men who harvest Kansas' yellow wheat  
(They harvest Winter's now), old men with stumps  
And those of youth who found adventure sweet  
But know the time and wait with silenced fear.  
I have slept nights where sleep led into death;  
I have walked streets where men like shadows go.

RAYMOND KRESENSKY.

## Eight O'clock Whistle

Come it is time  
you're late  
again the whistle  
rapes the blue virginity  
of dawn the sun  
stares splendid from  
the sky red in its  
frame of bright infinity

brrrrr I can see  
it shivering in the sky

hell it's the second time  
this month wake up you'll  
lose your job

o damn the job  
dig deeper in  
the tattered quilt  
soon  
I'll be digging  
deeper  
in  
the  
earth.

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LEE CHUMLEY

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Spring 0668



# LETTERS FROM AMERICA

## A FINGER FOR DEMOCRACY

When the late war originated in the liberal brains of Woodrow Wilson and Walter Lippman, I was one of those heroes, still unsung, unhonored and unknown, who decided to duck. I did not choose to be a martyr for democracy, Wall Street, and the New Republic. I chucked my white collar job, walked right past the office where they were registering suckers, and took to Walt Whitman's open road.

I had to knock about a great deal, because of the sheriffs and do every kind of work, but had a swell time seeing America first. Sometimes things were hot, but mostly they were pleasantly exciting. Eventually I landed in Los Angeles. There I got myself a job in the shipyards as machinist's helper.

I had been warned of the high casualty list in the shipyards, something like 74 per cent, but I needed the pay. Put on my dungarees one morning, took a deep breath of climate, and up I climbed beside my foreman, to drill rudder plate bores two or three decks high on the scaffolding.

A sweet, noisy job. There was a riveting gang directly above and around me—and another platefitting crew shifting the half-

ton plates and making the enormous scaffolding creak like an old chair. I worked seven hours that first day, right next to a riveting gun. My chief trouble, however, was not the flying sparks and red hot bolts, but the awful job of trying to get enough oil into the gearbox drive. I had to mop up at least half of it, for as fast as I pumped it in, the wind spattered it.

Then damn, the waste which I used for mopping the oil, caught in the gear, and took my finger with it. Yep, my finger, and I stood there a few hundred feet in air, and looked at my bloody stump and cursed like hell. The pain wasn't so much, but I felt like a fool. Here I had ducked one war, but had stepped into another—the industrial war. Every time I look now at that hunk of jagged bone where my third right hand finger used to be, I remember the lesson of that moment. You can't dodge the system, fellow worker, so you might as well put your back against the wall somewhere, and fight like hell!

CLEM TRAVERSE

Bakersfield, Cal.

## BOOTLEGGING FOR UTOPIA

When I read your paper, The New Leader, The Daily Worker, etc., I often wonder why the hell you don't BE revolutionary instead of just ACTING revolutionary.

In accordance with this theory, I am organizing the moonshiners and liquor-industry of this locality and I'm meeting with success beyond my wildest dreams; absolutely all of them are coming into it in spite of being 100% sissorbills. Why? Because there is money in it.

Now I propose that you place your revolutionary organization upon the sound economic foundation of the Volstead Act (God save it and Coolidge keep it) and you can finance the New Masses, the Socialist Party, I.W.W., Communists and any other dam red outfit. At the same time you can bore into the Elks, Rotaries and all the other Capitalist layouts, for the kind of stuff that is made in these hills will pass anywhere on its merits.

I trust you will talk this over confidentially with the leaders of other radical organizations and see if you cannot cooperate with us, if not as organizations at least as individuals. We have the ideal location, the technical men, the equipment for quantity and quality production and you can function perfectly in the distribution end of this profitable business.

In case you discover no radical organization that cares to function in any other place than the realms of speculative thot, perhaps you know individuals who do not

object to making their red activities pay. Just at present I can keep several salesmen profitably employed. Then I need some discrete literary person who can take charge of the office work and can be trusted to handle the advertizing and publicity end. I offer as inducement for said literary party the prospect of an exciting, adventurous, healthy and perhaps profitable summer, on top of Poke Mountain, and what I consider the most valuable of all, the opportunity to meet and study the people engaged in this trade. In case we all land in jail, this literary party can still win fame and fortune by writing a book about this most dramatic industry of the time.

JOHN COUNSELL,

Fort Sandymount, Ky.

## "YOU IRISH SLOB"

I work in one of the largest clothing factories in Chicago, for a firm which is supposed to be very modern, liberal, up-to-date and so forth. They have a show factory where visitors are taken; but where I work only us workers come. No daylight; we have to work by electric light, winter and summer. A four-story building, and only one wooden narrow stairway. If there is ever a fire, we will all die like rats.

The place is filthy. You smell the toilet disinfectant all over the shop. Half an hour for lunch. If you get sick, there's a hospital room, but the nurse hustles you back to work—that's what she's paid for. The first time they put me on a power machine I ran a needle through my finger. Around 3 or 4 o'clock the hospital is full of workers. Most accidents happen about that time. The kid who worked next to me ran a needle in her finger and got a bad infection. The "liberal" company went to no end of trouble to prove in court it was her own fault, so they didn't have to pay indemnity.

