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# **MASSES**

**APRIL, 1929**

**COLLEGE NUMBER**

**15 Cents**



*From a photograph by Ralph Steiner*

## **A MAN IN A TRAP**

**BY MICHAEL GOLD**

**Wm. Gropper  
Louis Lozowick  
Gan Kolski  
Otto Soglow  
Wm. Siegel  
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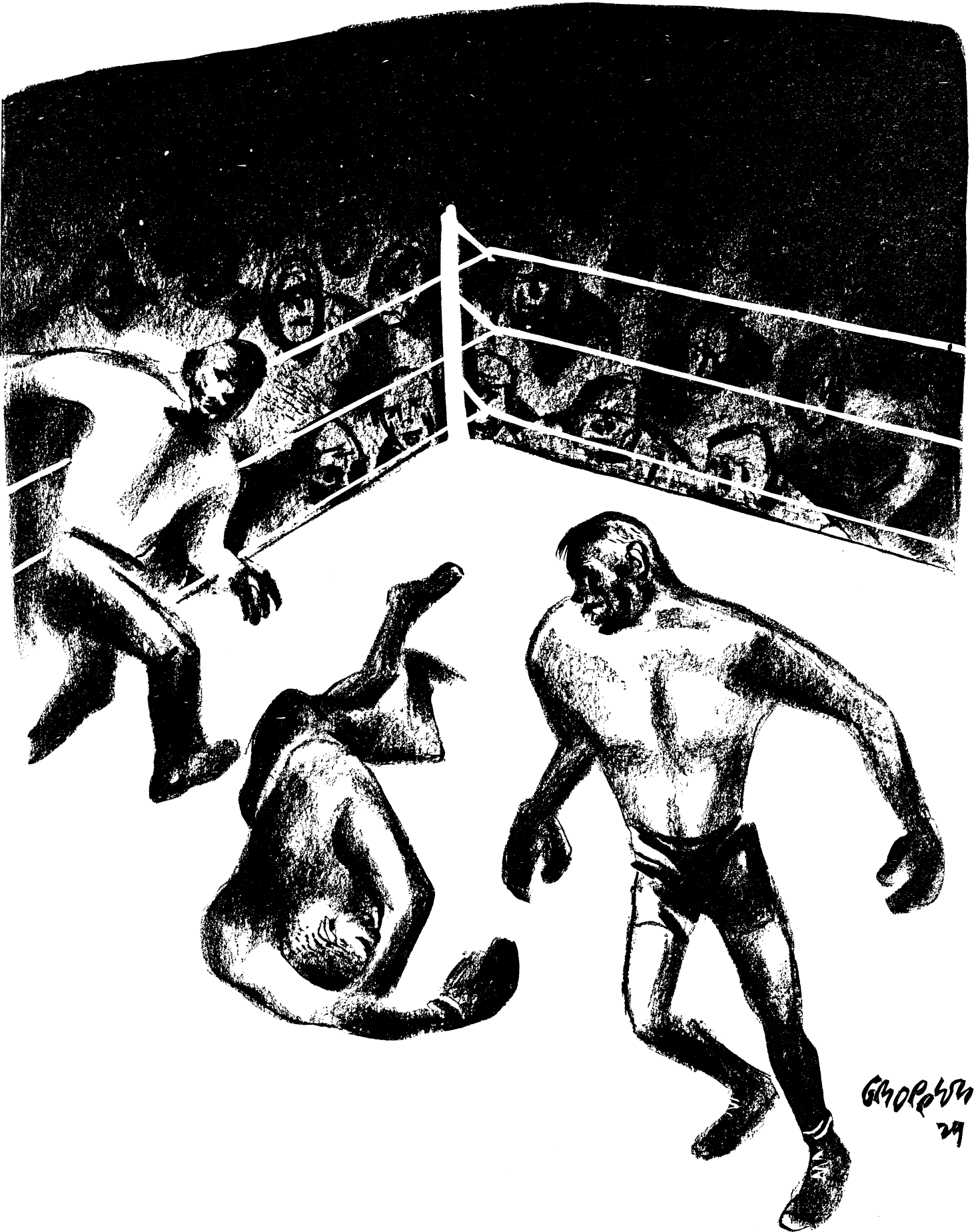
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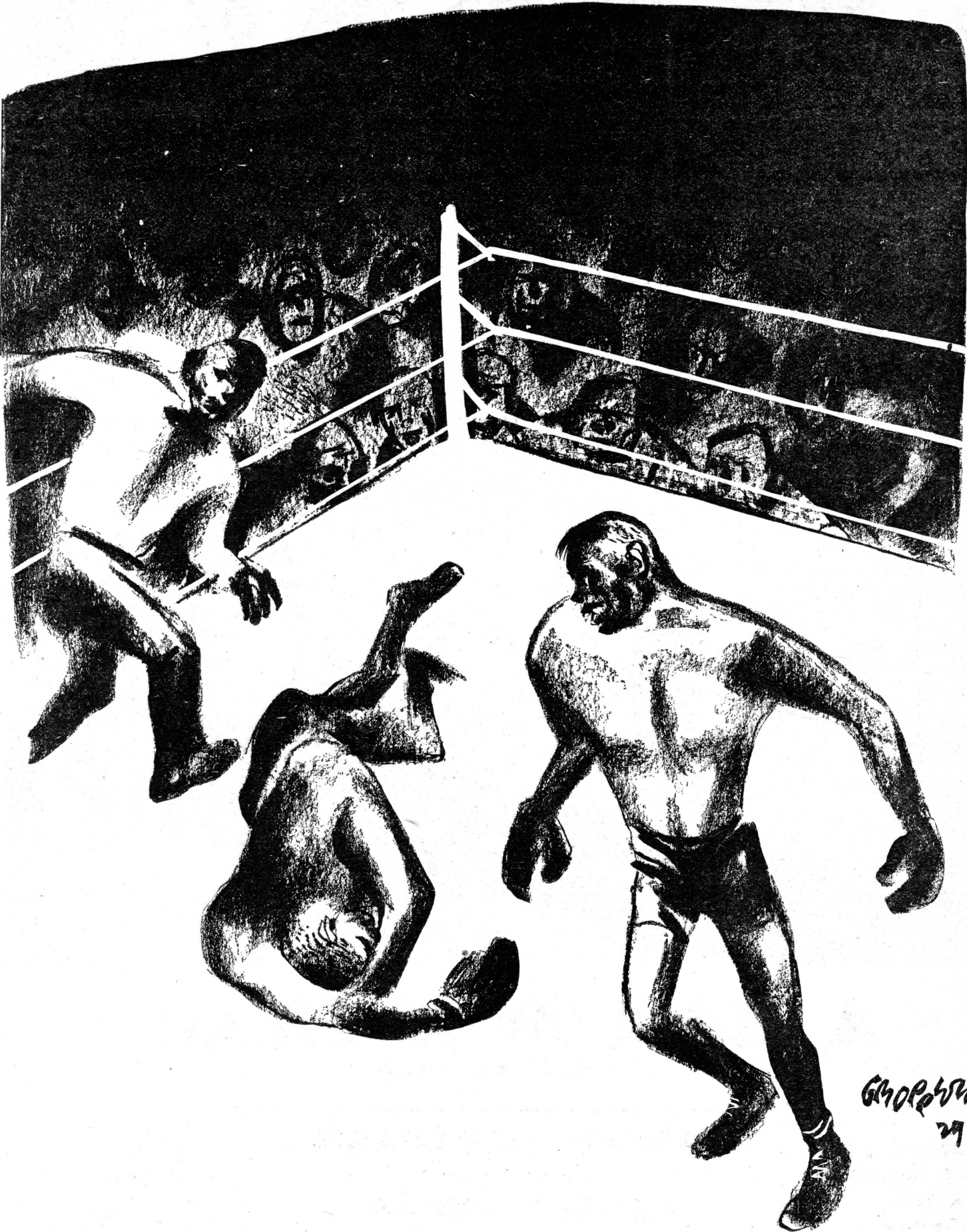
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GROPPER  
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# THE FIRST MILLION



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**THE FIRST MILLION**

# NEW MASSES

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## REVOLT AMONG AMERICAN INTELLECTUALS

By V. F. CALVERTON

American intellectuals, on the whole, are so superficial that their revolt is seldom revolutionary. Whether there is "something in our climate which belittles every animal, human and brute," as Alexander Hamilton contended in a moment of explosive despair, and which expresses itself in de Tocqueville's observation, "that in no country in the civilized world is less attention paid to philosophy than in the United States," can be answered by a consideration of the American intellectual, and the gesturing antics of his existence. The difference between American intellectuals and European is at once conspicuous by its profundity. This difference runs into every field and is characteristic of the intellectual radical as well as reactionary. One is almost tempted to say that there is among intellectuals a European and an American outlook. Or at least whenever one discovers in America that rarity which we shall call a deep-thinking, radical intellectual we have a tendency to say that his attitude is European.

The superficiality of the American intellectual, of course, is not a sporadic or capricious thing, but is rooted deep in the currents of American life. It is a reflection, in the clearest sense, of American economic and social existence. The cultural background of the European intellectual, radical as well as conservative, has always been richer than that of the American. In America the criss-cross of several types, none as deep rooted as the European, and in many instances amounting to nothing more than slavish imitations of their earlier origins, has resulted in a product that is uniform chiefly in its affinity for the mediocre. The cultured intellectuals in the North, with but an exception here and there, never became serious rivals of their English contemporaries. For a long period they made open obeisance to their English dictators of taste and convention, and even admitted their imitation as a virtue. In the South all that was rich in the aristocratic culture of Europe soon petered out, in the 19th century, under the influence of slavery, into vain artifice and affectation. On the frontier, where currents were set into motion that shook the entire nation, invading the White House, and in a way giving caste to a national culture that lingers with singular emphasis even today, an exaltation of the practical and utilitarian became the prevailing attitude. Booklearning was scorned, and intellectual attainment was outlawed by the frontiersman. The cultural traditions of New England, or of Europe, were sneered at by the exponents of this new philosophy. Bret Harte, Joaquin Miller, and Artemus Ward embodied its sentiment in prose, poetry and humor, and in such a farce as *Innocents Abroad* we have a vivid expression of its mocking contempt for European culture and tradition.

Out of such a milieu, a profound intelligentia could scarcely arise and flourish. Everything discouraged it. America was too much with us. There was no room for it on the frontier, no need for it in the South, and no reason for it in the North with England so near. On the frontier an intellectual was a pariah, in the South an anomaly, and in the North an imitator of his English forefathers. Gradually as the English influence weakened in the North, a sentimental puritanism, dwarfed and distorted by the environment of the new world, remained; but steadily, as even this puritanism started to wane, the frontier attitude and spirit in the form of Whitman and our own contemporaries began to pervade our entire literary outlook and tendency. The result has been tragically obvious. We have never had, never been able to have, a real intelligentia. The only significant philosophers we have ever had have been practical. Whether it is the pragmatism of James, or the instrumentalism of Dewey, its practical motivation has never been obscured. When it has not been so, the philosophers have remained isolated and unimportant. Our artists too, with but rare exceptions, have represented little deviation. Their practicality has been manifest in their bourgeois didacticism and puritanic timidities and trepidations.