My straw-boss is a husky Irish woman who has worked in the shop for fifteen years. She got my goat once and called me a god damned lazy slut because I was so sleepy and tired I did something wrong. I came back with something like, "You big Irish slob," and in a few minutes the factory manager was down and made me apologize. I was mad enough to chew up a yard of tweed cloth, but I needed the job so I apologized. They kept me on, because in spite of everything I am one of their best finishers, so it is a case of the cat and the dog living in the same kennel. I wouldn't be that Irish forelady for all the money in the world, though. It's better to starve than be the boss's policeman. I read the New Masses and like it, except for some crazy pictures. I like things with a meaning to them, that help the workers organize a new world, or have some fun.

ANGELA ROCCO.

Chicago, Ill.

## AN OUT OF WORKER

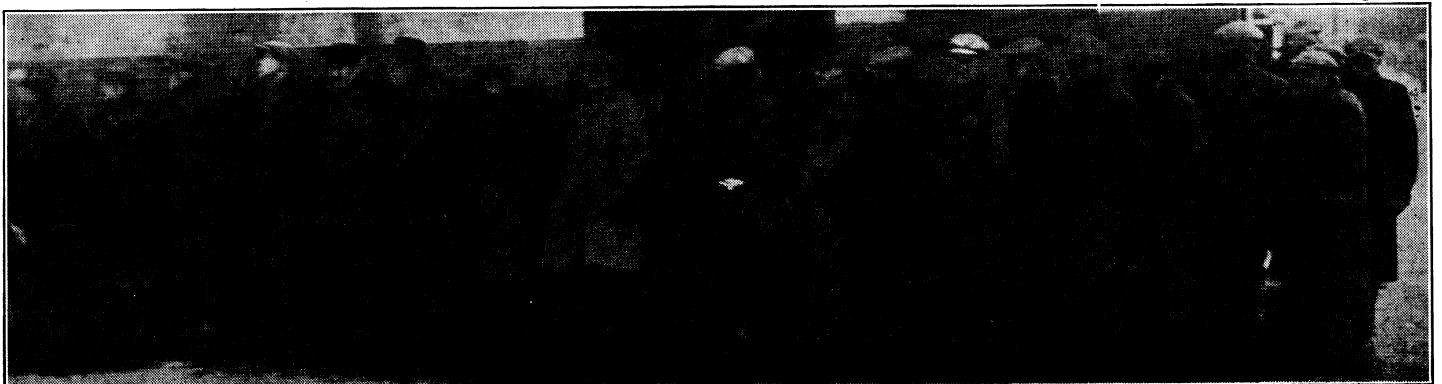
I saved a little money and paid it on a little home, was in high hopes and proud of my home. Then came unemployment and knocked all my plans away. I could not meet my payments, lost all I had, my wife sick, had to go to her folks to live. Think how it feels to have to tramp the streets all day and then find a cheap lodging house or a mission at night only to be turned out in the street during the night on orders from officials of the board of health de-

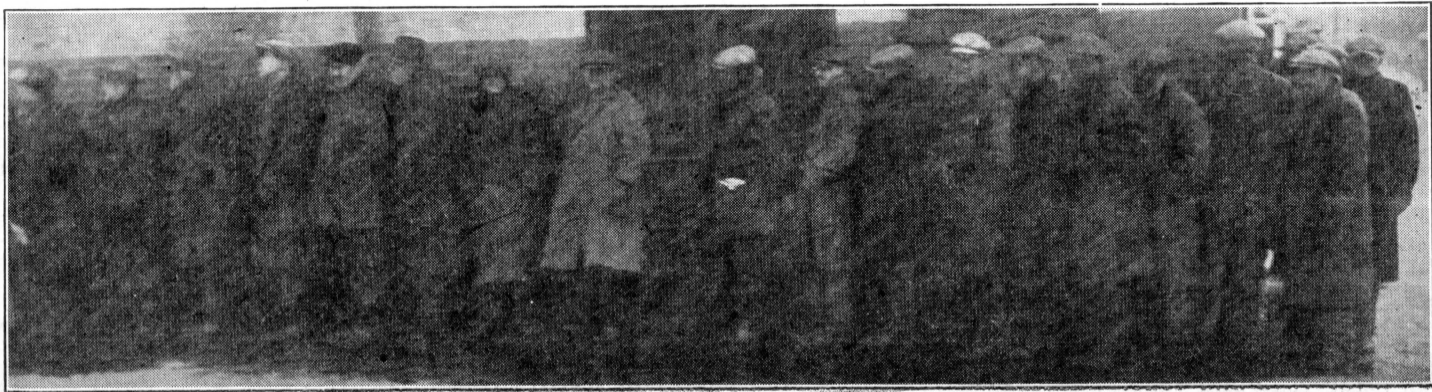
partment. What else is there left but ride the subways till day.