The American intellectual thus has become ingrown rather than expansive. He has been as afraid of adventurousness in the intellectual life as the pioneer was unafraid of adventurousness in the practical life. He has been superficial in his approach to things because the life about him demanded that superficiality for his survival. The deeper, more embracing problems of life than the merely obvious and practical have rarely engaged his attention. What American critic would ever have undertaken the magnificent and sweeping analyses and interpretations of Taine, St. Beuve, Brunetiere, or Pisarev, Bielinsky, Chernishevsky, Plechanov; or Ruskin, Arnold, Carlyle, Wyndham Lewis; or Grillparzer, Lessing, Hebbel, Hesse, or Hoffmannsthal; or Gentile or Croce; or Azorin. Unamuno and Madaniaga? There is no audience in America for such work, no incentive for its creation. What American radicals would have ventured such a work as Dietzgen's *Positive Outcome of Philosophy*; Bogdanov's *Empirio-Monism*; Lenin's *Empirio-Criticism*; Kautsky's *Foundations of Christianity*; Sorel's *Reflections on Violence*; Bonger's *Economic Conditions and Criminality*, or Friedrich Adler's defense of Avenarius? What radicals in America are interested in those problems? Or in sex, what radicals would have hazarded, in such an immense way, Bebel's *Woman*, Engel's *Evolution of the Family*, or Kollontai's *Communism and the Family*? Or what liberals, occupied in the same field, would

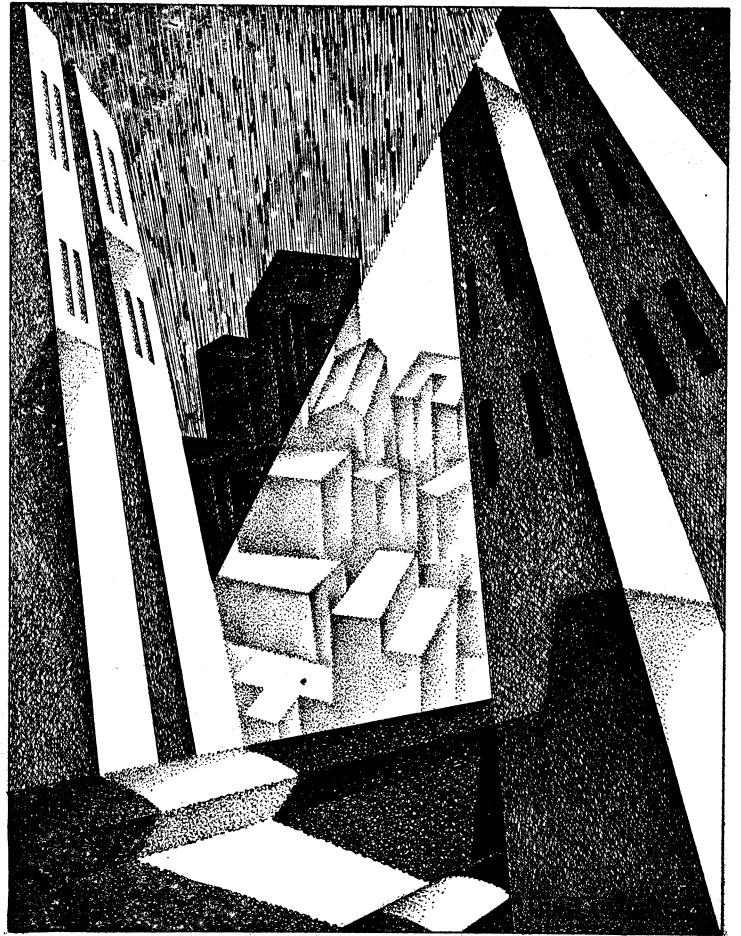
have attempted Ellis' *Studies in Sex*, Briffault's *Mothers*, or Hobhouse's *Morals in Evolution*? Only those with what we shall have to call, however vaguely, a European outlook would ever dream of such endeavors. The American outlook creates little men with small vision. There is no incentive or inspiration for the creation of big men with large vision. How well all this is borne out by our intellectuals today. They are all in revolt but are never revolutionary—or perhaps we should say, hardly ever. They are in revolt against a hundred things, but seldom against anything fundamental. They are muddled and confused, and their energies are lost in a frustrating chaos. They have no sense of coordination, no vision of things beyond the specific. They are afraid of theories, and in terror of dogma. They live within their little worlds like merchants of the intellectual life.

One can fully appreciate the attitude only when one sees how it has gripped almost everything upon American soil. At a meeting of a number of American intellectuals, editors, critics, professors, and what not, I recall certain individuals, well-known to the American reading public, asserting in a kind of uncanny unison—

"We don't care about your theories—tell us what to do and we'll do it." In other words be pragmatic, be up and doing, active, utilitarian, eager with practical initiative. Don't worry about the philosophy behind it, don't concern yourself with the deeper problems of existence, don't reflect, but *do*. The result has been that American intellectuals have never reflected, have never perturbed themselves with radical categories, but with the attitude of a frontiersman have managed to do rather than to probe. And the result has been that what they have done merits very little probing at all.

Let us glance at the work of a few American intellectuals in order to see the emptiness and superficiality of their revolt. One cannot deny that the American intellectuals are in protest against the prevailing civilization. In the 19th century this was not so. There was then, in large part, an acquiescence that was disturbed only at time of crisis. Since the days of Frank Norris and David Graham Phillips, with the decline of the influence of Howells, insurrection has become common. The insurrection, however has often been isolated and esoteric. Mr. Dreiser, for instance, is certainly in revolt against many of the forms of capitalism, and against the system of society itself, and yet his revolt finds expression in nothing more definite and revolutionary than a cynical despair. His appreciations of Soviet Russia reveal a superficiality of outlook that is almost pathetic. They are scarcely more profound than the observations of Ivy Lee. Sherwood Anderson is frank in his condemnations of contemporary society, but in his attack there is a medieval atavism that is touchingly sentimental in its hopelessness. He would have us return to the days of the artisan, deny machinery, and create a utopia of hands. A sweet dream this, but fantastic and futile. Its stultification, however, is to be found in his recent endorsement of Al Smith. Floyd Dell with a genius for style that is all too rare in America, alienates himself further and further from everything radical, and spends his time upon fiction that has neither deep meaning nor challenging significance. With an essentially fine understanding of the philosophic aspects of radical reconstruction, he nevertheless surrenders to the American urge for commercial creation. W. E. Woodward, who has been slashing into American life in *Bunk* and *Lottery*, suddenly discovers that one can now be respectable and be a socialist. He addresses a letter to his friends, urging them to vote for Norman Thomas and the cause of clean politics. One would think that all socialism meant in these days, to judge by our intellectuals, was exterminating the corruption in the capitalist parties. There was one time when socialism was associated with "Gum-shoe Pete" and the proletariat; but today, argues Mr. Woodward, socialism has been so refined that one no longer has to elbow proletarians in order to be a comrade. A fine picture this, of what socialism has become with the American intellectuals! A fine picture of their depth, and their vision of what radicalism embodies and signifies!

It is in the work of such American intellectuals as Waldo Frank, Van Wyck Brooks, and Lewis Mumford that the sharp disparity between revolt and revolution is most tragically apparent. While the reaction of Mencken against the older literature never rose above a spirited and vigorous protest, the reaction of these men has always risen to an eloquent and moving revolt. They always promised more than Mencken. Not that Mencken was not, and



Drawn by Louis Lozowick

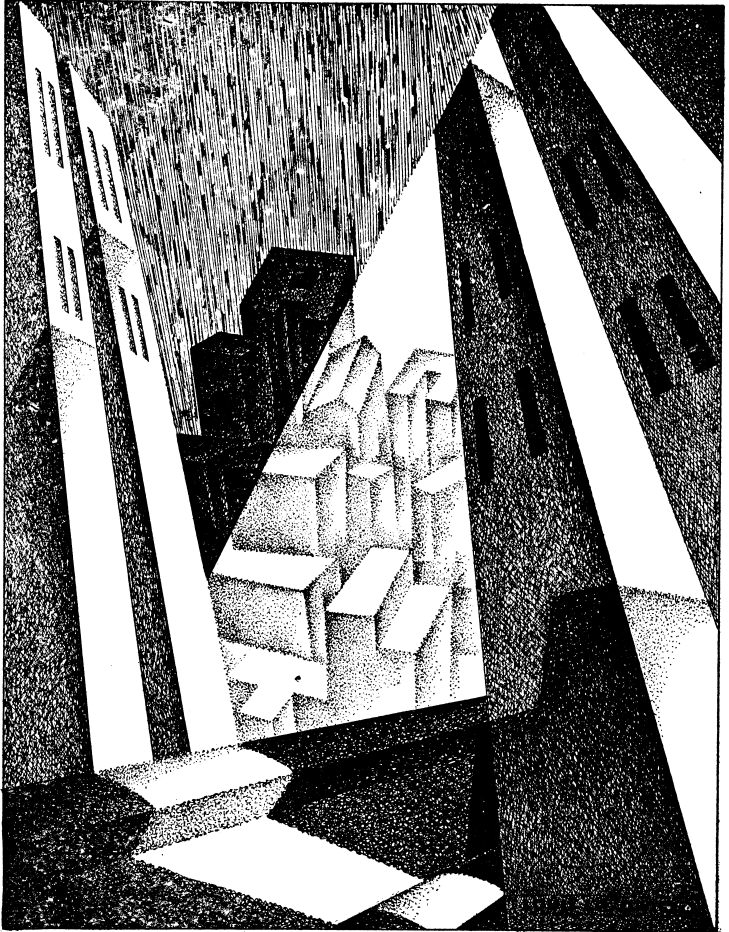
to an extent still is a greater *force*, and despite his vaudevillian superficialities often an inspiring force, but that Mencken never pretended to the seriousness and profundity that has always marked their approach. Mencken, in every respect, has represented America; his writing is Americanese; even his Nietzscheanism has been American in character and outlook. He has been the Mark Twain of American criticism. These men, however, have aspired toward a European outlook. They have striven to rise above America in order to understand it. Their efforts, fine as they have promised, unfortunately, have largely resulted in defeat and contradiction. While each has pursued a somewhat different method, there has been an underlying similarity about their general ideas and deductions. Waldo Frank has, perhaps, struggled for the largest vision of them all. In *Our America*, applying the thesis of Jung, he essayed an interpretation of America and the shallowness of its culture that was charged with an amazing earnestness and intelligence. In places his words were a cry and a challenge. His attack upon Emerson was signal. Repelled by the coldness of New England culture, Emerson failed to apply his genius to the realities of life, and escaped by making "a transcending leap away from all that was mortal-human." This is brilliant and perspicacious observation. His analysis of Poe pursued the same logic. In order to "escape," Poe "landed in a macabre region of synthetic horrors." In *America's Coming of Age* Van Wyck Brooks advanced an interpretation of American authors and American culture that was very similar in conclusion if not in approach. His comments upon Poe will illustrate a similarity of conclusion that is immediately striking.