How else can a fellow that really wants to work feel but that those in power with money assume the attitude that a man without money has no right to live? It makes one feel that New York is very cold when you are broke.

SYE JENKS.

Zero's Tub, New York City





# MORE FROM AMERICA

## He Needs a War

My dear World, do you want to know the story of a subject of the streets, a man who lives among the outcasts of modern civilization?

Well, I shall say a few words. I, who once belonged in the ranks of Society and now do not know where to sleep, I will tell you just the reason why I have been thrown into the horrible moloch of this metropolis.

Listen, World, I am not a writer and so I'll not be able to picture you my former life, but I shall tell you the facts why I had been beaten by reality, why my Dreams and Thoughts of Romance were destroyed by the hard and merciless land of industrial circumstances.

It came this way:

I did hold a position as night attendant for nearly four months in a certain Hospital at Staten Island. I had been happy and I made myself great plans about the future; then one day I was told not to report for duty but instead I should come to the office and I suddenly understood what it meant—my discharge.

I started to reason and came to the conclusion that it may be better—far better to be dead than to face this world as a man of continuous failures. So at 12:30 a. m. that same night I attempted suicide by hypodermic injection of a powerful poison but it happened that this remedy of all sorrows did not do the job and after a few days I recovered again, but only to see me face to face with terror and misery, in the form of unemployment.

Well to make the story brief after all my resources went as I didn't have any more money, I went into several restaurants and tried to sell my labor for food. So I worked as Bus boy among hash-houses, and as Dish-washer at the rate of twenty-five cents per hour; but all these jobs were only for three or four hours a day and kept just to keep me in circulation besides the conditions I had to work under were infernal.

So then I came to Mr. Zero's Tub. I never thought that I had to come so far down—but hear the question who is to blame for it? Well I will be honest and must state that everybody is to blame at least 30 per cent himself guilty; 20 per cent fault of society and 50 per cent to political crisis.

The reason why there is an unemployment situation is just because business at large is slow, and this again is quite natural. It is not like anarchists say, the capitalists; but it is the bad ability of our American diplomacy, which does not realize it went the wrong way about our foreign policy. There is only one thing to abolish unemployment and the only remedy is—War.

We need a war with some foreign power in order to get new markets for our products and lift up industries.

What the stupid brains of our diplomats could not do by psychological understanding toward other countries we must let our guns speak for. Or in other words, if Love does fail use Force. So in my opinion it would be quite justified to declare war, on all those countries which slow down our industrial market and so create unemployment and danger to more than 10 million of human beings.

This would be all so far, and I close with the words of a well known song:  
"Tear the work of his asunder,  
Let the truth be known—  
Rise your voice in angry thunder,  
Rise and claim your own!"  
Wake up America!

ROBERT S. E. FOERSTER.

Zero's Tub, New York City.

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wants to purchase sets of the old  
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## From An Ex-Champion

Dear Friends and Fighters—

It's a wonder that all your subscribers are not arrested and jailed as "Reds", etc., etc. Get the youngsters coming hotfoot and we will knock the Babbitts stiff. To show you the attitude of the highhats, I wrote H. E. Fosdick, D. D., about the STARVING MINERS, and asked him 15 good straight questions; and in his reply he advises me to consult a PSYCHIATRIST, damn him! And to think that up to the age of 45-50 I was the most orthodox fundamentalist in America. Ye Gods, what bunk I did swallow, but now, a Free Thinker I say: To Hell with Religion, Prohibition, Law without Justice (vide Oil Trials), to hell with State Medical Exam. Boards, Repression of Free Speech and Literature, and all the other injustices we rebels kick about.

I used to say my dearest wish was to see the LORD JESUS CHRIST, whom I believed to be God Incarnate, crowned with glory at the right hand of God. I wanted to live with him and the hosts of the Redeemed(?) and Angels(?) forever(?).

But now I would like half an hour's talk with him and his Father, especially regarding the "Great War" and why in hell they didn't stop it "pronto?" Yes, sir, I'd give them an earful.

What rot and bunk it all is, eh? No brains. When you're dead you're dead. I wouldn't accept Eternity as a gift. What job would there be to work at?

Well, boys, more power to you.

Yours to a cinder,

FRANK C. BROUGHTON (age 67).

## Knowledge

A crowd assembled before a row of squalid fire-escaped underwear-bedecked tenements on West Ohio Street one twilight during the season's first snowfall. The 75-year old Irish landlady, wrinkled like an Indian, who had told me these were desirable, respectable, clean apartments, close to the Loop district, emerged from her 10-foot square room for the first time in a year. The ambulance doctors came down the steps with a long bundle wrapped in a dirty sheet. A thin, weakened little girl, product of the tenements and horribly wise, awedly said, "She gassed herself!"

ROBERT WHITCOMB.

New Rochelle, N. Y.

## BOSTON

Two men are dead, two men are dead  
Whom nobody could save—  
And yet two men can never be dead  
Who lie in John Brown's grave.