"Poe having nothing in common with the world that produced him, constructed a little parallel world of his own, withered at the core, a silent comment. It is this that makes him so sterile and so inhuman."

And of Hawthorne he said:

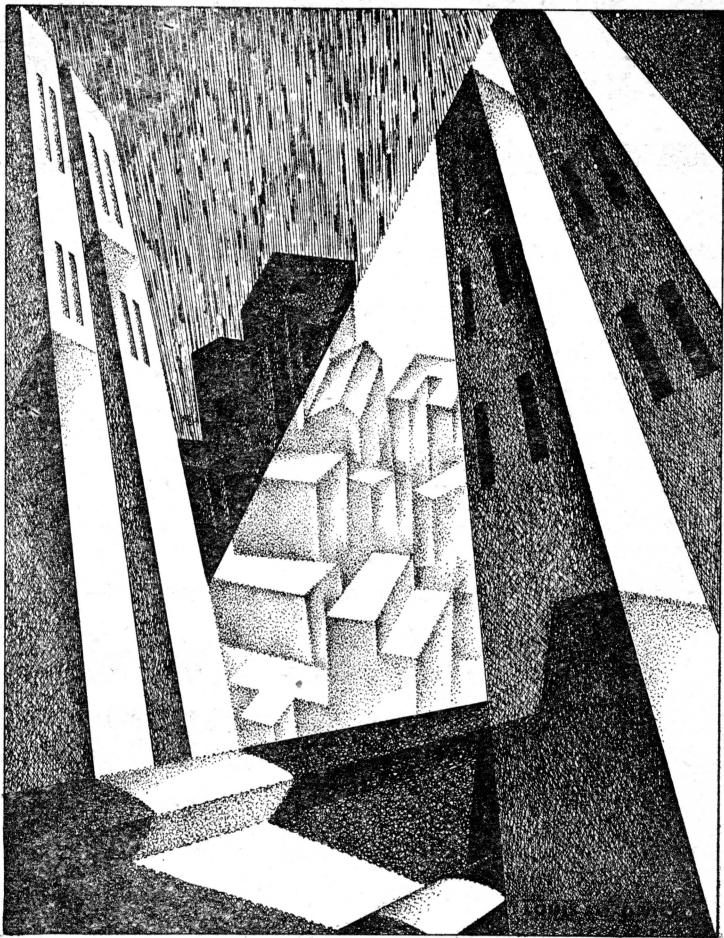
"He models in mists, presents cloud pageants and creates a world within a world . . . He was himself a phantom in a phantom world."

# NEW MASSES



*Drawn by Louis Lozowick*

# NEW MASSES



*Drawn by Louis Lozowick*



Correct observations, penetrating insights, fine illations.

But now let us see what has happened to these observations, insights and illations—to Mr. Frank and Mr. Brooks. Slowly but steadily Mr. Frank and Mr. Brooks have become the very souls that they decried in Emerson, Poe, and Hawthorne. Has America been too much for them? In recent years Mr. Frank has turned to a mysticism that is almost religious in its aspects, and argued that with the dissolution of western culture there has "come the apposite introduction into Europe of Hindu religious ideas," which he praises as having "always been based upon a deeper unity." Opposing now the scientific approach, which to a considerable extent he had adopted in *Our America*, and losing sight of the real world with which he was so concerned in this earlier work, he has now become anxious to "prepare the intellect to receive mystery," and vigorously contends that "the man who receives mystery in his mind is already part of the truth." From these few citations it is not difficult to note that Mr. Frank's indictment of Emerson, that Emerson escaped the realities of life by making "a transcending leap away from all that was mortal-human" is an equally fine indictment of himself. That anyone can be aware of, and in grips, with, the realities of our age, with their economic compulsions, and psychological propulsions, and advocate the mysticism of Mr. Frank is illogical and absurd. Mr. Frank has, like Emerson and Poe, moved on to another world. In *Virgin Spain* he has addressed his mystical attitude to historical fact. The result is a work of ardent prose, swarming with rich, voluptuous metaphors and comparisons, but without sound substance or logic. His picture is that of a people pasted on a painted canvas. We see the people, but all the while we know that they are unalive and immobile. If Mr. Frank has not escaped into a "region of synthetic horrors" he has escaped into a land of unreal mystery and dream.

In his recent articles in *The New Republic*, dedicated to a Rediscovery of America, the rediscovery, however enriched by a warm, poetic prose, is a rediscovery of Mr. Frank's own soul rather than that of America. It is somewhat the same story with Mr. Van Wyck Brooks. Conspicuous in the days of *Seven Arts*, active again later on *The Freeman*, devoting himself to genuine attack and challenge, Mr. Brooks in recent years has turned to different themes, and isolated himself from the very factors and forces that constitute the active realities of life.

In Lewis Mumford we have an intellectual who has not yet surrendered to either isolation or mysticism. His *Golden Day* is a very creditable continuation of the theme of *Our America* and *America's Coming of Age*. Mr. Mumford writes with verve and skill, and lends to his style a polished wit that lightens and livens the severest scrutiny and analysis. His approach is candid, and his conclusions are courageous. Nevertheless, his revolt never becomes revolutionary. *The Golden Day*, for Mr. Mumford is the day of Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller and Whitman. Unquestionably it was an important period in American literature. That its literature was a great literature can easily be disputed. In that it expresses the height of the individualistic trend, however, it may be called golden, yet not without an enthusiasm that is anachronistic in essence.

It is Thoreau's dream—"of what it means to live a whole human life" that enchants Mr. Mumford. These men and women of the mid-nineteenth century, in the opinion of Mr. Mumford, inspired "that complete culture (which) leads to the nurture of the good life (that), permits the fullest use, or sublimation, of man's natural functions and activities." Mr. Mumford's attitude, at least in its glorification of this period, is unconcealingly individualistic. Emerson's cry—

"Nothing is at last sacred except the integrity of your own mind . . . What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within . . . No law can be sacred to me but that of my own nature,"

and then his later assertion:

"Is not a man better than a town? Ask nothing of men, and in the endless mutation, thou only firm column must presently appear the upholder of all that surrounds thee,"

are both excellently illustrative of the individualistic attitude that dominated this period of American life and literature. The whole Transcendentalist movement, the entire sweep of mysticism that pervaded the philosophy of Emerson and intruded into the early pages of the Dial, the concept of the Over-soul, derivative of Novalis and Swedenborg, the feminism of Margaret Fuller, the hermitage of Thoreau, all were expressive of this vast movement of individualism that had overtaken the modern world and was consuming America. The inspiration of the frontier still re-

mained. The attitude was ubiquitous. At Brook Farm it was manifest, and even into the little colony of the Fruitlands, famous for the Alcotts, the spirit swept. Poe, with his morbid eccentricities and aloofness from the political scene, no more escaped it than Thoreau. In Emerson's words, which we quoted before: "A man is greater than a town," its philosophy is crystallized. It was a philosophy that fastened its faith in the individual. Thoreau's hegira to Walden is a concrete example of one form of its defiance.

The vision of that period is not our vision. Our direction is social. Our ambition is cooperative. That there were courage and fervor, spirit and defiance in the attitude of these nineteenth century leaders, is undeniable. We do not begrudge, but rather admire their challenge. Yet it is a challenge that today is obsolete. Our criticism of Mr. Mumford's striking analysis is not that he has failed to portray the individualism of the epoch, but that he maintains that "from their example we can more readily find our own foundations, and make our own particular point of departure." "For us who share their vision" — "they dream Thoreau's dream!"

Brave as is Mr. Mumford's revolt, it still is not revolutionary. We can no longer see in Emerson's vision an incentive for a new world. Emerson's vision and the vision of a new social world are in irreconcilable conflict. Mr. Mumford has confused his categories, and in his fine enthusiasm failed to appreciate the inevitable direction of the change that has come upon us. He has not yet learned to direct his revolt into revolutionary channels.

And to all this failure of the American intellectuals, there is the incessant cry—it is the conditions in America. And while we may admit this, we must further realize that it is not until we as radicals change these conditions, or rather act as a changing influence upon deeper-lying changes that are actively at work today, that we can ever develop greater thinkers, deeper radicals, finer artists, superior critics, and a more splendid vision.

## THESE STRIKES

By ANDRAE SPIRE

*Young woman  
With naked neck,  
Undulating breasts,  
Sheer-clad calves . . .*

*Young woman on the sofa  
With drops of chocolate ice-cream  
On the whiteness of your teeth,  
On the rouge of your lips:  
What do you think of these strikes?*

*"These strikes? . . . No more subways!  
And such taxis!  
And such chauffeurs!  
And such tips!*

*And Ah, if the department stores should close!  
And if they should corrupt my servants . . .  
Who'll make my bed?  
Who'll straighten up my house?*

*And my husband  
And his friends . . .  
When will they ever be able to put on evening-dress?  
And take me away on vacations  
If these strikes force them to work?*

*Where shall we go, where?  
Switzerland, Italy,  
Tunis, Algeria,  
Poland, Czechoslovakia,  
Jugoslavia, Greece, Morocco,  
Spain . . . or even Russia,  
Or the Republic-beyond-the-Rhine?*

*. . . O workman, you whom I hardly loved any more,  
Since you weren't worth more than I . . .  
Workman, you who disturb my life  
You who put all my plans out of order  
Just at the time when my soul growing old,  
Flinches and dreams of peace . . .*

*How I love you this afternoon!"*

Translated by STANLEY BURNISHAW.



**"GOOD FODDER!"**

*Drawn by Gus Uhlmann*

## FABLE ABOUT MR. MEEK By H. H. LEWIS

Once upon a time recently there was a very pious man. He said grace before every meal, read the Bible every night, went to church every Sunday, and all that. When he strolled "abroad," as was his habit, he searched for evidences of his Maker in every tree and flower. He would pick up a beautiful leaf, colored by the frost, and pause in reverence as he examined the intricate structure of ribs that spring from the main stem. Then, overcome with divine love dwelling in his soul, he would say in audible tones: "Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

One day while jay-walking in pious meditation to work, Mr. Meek was bumped by an auto-hearse and sent flying. A leg was so injured that it had to be amputated. But even that failed to crab his sweet nature. After getting a wooden leg and *tacking* his sock on, he patted the shapely substitute and said: "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, then He provideth me with a wooden one. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

His earning power was now lessened a great deal due to the handicap, and it began to seem that he could no longer support his family—twelve children with only one mother. But he reprimanded himself for dreading the cares of the world, found peace in that soulful ditty, "God Shall Take Care of You."

Yet somehow God just wouldn't. As the months dragged by, the flock sunk deeper and deeper into want. And, at the bottom of it all, Mrs. Meek, for long an overworked reproduction-machine, tried to bear child number thirteen and went to pieces from the strain. The weary husband buried her in correct ritual of his

church, satisfying himself that he had prayed her directly into realms of eternal bliss. Then he went back home to re-read condolences and to worry about the high cost of burial.

Stooping under despair, he went back home. Things were getting serious. The children . . . he would have to appeal to charity. Silently with drawn faces they moped about. Why wasn't the wife tending to them? Alas, the poor fellow's mind snapped—he went blooming crazy, having forgotten to take his accustomed shot of opium-faith.

After an oblivious span of years in an asylum, he was restored to sense when an agnostic janitor in the place cracked him on the head with a broom-handle. Thereupon Mr. Meek cried out: "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, then He restoreth my wits. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

The grey years were heavy upon him by this time, however. So after a while of prayer and meditation he kicked the bucket and set out for Glory.

When he got there he confronted a sign on the Pearly Gate, "Heaven full up—go to Hell." Astounded, he asked St. Peter what it meant. The sleepy old watchman shifted his cud to the other side, spat viciously and gruffly said that the meaning was clear enough, that Heaven could accommodate no more angels.

Refused admission! Crestfallen Mr. Meek turned away. Behind him, the glories unspeakable, the bliss, the beatitude. Before him, the endless torments of Hell. Robbed of his life's purpose! Now what did he say, what did he say *this time*? "The Lord calleth and the Lord sendeth away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"



**"GOOD FODDER!"**

*Drawn by Gus Uhlmann*

# ACADEMIC MORTUARIES

By SCOTT NEARING

While a social system is young and vigorous it gives youth a chance to spread itself. As it grows old, and approaches dissolution, it builds an institutional structure in which its remains may lie in decent state. American colleges and universities are a part of the mortuary chapel of capitalist imperialism.

Go to an elementary school, among ten or twelve year old boys and girls, and present some idea that is new to supporters of the present social system. The youngsters will examine it; discuss it; react to it—with facile, agile minds. They may agree or differ, but they display signs of mental vigor and life.

Take a high school junior class next,—boys and girls of sixteen or seventeen. Already blase, and mentally “stiff,” they can still react to ideas, but their memories are so clogged with propaganda that they can no longer receive or examine ideas with anything approaching mental freedom.

Now go into a college.

Let me begin by quoting a letter that recently appeared in one of the daily college papers. The writer, a college junior, described “professors, pale-faced, eyes glazed—truly hopeless; students dull, tired, yawning, and chafing at the system they are entangled in.” This is his summary of the tone of American college life.

Here is a letter from a college Sophomore:

“There is a certain manner of procedure in practice which effectually prevents the student body from learning history. At the first session of any history class each student is assigned a topic on which to report, and a book to review. One report is taken up at each session until these peter out and then the book reviews are used to fill in time until examinations bring sweet release.

“Each student who reports copies paragraphs from the reference books, puts them all together and reads the finished product in a hurried monotone. The object is to finish the ordeal as quickly as possible and the class, in co-operation, goes into a deep sleep so as not to disturb the speaker. If one interrupts this routine and asks questions, students and teacher are alike aghast. One doesn't receive more information anyway because all the student's knowledge is contained in the paper and there is no recourse but to re-read the paragraph and go on.

“It becomes amusing when a student chooses as references several books of differing points of view. When a paragraph here and there is taken from each one, the result much resembles marble cake, and is as indigestible.

“Perhaps you will understand why next term I study English.”

Many college teachers will retort that this student pictures the worst side of college academic life. I doubt it. The minds of the college students that I meet “feel” as though they had come out of just such a machine.

Recently I sat in a college class in political science where the professor was discussing the question of sovereignty. He explained Hobbs on Sovereignty; Locke on Socereignty; Montaigne on sovereignty. Eventually he dug his way through the academic rockpile and got down to Dicey.

“Let me test the application of Dicey's idea to a type of sovereignty such as that existing in a federal form of government Where does sovereignty rest in the United States?”

“In Wall Street,” replied a student.

The professor's eyelids never trembled; not a glimmer of interest appeared on his face; without displaying even a trace of humor, he lumbered through a heavy explanation of the mechanical workings of the Federal Government.

In another college, where I had a chance to speak to a graduate student group, a young man of twenty, in making an argument to prove the unworkability of Sovietism said:

“In Russia, when a machine is sent into a village, the peasants pull it all apart. One takes a wheel; another takes some bolts and

nuts. That is their idea of property. How can you do anything with such people?”

“How do you get these facts?” I asked him.

“I read them,” he answered.

“And you believe them?”

“Certainly,” he replied.

Obviously he did. He was mentally in the position of a college student who once said to me: “It must be true because it is in the book. If it were not true they would not have printed it.”

The college students that I meet seem to lack any matured sense of reality. They live in a world of mental make-believe, on a hill, far from the actual struggle of life; in a social vacuum, where their dolls and teddy-bears are foot-ball games; pool-tables; frats; teas; hops; drinks; smokes. Their nearest approaches to mental reality come in laboratories where they wrestle with the problems of natural science. In the social field they trick and try with “oughts” and “shoulds”; “rights” and other metaphysical concepts while the great world of struggle surges on about the mausoleums in which their youth is being sacrificed to the necessity of pretending that a dying social order is still in the full bloom of youth and vigor.

Are there exceptional students? Of course.

Are there exceptional teachers? Surely.

But the institutions of higher learning in the United States, with their vast endowments; their magnificent buildings; their huge administrative departments; their elaborate curricula are merely one part of a vast tomb which capitalist imperialism in its declining years, is erecting as the Pharaohs of Egypt built the imposing burial chambers in which their mummified bodies were laid to rest.

## Who Said Colleges Are “Independent” of U. S. Capitalist Imperialism?

Income yielding investments; stocks; bonds; mortgages; notes; real estate, etc., owned by various colleges.

Harvard .....	\$82,039,574
Columbia .....	62,601,349
Yale .....	49,144,159
Chicago .....	38,870,629
Mass. Inst. of Tech. ....	29,293,000
Stanford .....	28,917,532
Duke .....	27,500,000
University of Rochester ..	24,500,000
Johns Hopkins .....	24,132,941
Cornell .....	20,616,709
Princeton .....	17,000,000
University of Texas .....	17,000,000
Oberlin .....	14,222,796
Washington University ..	14,203,197
Northwestern .....	14,130,197

Total “Productive Funds” of all U. S. A. colleges, universities and professional schools as reported by the U. S. Bureau of Education for 1925-1926:

\$975,919,475.

Figures from World Almanac for 1928, pp. 394 and 385.

# A PAGE OF COLLEGE POETRY

## THE RESIGNATION

What's it to you, you blind of understanding?  
How can a school board know a teacher's thoughts?  
I've taught your kids, and done it well for you;  
Why can't you let me be when work is done?  
And work enough it is, too, let me tell you—  
Just you try standing on your feet all day  
And talking till your throat is dry and sore  
And trying to get the stupid ones to see  
What all the bright ones know without the asking,  
(And who can blame the smart ones for their mischief  
If they get through before the dumb ones start?)  
While all the kids keep wiggling like the devil  
Until you think by three o'clock you'll scream.  
No easy job you pay me ninety for!

But I'm not griping. There's a kind of kick  
In teaching them—appealing little things—  
They love you and they aren't afraid to show it;  
And if they know you'll give them a square deal  
They'll give you one; besides, they are alive.  
Three ways they're different from the other folks  
In this cold, godforsaken little town!

I came out here to try to save some money.  
I owed a lot from that last year at college  
And hoped I could go back. I thought I'd stand  
Most anything for just a year. But now  
I have my doubts. The women are the worst.  
I had a date with someone the first week  
I came here. Well, they must have thought  
Such quick work meant no good for any one.  
A teacher shouldn't have much time for men!  
What do they think I am? Lord, I'm no nun!  
I'd like to have kids of my own some time—  
If I didn't like them, why should I be teaching?  
Not that I'm crazy over men around here—  
Rustic, thick-skinned things, pulling old jokes  
And thinking they back Don Juan off the map—  
If they know who he is. They want their money's worth;  
But at least they're friendly, give them half a chance.  
I've got to have some friends—can't be a hermit.  
I didn't mind the Ladies' Aid's sly gossip.  
A teacher is a missionary, I've heard,  
And it's almost as much a kind deed here  
To give the old maids something new to talk about  
As it is to teach the kids new games to play.

I stood it four whole months without complaining,  
But when Fred Carr drove over here to see me—  
A real man, if a real man ever lived—  
Because he looked like somebody, and drove  
A pretty car, and we went out to spend  
All Sunday in the country—nearer God  
Than your damp, stuffy, nose churches—  
And didn't get back home till almost midnight—  
Well, then—I won't repeat what the Teacherage matron said.  
"The voice of the community"—"the children's morals!"  
Poor kids. They may amount to something yet  
In spite of you. I rather hate to leave them.  
Perhaps it's part my fault. I'm not too tactful,  
Although I've tried. You'd better get  
Another teacher—one who's older, maybe.  
I'm going back to town. Eighteen a week,  
Chained to a filing case, and life costs more;  
But after five o'clock I'm free to live.  
So I resign. I wish you better luck  
With whomever you hire to take my place.

I hope she gives the kids a decent chance!

MIRIAM BROWN.

## CHEMISTRY CLASS

The logs are booming. I  
sit here and study while  
idle chatter about the  
Bessemer Process makes  
a dull buzz and whirl. My  
mind grinds on  
mechanically.  
Such Ape Chatter shall  
not protect the lecturer  
against the world some day.  
For sentence after sentence  
enters the maw of my  
eyes and will be  
cast forth in hard,  
glittering, chaste  
form that cannot be broken,  
that will bend his  
mind as tho it were  
mere iron.

CONRAD KOMOROWSKI.

## CLASSROOM

A teacher teaches.  
A teacher sits at a desk and faces fifty students.  
Fifty students sit in one-arm lunch chairs and face a teacher.  
Fifty chairs, fifty faces face a desk.  
Fifty one-arm lunch chairs think of lunch.  
What'll it be to-day? Something in a roll with mustard and picallil?  
English—French—mathematics with mustard and picallili?

A teacher talks.  
Words come out of his mouth and hang in the air like a balloon of  
words in a comic strip.  
A windbag, a stomach with a desk on the end of it.  
Wind from a stomach.  
Fifty stomachs face a stomach.  
It would be better if fifty pairs of buttocks faced another pair of  
buttocks.

The balloons break away and float over the room,  
Fifty balloons—toy balloons—all colors—  
An Italian selling toy-balloons.  
Fifty faces stick fifty pins into fifty balloons and make fifty pops  
like fifty laughs.  
The windbag puffs harder and harder and gets redder and redder  
in the face,  
Blowing up new balloons.  
Fifty balloons break away each time and fifty faces pop fifty  
laughs.

How many brought their books to-day?  
Page page page page page what is the page?  
Fumble mumble jumble rumble of wind in a stomach.  
This is beautiful? How many think it is beautiful?  
Is there any question? Is there any answer?  
Sender requests an answer. Tick-tick-tick-tick.  
Next time and next time and next time.  
Page to page to page to page, face to face to buttock to buttock.