WITTER BYNNER

## How I Became a Radical

(By an Ex-Military Convict)

"Shoot him!"  
"Hang him!"  
"Cut him!"  
"Get a rope!"

These are a few of the introductory phrases that first aroused my interest in radicalism. I heard them in a logging-camp in Northern Minnesota in the winter of 1923. They were hurled at an I.W.W. organizer who had attempted to speak of the lumber-jacks' working conditions by a group of special men hired to break up the radical element that was smoldering in the logging camps that winter. The hatred and animosity of these remarks but served to stimulate my own wonderment and I soon arranged a talk with the man that left me keen with a desire to learn more.

A short time later I enlisted in the army for service in the Hawaiian Islands, and, after being shot full of serum, was herded in a tourist car with thirty-nine other recruits and shipped to the West coast where we awaited the sailing of an army transport to the Islands. Here we were joined by more, until fifteen hundred men were crowded aboard the U.S.A.T. Grant. Nothing can describe the trip across the Pacific. We were cramped in quarters so close that two men could not pass each other. The stench, and putrid foulness of the air was nauseating. Over a thousand of the men were seasick and very few ever reached the deck before they fell, overcome by the foul air and sickness.

Here we existed for six days, living on food that a dog would refuse. I am not including the officers in these statements. They were given spacious quarters, rationed at special tables, and had the only promenade deck roped off for their private use and enjoyment.

The time has not come when these facts will be public information but I tell them to explain how the failings of our present social system were being demonstrated before my eyes. How outraged and how disgusted I became with the civilization that permitted this treatment of men in a day so far advanced, I thought, from barbarianism.

Arriving in the Islands I was assigned to the coast artillery and after eight months of the usual routine was arrested for participating in a raid on a Chinese-American gambling "joint." A buddy had been severely beaten and as the place was under military police protection, five of us disregarded this authority and cleaned it up. We were tried, convicted and sentenced to varying terms at Alcatraz Island.

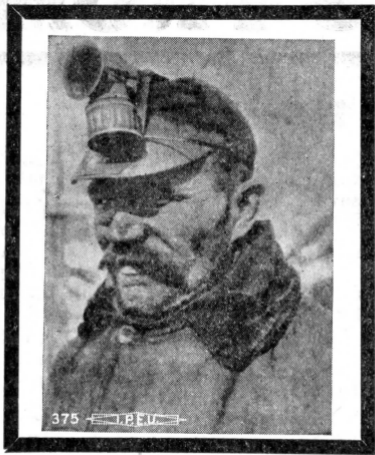
This imprisonment came, for me, at a most opportune time. Paul Crouch and Walter Trumbull were arrested a few months later and it was my privilege to be with these men during their whole period of confinement. Almost every day we stole a few moments to spend in a discussion of some socialistic topic. Here the seeds of discontent blossomed and with the unending patience of the two soldier communists Crouch and Trumbull I began to understand the teachings of Marx and Engels.

The "hell" of prison life and the unceasing fear of cruel beatings, solitary confinement, bread and water, and loss of reading material acted as fuel to feed a fire that had been kindled in Northern Minnesota, with the result that is moulding my entire life for future radical work.

GEORGE PERSHING.

Oakland, Calif.

THE NEW MASSES will offer very attractive terms to friends desiring to secure subscriptions in all parts of the country.



**From An Ex-Champion**

### The "New Negro"

The voice of a Roland Hayes, a Paul Robeson, a Lawrence Brown, the songs of Cullen, Hughes, Toomer, Johnson, and McKay, may wake to ecstasy the cultured bourgeoisie of the North, the absentee Southern landlords, the exploiters of black labor; the intelligentsia of the Negro race may break into rhapsody in praise of their performances. But ten millions of the most ignoble creatures, the most debased, and dehumanized of mankind, ten millions of blacks in the savage South are unaware of their existence. The economic position of these lowly blacks does not change because these New Negroes thrill high heaven with the beauty of their songs.

Actually, the New Negro is still far in the offing. He will come! He must come! But he will not be an aesthete; he will be a revolutionist, finding his milieu in the political arena. He will be a mass leader, a leader of the working class and the working class must buy its freedom with its blood. I do not say that these intellectuals are not completely in sympathy with the black peon and wage slave of Georgia. They are. Of necessity they must be. Their sensitive natures revolt at the persecution of their stricken people, but their intellectual stylized erudite musings, though full of the heart-beat of the black peon, will help that peon not one bit.

The New Negro must demand a new economic policy for his race, a new political program, a new social order. No modification of the old will relieve him from the yoke of oppression. His is not a lone fight. The oppressed of the world will be leagued upon his side. Only through the travail of revolution will he realize his full expression as a man, not through poetry and aesthetics.

WILLIAM L. PATTERSON.

### Labor

One August day in Arizona, while I looked at the fiery wilderness, and thought what a hell of a place a desert is, a man came up with nothing on but a cap, a sleeveless shirt, pants, and heavy shoes. His arms were like the heads of pavement mauls. Across his shoulder lay a pick; a hand, with fingers like the handle of a maul, carried a dinner pail. He put the pail on the sand, laid a nickel on the lid, and said, "That's my last." And then he stretched himself and said, "I gotta build a track across this sand," and drove the pick. Somehow, I felt ashamed, and slunk away. . . . Next year, at sixty miles an hour, I rode a train across that wilderness.