Windbag grows tired of blowing, bellowing and belly-aching,  
pumping the bellows.  
Can't hear himself talk for the steady popping.  
Fifty laughs of buttock-faces taking the wind out of a desk-stomach.  
Balloon-face collapses and sags into open book.  
Balloon-stomach swells and swells and nearly bursts when—  
Brrrrnnng! the bell . . . .  
A closed book floats out of the room.  
Fifty faces, fifty pairs of buttocks leave fifty one-arm lunch chairs  
staring at an empty desk.

B. A. BOTKIN.

# A MAN IN A TRAP

(from a Book of East Side Memoirs)

By MICHAEL GOLD

Why did I come to America?" asked my father of himself gravely, as he twisted and untwisted his moustache in the darkness. "I will tell you why; it was because of envy of my dirty thief of a cousin, that Sam Kravitz, may his nose be eaten by the pox.

"All this time while I was disgracing my family, Sam had gone to America, and was making his fortune. Letters came from him, and were read throughout our village. Sam, in about two short years, already owned his own factory for making suspender ends. He sent us his picture. It was marvelled at by everyone. Our Sam no longer wore a fur cap, a long Jewish coat and peasant boots. No! he wore a fine gentleman's suit, a white collar like a doctor, store shoes and a beautiful round hat called a derby hat.

"He suddenly looked so fat and rich, this beggarly cobbler's son! I tell you, my liver burned with envy when I heard my father and mother praise my cousin Sam. I knew I was better than him in every way, and it hurt me. I said to my father: Give me money. Let me go at once to America to redeem myself. I will make more money than Sam, I am smarter than he is. You will see!

"My mother did not want me to go. But my father was weary of my many misfortunes, and he gave me the money for the trip. So I came to America. It was the greatest mistake I ever made in my life.

"One should not do things through envy. There is a story in the Talmud that illustrates this. Once there was a man who owned a beautiful dog and a big ugly jackass. Every night while eating his supper the man would take the dog on his lap and feed it and stroke its head affectionately. The dog would kiss him and lick his face. The jackass watched this for a time, and became envious. So one night at supper time he entered the house and sat himself on the man's lap, too. He licked the man's face with his rough tongue, and embraced him affectionately with his legs.

"But the man did not stroke the jackass' hand in return, or feed him choice food. No, the man was very angry. He took a stick and beat the surprised jackass and chased him out of the house. The moral of this is, do not envy other people's good luck."

## A LAND OF FUN

"But, children, I am not discouraged. I will make a great deal of money some day. I am a serious married man now and no greenhorn. But then I was still a foolish boy, and though I left Roumania with great plans in my head, in my heart a foolish voice was saying: America is a land of fun.

"I was not serious. But how full I was of all the Baba stories that were told in my village about America! In America, we believed, people dug under the streets and found gold anywhere. In America, the poorest ragpicker lived better than a Roumanian millionaire.

"I had seen two pictures of America. They were shown in the window of a store that sold Singer Sewing Machines in our village. One picture had in it the tallest building I had ever seen. It was called a skyscraper and at the bottom of it, walked the proud Americans. The men wore derby hats and had fine moustaches and gold watchchains. The women wore silks and satins, and had proud faces like queens. Not a single poor man or woman was there; everyone was rich.

"The other picture was of Niagara Falls. You have seen this picture on postcards; with Indians and cowboys on horses, who look at a rainbow shining over the water.

"I tell you, I wanted to get to America as fast as I could, so that I might look at the skyscrapers and the Niagara Falls rainbow and wear a derby hat.

"In my family were about 75 relatives. All came to see me leave Roumania. There was much crying. But I was happy, because I thought I was going to a land of fun.

"The last thing my mother did, was to give me my cousin's address in New York, and say: Go to Sam. He will help you in the strange land.

"But I made up my mind I would die first rather than ask Sam for help.

## THE SPRING BED

"Well, for eleven days our boat rocked on the ocean. I was sick, but I wrote out a play called the Robbers of Schiller and dreamed of America.

"They gave us herring and potatoes to eat. The bread was like clay. And the boat stank like a big watercloset. But I was happy.

"I joked all the way. One night all of us young immigrants held a singing party. One young Roumanian had an accordion. We became good friends, because both of us were the happiest people on the boat.

"He was coming to a rich uncle, a cigarmaker who owned a big business, he said. When he learned I had no relatives in America, he asked me to live at his uncle's with him. I agreed because I liked this boy.

"Nu, how shall I tell how glad we were when after eleven days on the empty ocean, we saw the buildings of New York?

"It looked so nice and happy, this city, standing on end like a child's toys and blocks. It looked like a land of fun, a game waiting for me to play.

"And in Ellis Island, where they kept us over night, I slept on a springbed that had no mattress, pillow or blankets. I was such a greenhorn I had never seen a spring before, and so I thought it was wonderful, and bounced up and down on it for fun.

"It was there someone taught me my first American words. All night my friend Yossel and I bounced up and down on the springs and repeated these funny words to each other.

"Potato, he would yell at me and laugh. Tomato, I would answer him, and laugh. Match, he would say. All right, I would answer. Match, all right, go to hell, potato, until everyone was angry at us, the way we kept them awake with our laughing and yelling.

"In the morning his uncle came for us and took us in a horsecar.

"I tell you, my eyes were busy on that ride through the streets. I was looking for the American fun.

## WHEN DOES IT START?

"Nu, I will not mention how bad I felt when I saw the cigarmaker uncle's home. It was just a big dirty dark room in the back of the cigar store where he made and sold cigars. He, his wife and four children lived in that one room.

"He was not glad to have me there, but he spread newspapers on the floor, and Yossel and I slept on them.

"What does it matter, I thought, this is not America. Tomorrow morning I will go out in the streets, and see the real American fun.

## THE ELEVATED

"The next morning Yossel and I took a long walk. That we might not be lost, I remember, we fixed in our minds the big gold tooth of a dentist that hung near the cigar shop.

"We walked and walked. Nu, I will not tell you what we saw, because you see it every day. We saw the East Side. To me it was a strange sight. I could not help wondering, where are all the people running? What is happening? And why are they so serious? When does the fun start?

"We came to Allen street, under the elevated. To show you what a greenhorn I was, I fell in love with the elevated train. I had never seen anything like it in Roumania.

"I was such a greenhorn I believed the elevated train travelled all over America, to Niagara Falls and other places. We rode up and down on it all day.

"I had some money left. I bought two fine derby hats from a pushcart; one for Yossel, and one for me. They were a little big, but how proud we felt.

"No one wears derby hats in Roumania. Both of us had pictures taken in the American fun-hats to send to our parents.

## WHEN DOES IT START?

"This went on for two weeks. Then all my money was gone. So the cigar-maker told me I should find a job and move out from his home. So I found a job for \$5 a month in a grocery store. I lived over the store, I rose at 5 o'clock, and went to bed at 12 in the night. My feet became large and red with standing all day. The grocery-man, may the worms find him, gave me nothing to eat

but dry bread, old cheese, pickles and other groceries. I soon became sick and left that job.

"For a week I sat in Hester Park without a bite of food. And I looked around me, but was not unhappy. Because I tell you, I was such a greenhorn, that I still thought fun would start, and I was waiting for it.

"One night, after sleeping on the bench, I was hungry in the morning and I decided to look for my rich cousin. I hated to do this, but was weak with fasting. So I came into my cousin's shop. To hide my shame I laughed out loud.

"Look, Sam, I am here, I have just come off the boat, and am ready to make my fortune.

"So my cousin Sam gave me a job in his factory. He paid me 25 cents a day.

"He had three other men working for him. He worked himself. He looked sick and sharp and poor, not at all like the picture he had sent back to Roumania.

#### LAND OF HURRY UP

"Nu, so your father worked. I got over my greenhorn idea that there was nothing but fun in America. I learned to work like everyone else. I grew thin as my cousin.

"Soon I came to understand it was not a land of fun. It was a Land of Hurry-Up. There was no gold to be dug in the streets here. Derbies were not fun-hats for holidays. They were work-hats. Nu, so I worked! with my hands, my liver and sides! I worked!

"My cousin Sam had fallen into a good trade. With his machines he manufactured the cotton ends of suspenders. These ends are made of cotton, and are very important to a suspender. It is these ends that fasten to the buttons, and hold up the pants.

"Without these ends there could be no suspenders, and no one could hold up his pants.

"Yes, it was a good trade, and a necessary one. There was much money to be made, I saw that at once.

"But my cousin Sam was not a good business man. He had no head for figures, and his face was like vinegar. None of his customers liked him.

"Gradually, he let me go out and find business for him. I was very good for this. Most of the big suspender shops were owned by Roumanians who had known my father. They greeted me like a relative. I drank wine with them, and passed jokes. So they gave me their orders for suspender ends.

"So one day, seeing how I built up the business, Sam said: You shall be my partner. We are making a great deal of money. Leave the machine, Meyer. I will take care of the inside shop work. You go out every day, and joke with our customers and bring in the orders.

"So we were partners. I was very happy. I earned as much as thirty dollars a week; I was at last a success.

"So a match-maker came, and said I ought to marry. So I met your momma and saw that she was a kind and hard-working woman, and I decided to marry and have children.

"So this was done.

#### NIAGARA FALLS

"It was here I made the greatest mistake of my life.

"Always I had wanted to see that big water with the rainbow and Indians called Niagara Falls.

"So I took your momma there when we married. I spent a month's wages on the trip. I showed America to your momma. We enjoyed ourselves.

"In a week we came back. I went to the shop the next morning but could not find it. It had vanished. I could not find Sam. He had stolen the shop.

"I searched and searched, and my heart was swollen like a sponge with hate. I was ready to kill my cousin Sam.

"So one day I found him and the shop. I shouted at him, Thief, what have you done? He laughed. He showed me a paper from a lawyer proving that the shop was his. All my work had been for nothing. It had only made Sam rich.

"What could I do? So in my hate I hit him with my fist and made his nose bleed. He ran into the street, yelling for a policeman. I ran after him with a stick, and beat him some more. But what good could it do? The shop was really his and I was left a pauper.

"So now, I must work as a house-painter. I must work for another man, I am not my own master now. I am a man in a trap.

"But I am not defeated. I am a man with a strong will. I will

yet have another shop. All I need is \$300; and I will find this \$300 somehow.

"Yes! Yes! I will show my cousin yet! I will show the world how I can run a suspender ends shop!

"I will have no partners this time. I will work alone. I will show your mother how a man makes his fortune in America! Look at Nathan Straus! Look at Otto Kahn! They peddled shoe-laces when they first came here. I have had a better start, and should go further than them!

"I am certain to be rich! I will make a school teacher out of you, Esther! You will dress in a fine waist and a pompadour and be a teacher. Isn't that wonderful, Esther?"

"Yes, Poppa."

"And you, Mikey, will be a doctor! You will be what I should have been if I had kissed the priest's hand. It is a great thing to be a Doctor. It is better to have learning than to have money. I will earn the money, Mikey, and make you a Doctor! How do you like that? Will you do it?"

"Yes, Poppa," I said sleepily.



Mural by Diego Rivera—Photo by Tina Modotti

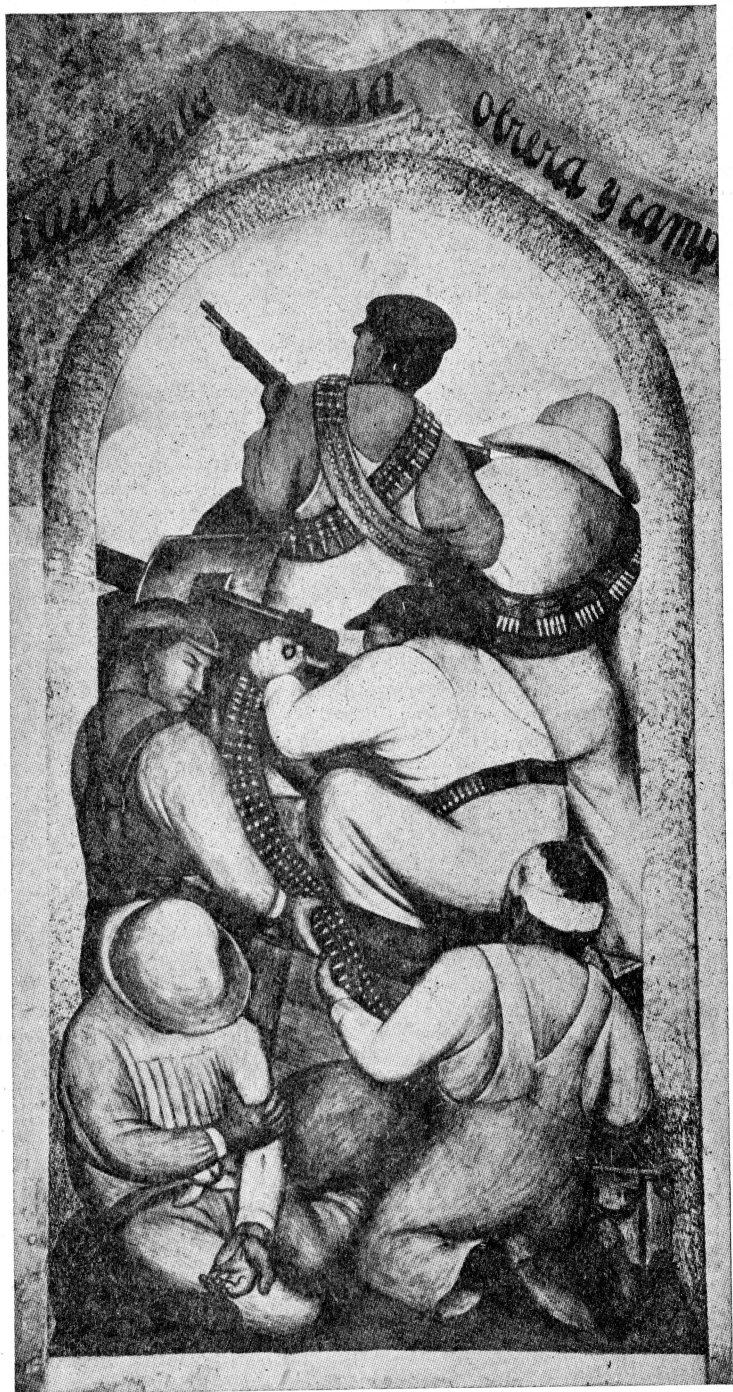
## ON THE BARRICADES



*Mural by Diego Rivera—Photo by Tina Modotti*

## **ON THE BARRICADES**





*Mural by Diego Rivera—Photo by Tina Modotti*

## **ON THE BARRICADES**

# MEXICO IN REVOLUTION

By CARL RAMBURG

The revolt which has broken out in Mexico is not of the comic opera variety. It is a determined struggle on the part of the landed proprietors, the clericals and a number of professional militarists against a government which has derived its strength primarily from native industrialists and American capitalism. No social or political group has been able to maintain a position of benevolent neutrality in this basic struggle.

The armed clash between these contending groups was no surprise. Close observers of the situation had predicted it soon after Obregon's assassination. The sixth national Congress of the Mexican Communist Party which met early in February declared that the militarists of the northern states and the landed proprietors were preparing for an upheaval. The congress actually planned a definite program for action in such an eventuality. This was not prophecy. It was a logical inference from the centrifugal drive which split the Obregonista forces and sent them whirling into new groupings on the death of Obregon.

In a general way the assassination of Obregon split the Obregon camp into the militarists of the north, who derived their strength from the feudal landed aristocracy, and the bureaucratic forces in control of the government, who had the support of the native industrialists, a considerable section of the peasants and the United States. The militarists of the north are allied with a number of politicians who have considerable influence over large numbers of peasants. The outstanding political leader of the movement, perhaps, is Gilberto Valenzuela, former Minister of the Interior and recently ambassador to England. Valenzuela is definitely anti-labor. He left the Calles cabinet early in the administration because Calles insisted on imposing a Labor Party candidate in the state of Mexico. In a statement issued immediately prior to the outbreak of the revolt, Valenzuela displayed a marked friendliness to the Catholic church. Supporting Valenzuela are the agrarian leaders Aurelio Manrique and Soto y Gama, who were recently expelled from the National Peasants League. Both Manrique and Soto y Gama opposed the northern militarists in the first realignment of forces following the death of Obregon; later, however, they joined the militarists and large landowners, dissatisfied with the Calles-Gil land policies, in supporting Valenzuela.

Another political group which seems to be connected with the revolt is the even more reactionary Anti-Reelection group, which last year backed Gomez and Serrano. The leader of this group is Antonio Villareal, former minister of Agriculture under Obregon. Villareal claims some peasant following, including the De la Huerta elements.

The mass of peasantry, however, is undoubtedly hostile to the revolt. There are at the present time two major agrarian organizations in Mexico—the National Agrarian Party and the left wing National Peasants League. The expulsion of Aurelio Manrique and Soto y Gama indicate the refusal of the Agrarian Party to be linked with the reactionary revolt against the present government. The Party was formed by Soto y Gama in 1920 shortly after Obregon came into power. In spite of its being used by various professional politicians for purely personal ends, it remained for some time the one distinctive national peasant organization. Its conservatism, however, led to the growth of independent state organizations, more radical in aim. By 1926, the independent state organizations were loosely federated into the National Peasants League, which has steadily grown in numbers and influence. The League is affiliated with the Red Peasants International and has a membership of about 300,000. The program adopted at the recent convention of the League demands the abolition of the present form of the Mexican government and the creation of workers and peasants soviets. The League has united with the left wing trade unions and put forward a presidential candidate of its own, General Pedro V. Rodriguez Triana, the peasant leader of northern Mexico, who for ten years was an officer in the armies of Villa and Zapata. The left wing bloc is critical of the Calles-Gil regime. In the present situation, it is taking measures to protect its organization and advance its position. Diego Rivera,

well-known Communist artist speaking for the bloc, recently denounced the revolt as "frankly reactionary."

The mass of workers is undoubtedly hostile to the revolt. In spite of its recent quarrels with Portes Gil, it is extremely doubtful whether the leadership of the conservative CROM would aid the rebels, while the left wing federation, known as the Unitarian Syndicalist Confederation would take a stand similar to that of the National Peasants League.

Recently CROM lost the official favor in which it basked in the first years of its existence. The organization was formed in 1919 by Luis Morones and Ricardo Trevino, under the patronage of President Venustiano Carranza, as a foil to the Syndicalist Casa del Obrero Mundial which had been declared an outlaw organization and whose leaders had been arrested for treason. The CROM, however, promptly split with Carranza and the leaders formed the Mexican Labor Party to support the candidacy of Obregon. After Obregon's victory, Morones was awarded the management of the National Munitions Works with a budget of \$15,000,000 a year. With the election of Calles in 1924, he was promoted to the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Labor. The municipal administration of Mexico City, various governorships and seats in the Chamber and Senate were captured by the Mexican Labor Party. The first two years of Calles' administration marked the heyday of CROM and the Labor Party. Since then they have steadily declined. Gradually the CROM was deserted by Calles; its self-advertised attempts to organize the peasants were dismal failures. Corruption crept into the leadership. Maladministration, embezzlement of union funds, browbeating tactics toward independent unions, the breaking of the railway strike called by the Independent Transport Confederation—all these led to the disintegration of CROM.

Politically, too, the CROM officialdom was fishing in troubled waters. Morones made a speech attacking Obregon which brought prompt counter-attacks. The labor party lost control of the municipal administration of the capital and of state governorships. Today the only Labor governor on the scene is that of the state of Zacatecas—and his position is precarious.

In the mean time the independent unions, steadily growing in strength, have formed a new federation, which already has a membership of 120,000. Closely linked with it is the National Peasants League. The left wing labor federation includes most of the elements independent of CROM and a few organizations which split away from CROM as a result of the Morones rift with Obregon.

No estimate of political forces in Mexico is complete without consideration of American and British imperialism. It is almost axiomatic that every Mexican revolt is financed from the outside. The Calles-Gil regime undoubtedly has the support of the Hoover administration at the present time. The Standard Oil interests are satisfied with the new oil laws and Morrow appears to be making an arrangement for the payment of the Mexican debt that is satisfactory to the House of Morgan. It is logical, therefore, that Hoover should arrange for the shipment of 10,000 Enfield rifles to the Mexican government and lift the embargo on commercial planes. It is important to note, however, that although the Standard Oil Company is highly gratified with the recent Mexican oil decisions, the Doheny interests are not. Mexico has never recognized most of Doheny's claims and Doheny has a good deal to gain by the overthrow of the Portes Gil government. The *Wall Street Journal*, which has always shown partiality towards the Doheny interests, has sharply criticized Hoover's Mexican policy. Whether or not Doheny and certain American mining interests which hold large properties in the states where the revolt broke out, have had anything to do with the revolt remains to be seen.

That British capitalists may have had their finger in the pie is also within the realm of possibility; but to date there has been no evidence whatever to give weight to such a hypothesis.