One winter night on Wabash Avenue, while I stood in a doorway and watched the hurricane lift bums and harlots off their feet, and thought what a hell of a place Chicago is, a man came by with nothing on but a cap, a sleeveless shirt, pants, and heavy shoes. His arms were like the heads of pavement mauls. I knew I'd seen that man before. He had a pick and a dinner pail. I followed him on the wind for many blocks until we reached a wretched bar below the street—a burrow packed with bums. He put his pail on the floor, laid a nickel on the bar, and said, "That's my last." And then he stretched himself and said, "I gotta build a drive along the lake." Somehow, I felt ashamed, and slunk away. . . . Next year, I rode a car for thirty miles along the lake.

A dozen times or more I've seen that man with nothing on but a cap, a sleeveless shirt, pants, and heavy shoes, with arms like the heads of pavement mauls. I met him in a Rocky Mountain gorge, while I looked in the gulf, and thought what a hell of a place the Rockies are. He came with pick and pail. He put the pail on a rock, laid a nickel on the lid, and said, "That's my last." And then he stretched himself and said, "I gotta build a bridge across this gorge," and drove the pick. Always down to that last nickel. And then he stretches up those mallet arms and says, "I gotta build." CLARENDON ROSS.

Oxford, Ohio.

### The Poor White Collar Guys

It seems to be a common conception that labor is restricted to mines, sewers and subways. A laborer is a yegg who wears grimey clothes, gets his hands mutilated and his face dirty. But there is another kind of worker: the guy who must keep his collar clean.

This fellow should stand in for as much show in the workers' ranks as the riveter or the coal-digger. True, he doesn't sweat much, but he wears out the seat of his pants, the elbows of his coat and has to keep his badge, the white neckpiece, spick and span. He is, of course, in a class by himself; poorly paid always, generally meek and submissive, because he has to be, and in most cases well trapped on.

He is a migratory bird while young, but when he finds himself moulting he chooses a comfortable stool, or at least one to fit his seat, in some money machine or other, buys himself a dozen or two badges and settles down to figures. Once settled he is not prone to give up his stool for one less comfortable nor even take the chance of obtaining one more comfortable. He is, therefore, an easy mark, and the big-pocketed boys make the best of him.

But, after all, his case is not so sad. When he arrives at the settling age he is beyond saving or does not want to be saved. The routine of ten or a dozen figure factories has so benumbed his natural ambition he is glad to make the best of a more or less safe berth and take what he can eke out of the profiteers without alarming them. To an observer he is a sorry sight indeed but to himself all is well and good. He is eating. He will eat as long as he minds the bosses' business. His job is not too hard, even though it keeps him after hours two-thirds of the time. The bosses' work must be done at any cost and the bosses are kind; they give him supper money. In short he is a fairly contented old bird and fairly well off. He has no kick coming.

But let us consider his case when he is young. Then, nine times out of ten, he is a floater. He has just enough education to qualify him for a routine job where it is essential that he be quick, accurate and steady. Often he is a misfit in some way or other, bright enough to fall in step, not bright enough to pull himself up. Sometimes he is a college graduate or an artist or an actor or something else. Too often he is something really worthwhile, out of place.

Yes sir! The white-collared boys are workers too. True, they do not sweat much, except in their minds. But they wear out the seats of their pants, the elbows of their coats and go in for plenty of dirt. WHY NOT ORGANIZE THE WHITE-COLLARED BOYS?

WALTER F. BARBER.

New York City.

### Does Your News Dealer Carry the NEW MASSES?

If not, why not ask him to take a trial bundle?

### A Novel by Jester

Once More Ye Laurels, by David Cort. John Day. \$2.00.

This is a novel by the former editor of the Columbia JESTER who is now associated with VANITY FAIR. The mannerisms and philosophy of the latter publication are evident on every page of the book. It deals with the futility and impotency of the "sophisticated set," certainly an excellent theme and one that is well handled at times by the author's deft satirical touch. Mr. Cort would do well to tear himself from the VANITY FAIR crowd and try to go beneath the surface of things.

B. S.

### Down with Frank Crane!

As a member of the working class, I must protest against the continued existence of Dr. Frank Crane. Of my many aversions, he is the pet. There are sores and ulcers on the industrial and political body of America. And therefore capitalism requires the services of many practitioners in salve; men who are highly efficient in spreading the salve of demulcent palaver over the irritating wounds. And the greatest of these, the most benevolent demagogue of all, is Dr. Frank Crane. The constant demand for his potent lotion is conclusive proof of its soothing qualities. The people cry for it, the mob bellows for it, and Dr. Crane continues to spread the salve, rubbing it in with gentle skilled, fingers, while he sheds a saintly smile upon the relieved patient.

And who is this male Pollyanna? Simply the village preacher turned Rotarian. He radiates optimism, cheerfulness, charity, faith, goodness, hope, the Alger story book morals, and sweet virtue triumphant at last. But the dear old faith of our fathers is still there in all its essentials. God has had a shave and a hair-cut, hell has been mopped up and disinfected, and heaven has had sanitary plumbing installed. But—it's the same old bunk.

True, Dr. Crane does not resort to the crudities of the pulpit pounding bigot, or the frantic bellows of the Hell-fire and brimstone evangelist. But he achieves the same results by gentle persuasion, subtle implication, and modern salesmanship.

The old church deacon is speaking to the naughty boys of the village. How gently he admonishes them to be good boys, not to throw dead cats through old maid Perkins' window, not to steal apples or play hookey from school, and some day they will go to Heaven and be angels.

But Dr. Crane is not blindly gullible. Oh, by no means. He is really worldly wise and sophisticated. Full well does he know that there are such things as swindlers, fakirs, and pork-barrel politicians. But these evil fellows are but a few insignificant exceptions that prove the general rule. All's well with the world. Virtue is its own sweet reward. If not, you will be rewarded in the hereafter. Capitalists, politicians, and preachers are really good fellows after you get to know them. We are all one big happy family.

A picture:—God and Dr. Crane walking hand in hand.

Midlothian, Ill. ALFRED O. PHILIPP.

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# HALF A DOZEN BOOKS

## Young Asch vs. the World

*Love in Chartres*, by Nathan Asch. Albert & Charles Boni. \$2.00.

The height of condescension was recently attained by a writer in the New York WORLD. In a review of Nathan Asch's new novel he took it upon himself to chide Mr. Asch for an "obvious" attempt to imitate Ernest Hemingway. One can almost see that reviewer smiling benevolently as he bestowed upon the young author of LOVE IN CHARTRES the singular honor of being mentioned in the same breath as the Olympian Ernest.

If nothing else, however, that review was an indication of progress. It was not many years ago that Mr. Hemingway and Mr. Asch were both writing sketches for obscure journals, and New York WORLD writers at that time had either never heard of Mr. Hemingway or had not considered him important enough to discover that he had imitators. It was not until the publication of THE SUN ALSO RISES that the ballyhoo was started, and it was so effective that today anyone whose technique even remotely resembles Mr. Hemingway's must expect to receive abuse. Our "critics" have elected a new idol.

Peculiarly enough, it happens that Ernest Hemingway's technique is not altogether original. It is a derivative of the Gertrude Stein manner. His debt to her can never be fully paid. It also happens that Nathan Asch learned something from her, and was applying his knowledge long before THE SUN ALSO RISES appeared. There is no reason why Mr. Asch should not have done so. He is a young writer, and as such he must experiment with many forms before he strikes upon one that is best suited to his needs. The road to maturity and importance is strewn with discarded mannerisms.

That Mr. Asch will some day achieve literary maturity and importance is more than likely. LOVE IN CHARTRES is the best thing he has done to date. Each succeeding work of his has been an improvement on the past. Certainly this novel bears traces of the Hemingway manner. It also bears traces of many other manners. But there is enough in it of Nathan Asch to warrant optimism. It is a fine novel. The sense of the old, brooding cathedral in Chartres pervades every page, and the young, fresh love enacted beneath its shadow is wholly in the proper mood. The story of that love, and the consequent disillusionment in the magic of the cathedral when the love is exhausted, form one of the most amusing tales of the season. It has nothing startlingly original, nor does it overwhelm the reader with the genius of its author, but it shows that Mr. Asch is a writer of considerable skill and imagination, and that he is unusually sensitive to impression.

BERNARD SMITH

## Unintended Irony

*The Legion of the Damned*, by Bennett J. Doty. The Century Co. \$3.00.

"I shall tell of the Foreign Legion as it is," says the author of this journal, "and let the facts speak for themselves. I shall describe my training, my year of constant fighting, my desertion, capture and trial, and my eight, long, weary, terrible months in five French prisons." And the book has the ring of sincerity; the author does no more or less than he promises.

It would be simple to point out the irony of an American fighting against the recent Druse uprising in Syria, under Abd-el-Krim, but in this case, pointless. The author was frankly moved by curiosity concerning the French Foreign Legion and an appetite for adventure. No other thought entered his head.

He found exactly what he was looking for, a year of bitter marching, starving, fighting, with now and then a month of the dullest

monotony by way of rest and reward. And to cap it off, several months in the French prison Clairvaux. Or at Mousseifre—"There was another moment I remember in which I seemed hypnotized as if in a dream. From one of the stone hedges not more than a hundred feet away, a little detachment of about ten Druses suddenly appeared in a headlong screeching charge for my part of the wall. And what almost paralyzed me was that they were all withered old men with long ragged beards that fell lower than their waist and almost to their knees. Into our concentrated fire these queer old gnomes came and seemed to bear a charmed life. I fired and fired and it was having no more effect than if they had been air. While the concentrated fire from my right and left seemed as impotent. They reached our piteous little strand of barbed wire... all together started to step over, their knees parting their long beards—and then abruptly, all together in one movement, all collapsed." The book details rather fully the fierceness and unanimity of the Druse attempt for independence.