# CHICAGO IDYLL

By E. MERRILL ROOT

*A knife within his hand he stood  
And struck his blow by rote:  
All day, for six days in the week,  
He waded blood, and smote  
Again . . . again . . . his knife into  
A tied hog's squealing throat.*

*Bare to the waist, with clot and clog  
Of steaming sweat and blood,  
He watched the line of chain-caught hogs  
Flow by in screaming flood;  
And slit their red life out, that caked  
His shoes like crimson mud.*

*Strange flies within an iron web,  
The writhing hogs clicked by—  
One after one, in clockwork hell,  
Across a plaster sky—  
Their blood-shot, little, bulging eyes  
Aware that they must die.*

*One hind leg noosed within a loop  
Of chain, head down they hung;  
They writhed and squealed, they squealed and writhed,  
As down the room they swung,  
Their dump snouts wrinkling at the smell  
Of blood from slit throats flung . . .*

*Of blood from throats wherein he thrust  
His blade like frozen fire . . .  
He slit the soft and heavy flesh  
All day, and did not tire—  
A wooden executioner  
Whose arms were twitched by wire.*

*He thrust the blade into their flesh  
And when he drew it out  
The life came with it, choked and thick  
As from a gutter-spout;  
Screams spattered into gasps, his hands  
Were red with froth and gout . . .*

*Thus for ten bloody years he stood  
And slaughtered hogs by rote,  
Ten years—ten crimson stolid years—  
He waded blood, and smote  
(Each day for six days in the week)  
His blade into a throat.*

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*And then one day something clicked  
Within his heavy brain,  
The life that is not a machine,  
From every sullen vein  
And artery, rose to wreak abroad  
On others its own pain.*

*The clockwork nightmare flood of hogs  
Still clicked its shrieking way;  
The river of blood dashed on the stones  
Its steaming froth and spray,  
The slaughtering went on, but he  
Took ghastly holiday.*

*He stood beside a struggling hog—  
His knife was at its neck;  
But there the razor-whetted blade  
Found strange and sudden check,  
And the tied hog went squealing by,  
Its throat without a fleck.*

*He stood, the knife within his hand,  
He stood and seemed to brood;  
And then he turned—still knife in hand—  
From death's mere interlude . . .  
And his knife (still hot with blood of hogs)  
Found fit vicissitude.*

*He thrust it with a practised ease  
And a swift blow's soft jar  
Straight thru a fellow-workman's throat  
And slit the jugular  
And watched him sob his red life out  
In ways familiar.*

*Then knife in hand he ran amok . . .  
Slit, slit . . . before they knew,  
Men felt the hot steel in their flesh,  
And then the blood was thru . . .  
And then they stiffened on the floor—  
Heads hideously askew . . .*

*Before the dazed and cursing men  
Could scatter from his rush,  
He struck three times and from three throats  
He saw the hot life gush . . .  
And then an axe beat in his skull  
Against the brain's grey plush . . .*

*Even in that place of blood and doom,  
Where death was a cliché,  
Men turned aside—and 'Jesus Christ!'  
Was all that they could say.  
And then the hogs moved on once more  
Upon their screaming way.*

## RAG-BAG

*My mind is a rag-bag tonight,  
My songs are a multicolored wad  
Of snarled and twisted ends.*

*For a long time  
I've been storing them away  
In the secret crannies of my brain,  
Hoping for a few idle hours  
That I might weave them into song.*

*But toil,  
The bread and butter dance of life,  
So thoroughly absorbs me,  
Leaving but a few tired hours  
Between the day's work and the bed,  
That now, my songs are but a jangle  
Of raucous sounds and colors.*

*O, my mind is a rag-bag tonight,  
My songs are a multicolored wad  
Of snarled and twisted ends.*

JIM WATERS



## DEATH OF A MINER

Drawn By Wm. Siegel

# Two Poems by Norman McLeod

### CATTLE-TOWN

*sprawling like a drunk sailor  
in a maritime saloon: cattle town  
gone wrong, weep sister  
a cattle rutting hellshotted town  
gone wrong, the santa fe reeking with  
capitalism and smug cigars invaded  
after the drouth  
they built hotels respectable,  
eating houses representable  
and telegraph wires buzzed where only  
roundup bellowings challenged  
the waste  
before america came with money,  
wild west stories.  
when the cattle towns went wrong.*

### COWPUNCHING BOOTLEGGERS

*a population of seventeen fat women,  
scrawny children and bleary blue-eyed  
old time cattlemen on the sicklist  
out of a job, cattle and glory,  
but they have consolate  
where a bootlegger makes little money  
a goddam good whiskey for home consumption.  
bill trades with jim  
and luther with tom:  
nobody likes his own whiskey, at least  
not gentlemen cowpunchers  
out of a job.  
the painted desert hides more stills,  
navajos, dead white men  
and goodinjuns, agents  
and who knows a better flyaway  
by night.*



**DEATH OF A MINER**

*Drawn By Wm. Siegel*



**DEATH OF A MINER**

*Drawn By Wm. Siegel*

# FLIVVER TRAMPS

By PAUL PETERS

Scarface Al Capone came to Los Angeles last winter and made himself at home. The newspapers broke the news to the police. The police didn't know what to do about it at first! but when public opinion became too hot, they suggested politely that Scarface might move to Tiajuana and enjoy the races. Scarface thought it over. In due time he moved.

Me the police treated differently. But then I was only a working stiff without friends or money or a job; whereas Scarface is a crack gunman and knows the most distinguished crooks of the nation and has cleaned up a cold million on moonshine. You can see that the police would treat us differently.

They kept me in jail all night. "Choose between 90 days in jail or leaving town in 24 hours," said the judge. So I left town. They are not lenient with you for the crime of poverty in Los Angeles. You fare better if you're a gunman.

I left the city as a poor man travels, on the highway. Zoom, roared the cars as they passed me by in streaks of gloss and nickle. Up the coast, over the mountains, through the valley—467 miles to San Francisco. I had gone ten. My feet were sore. Sweat oozed out of my hat. Dust formed mud with sweat and caked my weary body. I knew there were breadlines in San Francisco, so acute was unemployment. Imagine what chance I had of finding a job, a stranger, travel-stained, almost broke. But that did not trouble anybody in Los Angeles. The main thing was to get rid of jobless men like me. Our presence annoyed the tourists. Where we went or what the next town did to us, how in hell was that any of Los Angeles' business? San Francisco could pass the buck to Portland, Portland to Seattle....

Before and behind me the road was dotted with plodding black figures. I was one of an army. Glum, bitter, I fell in line.

For hours I stood on that corner, waving at cars, shouting, whistling. Not one slowed up. I would gaze for a moment into a pair of cold, set eyes: then I was swallowed up in dust and the stink of gasoline fumes. The women were the worst. They would glare at you as if you were a lump of meat. How they loathed you out of their plate-glass rolling palaces, out of their silks and their cool complexions. "Get out of my sight," said their look. "Go bury yourself. You are foul to my eyes. You make us feel uncomfortable. You are a mangy cur. You should be carted to a pound and chloroformed."

A light delivery truck drew up at the curb and a small-town face leaned out. "Hey you! You can't wave at cars like that in this town. Get the hell out of here."

"Who says so?" I retorted.

"I'm the constable here. Now get out, damn quick, or we know what to do with tramps like you."

I walked a square and sat down on the curb. I had a mad desire to jump on running boards, to pound my fist on sneering noses, to scream obscene curses. "Isn't it enough that you drive us out of your cities, you pigs! Must you choke us off your highways too? You fat nickle-plated swine!"

Then the flivver tramps came along, a man, a woman, and three small children. Their rickety old Ford was held together with rope and wire. It bulged and spilled over with blankets, washboards, washtubs full of clothes, paper packages, boxes of tinpans and cups, rusty tools, worthless tires. A junkshop on wheels.

"Hop in," cried a friendly voice. "Where you goin'?"

"Frisco."

"Us too." We chugged out into the black, arid highway.

I travelled with the flivver tramps four days. We were sorely cramped. Most of the time I held one of the kids on my lap. All of them were wet and dirty and they stank. I didn't mind, I knew it costs money to be clean on the road, and the flivver tramps were poor, desperately poor. They had been on the road eleven months. Starting from Indiana, they had drifted down to Tennessee, through Arkansas into Texas, then west across the Mojave desert and up

the coast. You had only to look at the kids and see that often they had hungered.

We did not take life too seriously. We sang, we told jokes, we swiped fruit from orchards, I spun yarns for the kids. But we made rotten time. We were always running out of gasoline. Every fifteen miles we had a blow-out or a break-down. Then the man and I would march to the nearest town, borrow tools on a deposit and pick up cast-off parts from garage scrap heaps. We made some money too, haywiring broken parts in gib cars stalled along the road, siphoning out a gallon of gas for them—when we weren't begging for some ourselves. You soon learn to overlook the unctious with which tourists and drummers slip a dollar or two into your hand.

The Old Man, as his wife called him (though he surely wasn't over 32,) had been a mechanic in a garage in Muncie. One day a car slipped off a jack and shoved his ribs half through his lungs. They patched up his ribs more or less, but his lungs were never the same. When months later he crawled out of bed, all his starch was gone. His hair had grown gray. His eyes had become watery. His face had assumed an absent sort of smile. He tried for a time to get a clinch on his old job, but he didn't have the strength any more, the job shook him off. He tried other jobs, but jobs were hard to get, harder to keep. Who wants the starchless leftover of a man with pussy lungs? He gave up trying. He packed his family into an old car and became a drifter, working a week here and there, camping out, eating or fasting: a flivver tramp, sweet and simple—and whipped to a pulp.

It was the Old Woman from whom I got most of this, though she did not talk much. At twilight, when the kids became sleepy and cross, we would turn into a tourist camp in a clump of trees down



Woodcut by Gan Kolski

**THE PARASITE**



*Woodcut by Gan Kolski*

## **THE PARASITE**



a hollow, and rent a shack for a dollar. Then I would help the Old Woman strip the car of tinpans and blankets, haul wood for the fire, carry water, boil it, prepare the grub. Grub consisted mainly of dandelion greens, potatoes, bread, chicory, maybe an orange for the kids. I paid them a quarter a meal. If we had a day rich in stalled cars the Old Man and I would hike into the village and haggle with the Chinese grocer over half a dozen eggs or a can of pork and beans. On the way back, through the highland night, he would gab in a quiet, drawling, incoherent way: the war, the life on the road, the guy stalled near Albuquerque who handed him a twenty dollar bill, the new start he was going to make in Frisco. Man, this time luck was going to come his way. Luck was always just around the corner, always just out of reach. But Frisco, Frisco would be different. In Frisco he was going to grab luck by the "britches."

I used to listen to him silently, plodding wind-burned and tired at his side, sick at heart with pity. I used to think: "Yah, a fine system. You smash a man up. You tear the heart and guts out of him. Then you turn him out on the road like a broken old nag. A hell of a fine system."

After supper we pulled off the top layers of clothes from the kids and laid them, already half asleep, in a row across the bed. Then while she slopped up the tin plates, the Old Woman would talk a little. I had to piece her story together, filling in the gaps myself. There was no bitterness in her. She was a large strong woman, serene and stolid. Her hair was coarse and wind-blown, her face rough-skinned, her hands red and heavy. She made you think of one of those motionless peasant women of Millet. But sometimes she would break into a slow furious fire; and then suddenly you knew that under the placidity of her face were fears, grudges, anger, revolt. The Old Man was whipped, but the Old Woman still had fight.

"I guess he won't never settle down," she told me once when the Old Man left the shack. "First in Memphis, then it was Little Rock, then El Paso, then Los Angeles. Now he keeps sayin' Frisco, Frisco. But he ain't a-goin' to stay there neither. I ain't a-blamin' him. It don't make no difference for me. But the kids, that ain't no way to raise kids. It aint right for the kids."