KENNETH FEARING.



Drawn by Louis Lozowick

## Goofy but Tragic

*Death of a Young Man*, by W. L. River. Schuster & Simon. \$2.00.

In a season when the cultural brotherhood was wringing its hands over THE GRANDMOTHERS, A GOOD WOMAN, MAGIC MOUNTAIN, etc., etc., each of these masterpieces being "greater and more poignant" than its fellow, DEATH OF A YOUNG MAN, by W. L. River, won little of the attention that it deserved. It is the only eye-to-eye study of a university student, of more than average intelligence, of which this writer has memory.

David Bloch, central character of the book, is audaciously unconcerned over any of the fake problems upon which college-writers, as a rule, crucify their quarter-backs and prom-leaders and moral innocents. In fact, David Bloch is concerned over the matter of his approaching death. He is told by doctors that he has one year to live, and instead of endeavoring to remain clean-minded and solve the "problems which confront the youth of the modern age," he keeps a journal in which he records his loves, his curiosity in crime and the social background of the crude city in which he lives, his struggles to retain sanity and to use the year of life left him.

The book is introduced with this note, purporting to be the only words written by W. L. River, the author: "These are the papers of my young friend, David Bloch. He was eager for life, romantic, sentimental and afraid of life, romance, and sentiment. Perhaps he was dying. He did not wait to see." The book proper is the careful, painfully exact diary written by Bloch himself.

This necessarily involves a tour de force—W. L. River making Bloch write as Bloch would write, with no eye to the literary effectiveness of his journal—and, of course, there are dreadful moments when this scheme becomes apparent, when it is River arranging the scene and not Bloch. But these passages are infrequent, and in view of the force and accuracy of the book as a whole, forgivable. Bloch is at his best, from the reader's viewpoint, when Bloch forgets himself and studies the life about him, the Chicago background, its black cabarets, Italian tenements, students, artists, scientists. The portrait of Doctor Meis is unforgettable; the Chicago setting and atmosphere is authentic.

The present writer was grieved to discover that the Rev. William Allen White ruminated concerning DEATH OF A YOUNG MAN; "And why devote one's time to writing about a young gentleman who is clearly goofy and gaga? If we are to have half-wits in literature, who can improve on Mr. Toots?"

David Bloch is indeed goofy and gaga; but, unfortunately, not all subnormal people are as lightly, deliciously, whimsically amusing as the Rev. White and Mr. Toots. The life of David Bloch, and his death, are tactlessly serious. The book is nearly as perfect as the author intended it to be; it is regrettable only that at times Bloch is squeezed for literary effect, and that his existence is too isolated from the heat of ordinary struggle. Yet there is nothing spurious about Bloch's madness and suicide. It has happened, in just this way, in New York, in Chicago, in Kankakee, no matter what happens to the cheerful Mr. Toots.

KENNETH FEARING.

## For the Boudoir

*Dead Lovers Are Faithful Lovers*, by Frances Newman. Boni & Liveright. \$2.50.

Miss Newman gives us a highly mannered prose, a hard steely cleverness, a certain fashionable cynicism, and a surprisingly complete knowledge of woman's soul. Her new novel is not great literature, but it makes interesting reading for those who can forget the major conflicts in our world.



*Drawn by Louis Lozowick*



*Drawn by Louis Lozowick*



### A Slap Badly Aimed

An Artist in the Family, by Sarah Gertrude Millin. Boni & Liveright. \$2.50.

It is strange, but true, that practically nothing has been written on the relationship between society and the artist. The few novels and stories that do touch the subject deal only with society's traditional failure to understand and appreciate the creative genius. Mrs. Millin's new novel is the only attempt to depict the other side of the story that I am able to recall.

She sets Theo Bissaker, a quasi-Byronic painter, into a provincial South African family and proceeds to show how conflicts must inevitably result. His egotism, self-delusion, and blindness to reality make him incapable of sympathizing with his parents; he can only think of himself and his art. His passionate belief in his future makes him unwilling to do anything to relieve the economic burden that is oppressing his father; he continues to ask for support and encouragement even though his career has largely been futile. Mrs. Millin finally seems to suggest that whatever the artist may suffer because of society, society suffers much more because of the artist.

Her case is weakened considerably by the fact that her protagonist is a puny weakling unable to create anything whatsoever. She proves that idiots are not blessings, but we already knew that. Can she also prove that although a genius may give much, he cannot give enough to compensate for what he takes? It is true that the spoiled child of our civilization has always been the artist, but Mrs. Millin does not show us why. In fact, if anything at all may be concluded from AN ARTIST IN THE FAMILY it is that the author missed an opportunity. She should have indicated the various factors that enter into the formation of the artist's personality. She should have analyzed the elements in Theo Bissaker's environment that made him a tragic bungler. She indicts the artist for his egotism. Should she not have shown the part society plays in making him egotistic? To particularize, should she not have shown the extent to which the character of Theo Bissaker was the result of his home influence?

BERNARD SMITH.

### America's Still Young

America Comes of Age, by Andre Siegfried. Harcourt, Brace & Company. \$3.00.

This is the book H. L. Mencken called "so good that it seems incredible," and it is good. M. Siegfried has sense, insight, taste and talent, and he has apparently had (what most of the current critics of America notoriously have not) considerable experience in the United States and sufficient time to digest this experience into a compact and coherent book.

But there are at least two points which M. Siegfried disposes of in a manner open to some doubt. In speaking of the mixture of races, creeds and nationalities that compose America at the present time, M. Siegfried assumes that Anglo-Saxons look upon the "invasion" of their country by immigrants of other races as altogether bad. The truth is that many Anglo-Saxon Americans realize that their own stock, for all its material achievements, has failed to produce an American civilization strong enough to last. Without any reference to the "melting pot" ideal, these Americans believe that the future lies in a mingling of races, and that the true American civilization must come as a result of such a fusion or not at all.

Then, M. Siegfried assumes too easily that because the American public is now being led by the nose by Big Business that it must always be so. No doubt we are now richer than any other country in the world, and enjoy a higher standard of living than has ever been known before. Big Business pays us enough in salaries so that we can buy its products and live to work and buy more. But it seems not unreasonable to hope that people will eventually stop running when they fully understand that they are chasing their own tails.

CLINTON SIMPSON.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUG. 24, 1912. Of New Masses, published monthly at New York, N. Y., for April 1, 1928.

State of New York; County of New York.

Before me, a Notary in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Egmont Arens, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Editor of the New Masses, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor and business managers are:

Publisher, New Masses, Inc., 39 Union Square, New York; Editor, Egmont Arens, 39 Union Square, New York City; Managing Editor, Egmont Arens, 39 Union Square, New York City; Business Manager, Eva Ginn, 39 Union Square, New York City.

2. That the owner is: Board of Trustees—New Masses: Egmont H. Arens, 39 Union Square, New York City; Helen Black, 46 Bank Street, New York City; Hugo Gellert, 39 Union Square, New York City, Michael Gold, 39 Union Square, New York City; Wm. Gropper, 20 Charles Street, New York City; Paxton Hibben, 422 West 22nd Street, New York City; Freda Kirchoway, 20 Vesey Street, New York City; Louis Lozowick, 130 East 27th Street, New York City; Robert L. Leslie, 406 West 31st Street, New York City; Ruth Stout, 7 West 106th Street, New York City, and Rex Stout, 66 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

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Sworn to and subscribed before me this 6th day of April, 1928. My commission expires March 30, 1930. Sydney Benjamin, Notary Public.

### TIME TER HOLE UP!

C'm on, Shorty, grab yer turkey, Time ter be a-goin'; The shark-boards is bare o' jobs An' winter winds a'blowin'.

What become o' the summer's wages Hell only knows! Hurry, Shorty! Got ter beat it Where the climate suits our clo'es.

Pull fer good o' Califrisco Where the cops is kind, Afore a damn nor'easter comes An' snow hits us behind!

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# AN APPEAL FROM A COAL MINER

The United Mine Workers are facing today the greatest test ever set before Organized Labor in America.

We have been recognized for years as the back-bone of the labor movement in America and Canada. Now in the past 8 years the proponents of the so-called American Plan, namely, the Open Shop Movement, have decided that Organized Labor Should Be No More. First they will try to break us, the back-bone, then the weaker organizations will be their prey.

Two and a half years ago the operators near Pittsburgh posted notices of reduced wages, disowning the contract which they had signed with us seemingly in good faith. The reduction was in reality less than common labor wages in cities of the U. S. The Gigantic struggle between Capital and Labor then began to form. The Miners ignored the command to accept reduced wages. The fight continued for years, and thousands of miners were evicted from their homes by the Operators.

The Coal and Iron Police tossed their belongings and furniture out in the street. Caused scores of poor innocent women and children to die from the treatment at the hands of Cruel Coal and Iron Police. And Coal Operators.

Mrs. Lubresky of Aremnton, Pa., was at Death's Door with pneumonia. Those heartless scamps forced the husband to take his wife 6 miles away to some Barracks that were built by the United Mine Workers, through sleet and a Snow Storm last winter, while the Coal and Iron Police threw their belongings outside. Mrs. Lubresky died three days later.

There are hundreds of thousands of those poor little victims of circumstances who ask for bread, and they wonder what it is all about, and the mother's heart is heavy-laden as she shows them an empty cabinet with nothing to eat at times for two or three days, sometimes nothing but Bread and Coffee for days and weeks.

But we will hold fast to our principles, for we are fighting for our existence, for if we lose it means complete slavery for Miners, and it means capital can crush Organized Labor in America. We ask for aid from the Masses of Labor.

THOMAS OAKES, Local 2051, United Mine Workers.