They would squeeze into bed with all their clothes on, beside the kids. I slept outside, jack-knifed in the rear seat of the car.

The last night was so cold and foggy that I had to rent a separate shack. I heaped the stove with wood till its belly was blistered red and the pipe spat sparks. Then I huddled under newspapers on the bare yellowed mattress.

I sat up with a jerk out of a half-sleep. I could hear the door-knob gritting; the hinges squealed faintly; then the door was closed again. Some one was standing in the room. After a moment of bewilderment and fear, I saw that it was the Old Woman. She took a step toward the bed, and I got up.

"The Old Man sent me over," she said slowly. "He thought mebbe you'd want a bed-mate."

Still dazed, I answered: "Sure. There's lots of room over here. Send him over."

She seemed to hesitate. I can still remember her face, broad and red in the glow of the stove. But now she was smiling faintly; and in her smile there was both shame and pain.

"No, you don't understand," she answered simply. "The Old Man thought mebbe I could earn a couple of dollars by stayin' with you a while, as a bed-mate. We aint got no more money."

I had about four dollars in my pocket. I counted out two and pressed them into her hand. I couldn't look at her face. I could only see her hands holding the money out stiff before her.

For hours I crouched over the stove, cold and despondent.

All the next day, driving down the peninsula into Frisco, the Old Man gabbed at me in his incoherent way. The Old Woman did not talk at all. We avoided each other's eyes. Sometimes I felt that she was studying my face. Once our eyes met, and in hers shone an intense sort of dumb animal kindness for me. We both smiled sheepishly and looked away.

Now we were rolling through the outskirts of the city. Big, flashy motorcars whizzed by. "God, aint that swell," cried the Old Man, laughing like a child. "Cheer up, Old Woman. This hyer 's where we stop—in the Golden West."

It was night when we drew up on a bright corner of Market Street. They didn't know where to spend the night, and I could help them no longer. I said goodbye and followed down a side-street in search of a flophouse.

Night fog swirled around me. The Golden West, I thought bitterly....

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# BOOKS

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*transition stories*, edited by Eugene Jolas and Robert Sage. Walter V. McKee. \$2.50.

Although *transition stories* contains several sketches of extraordinary literary importance, the book is valuable chiefly, I believe, because it records the ferment in contemporary letters that may some day result in a deep and passionate renaissance in American literature.

*transition* has become too well known (because of the sneers of newspaper "wits") to require elaborate description. I wish merely to recall the fact that *transition* is the lineal descendent of the "little" magazines that have played so fundamental a role in the creation of a modern literature. I refer to such magazines as *The Little Review*, *Broom*, *Others*, *Secession* and *S4N*. It is therefore not to be disregarded in spite of an occasional unintelligibility. Those who jeered at Anderson, Joyce, Eliot and Pound a decade ago have lived to regret that fact.

The traditions of the older quarterlies are carried on by *transition*. It is looking for the new, the experimental, the revolutionary, the emerging in art, and unlike *The Dial*, it is willing to take a chance. Because of this willingness to gamble, it often publishes the absurd, idiotic posturings of aesthetic charlatans. And because of this attitude, it also publishes some of the most vital prose in America. The experimenter must always make mistakes, but it is only from him that we can expect progress and discovery.

The aims of *transition* are admirably set forth by its editor, Eugene Jolas, in the introduction to this collection. He writes: "The tendency in modern life is toward universalism or collectivism. Mechanical science is producing a condition which is the triumph of rationalistic categories through the destruction of time and space . . . Sociologically speaking, it is conceivable that the machine will make it possible for humanity in the future to devote more time to pure laziness, to the beauty of the dream, when once the capitalistic hierarchy has been vanquished by the masses themselves. For this is the chief fault of the rule of the machine as obtaining now in capitalistic countries: it is exploited for the benefit of the few, while the majority employing its appendages for economic facilities become interested primarily in the superficial aspects of bourgeois comfort . . . It is therefore important for the writer, not to reflect his time in a photographic sense, but to help first in the struggle for the eternal autonomy of the spirit, and then to work for the mass-spirit that will continue to have its roots in variation.

"We are no longer interested in the bourgeois forms of literature. We are against the æsthetic chaos which, using decadent dogmas, continues to weigh upon our minds. We demand a sense of adventure that leads the individual towards the collective beauty, that is for every movement tending to demolish the current ideology, that seeks again the root of life in an impulse towards simplicity."

In this statement one observes escapist poetry and the emotions of a mystic, while at the same time evincing a sincerely rebellious understanding of the forces which are degrading art and rendering the artist impotent today. The two tendencies obviously reflect the conflict that must disturb every sensitive intellectual who is still under the influence of old ideologies but conscious of the economic and social movements that are transforming our environment. The mysticism may be ignored. The awareness of "chaos" is significant. There is a ferment. It is still submerged beneath

"bourgeois forms of literature," but it must inevitably arise to the surface.

The collection of stories, taken from past issues of *transition*, incorporates the two tendencies. The strain of mysticism runs through many of the contributions, but the sardonic revolt in Kurt Schwitters' "Revolution" and Murray Godwin's "A Day in the Life of a Robot" is an equal and opposite force. The two negate each other. The result is something resembling futility, but at least it is not reaction, it is not acceptance, it is not the ugly decadent cynicism of the boulevard aesthete. To the uninitiated reader, much of *transition* stories will seem incomprehensible. At best, it makes difficult reading. For those, however, who seek the signs of change, the volume is exciting. And for those who wish to enter the laboratory in which the literature of the future is being distilled, I can recommend nothing better.

BERNARD SMITH.

## THE KRASSIN

*The Krassin*, by Maurice Parijanine. The Macaulay Co. \$2.50.

Parijanine, is a member of the staff of the French Communist daily, L'Humanite. "A French comrade" the Krassin sailors call him. From the journal of Martin Lehman, a Lettish electrician aboard the Krassin, and from the dispatches of Chpanov, correspondent for one of the Moscow papers, he has unwound the thread of his story. But the manner of unwinding is expert journalism, swift, gripping,—as the rescue nears, thrilling, and as the facts begin to come to light, horrifying.

The picture of the first two men to be rescued, the loathesome Zappi, half-insane with fear, dirty, bearded, agile with a strength that had come to him from some unspeakable source, and Mariano, lying in his underwear in a pool of ice-water, is unforgettable. Parijanine's art makes it so.

But it is a single sentence of Mariano's which rings thru the entire remainder of the book. Once we have read it, it is impossible not to remember it. "You may eat me after I am dead," the freezing Mariano said to Zappi—"but not before."

So certain is the charge of cannibalism against the fascists that Mariano fortuitously died after his return to Italy while Zappi was dispatched to a diplomatic post in Japan.

This is the focal point of horror in the narrative. Yet Nobile's dastardly abandonment of his men in the frozen north, Ceccioni's furious outbreak at the Swedish flier who had wrecked his plane and risked his life in the attempt to rescue him, are just as significant, if less fascistly gruesome.

The officers of the Italia, the pious crusaders to the Pole, were stripped bare by the cutting winds of the arctic. Every pretense was torn away from them and they were revealed as something less than human, as that thing which the proletarian world, with a shudder, has come to call "fascist."

Against this horror, moves the reliant crew of the workers' ship, able, unassuming, conquering.

WHITAKER CHAMBERS.

## THE SOCIAL SCRAP HEAP

*The Challenge of the Aged, by Abraham Epstein. The Vanguard Press. \$3.00*

Mr. Epstein has massed to-gether considerable material proving the need for old age pensions. He shows for example, that at least one-third of the population of the country 65 years of age or over, is definitely dependent in part, or entirely upon children, relatives or organized charity for support. The poor house, sheltering under the same roof, as it still does in many states, feeble-minded and epileptics, cripples and imbeciles, infants, criminals and drunkards, is also the catch-all for the victims of the industrial guillotine. Each year "American efficiency production" presses down a little tighter on the middle-aged wage-earner. To-day the man of 40 is already looked upon as "old" and a poor prospect for hiring. As the number of the unemployed in the great industrial centers continues to grow, the age at which men will be laid off becomes menacingly lower. As the machine increasingly takes the place of skill in factory and workshop, the trade experience of the middle-aged becomes rather an impediment than an asset. In spite of American "prosperity," Mr. Epstein amply proves that even in their most productive years the mass of workers actually live below the subsistence level. Accidents, unemployment, sickness, rob them of any possibility of saving for old age.

It is not therefore with the plea for old age pensions that I find fault. The role of capitalist machine industry in throwing workers on the scrap heap at 60 or even younger is graphically described. But Mr. Epstein, instead of openly attacking capitalist society as the cause, and seeking his remedy in fundamental change, sentimentalizes over the "inevitable ruthlessness of the industrial juggernaut for most aged wage-earners." The graft and humiliation of the "poor house" is vividly enough portrayed. Only Mr. Epstein throws himself too eagerly into the hands of the very political state apparatus which runs these poor houses and grafts from them. Mr. Epstein rightly points out that workmen's compensation laws meet only about one-fifth of the actual and prospective wage loss from accidents.

For the working class, organizations such as the Association for Old Age Security, of which the author is secretary, constitute a real danger. They set before the eyes of the potentially rebellious worker just another mirage to delude him into thinking that somehow "through a recognition of a new social responsibility," as Jane Addams puts it in her introduction to this book, the present injustice and inequality can be patched up. The American Child Labor Committee, the American Association for Labor Legislation, and the National Consumers' League are in the same class. Each organization chooses an isolated manifestation of capitalist oppression, makes of its program a "cult," and agitates for the partial amelioration of the trouble.

The line of cleavage therefore, between protective legislation sponsored by worker and social worker must be sharply drawn. A campaign for adequate old-age pensions based on the previous earnings of the workers and included as part of a comprehensive program for social legislation, proposed by workers' organizations and fought for under their leadership, is one step in the struggle for working class power. As an isolated effort, under the control of the "nation's most prominent leaders, with the support of the church, business and manufacturers," it must be uncompromisingly fought. At the same time the facts in Mr. Epstein's book can be utilized to show workers what they can expect in the present unregulated orgy of capitalism and to arouse them to action.

GRACE M. BURNHAM.

*The Only Two Ways to Write a Story, by John Gallishaw, G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$5.00.*

Most of the texts that attempt to deal with the art of story writing are so much piffle. But here at last is a work that seems to have genuine merit. Gallishaw knows what he is talking about. He makes a careful critical analysis of several short stories. Every line of the story is numbered and the text refers to these numbered lines. In this way definiteness is achieved. To those youngsters who are hunting for a text of value, I recommend this along with N. Bryllion Fagin's *Short Story Writing—An Art or a Trade?*

H. F.

## THE NAKED YEAR

This powerful story of the Russian people during the famine year of 1921 is the acknowledged masterpiece of Boris Pilniak, the most brilliant and penetrating of the young Russian writers. Upon the book's publication in Moscow in 1922 it created an immediate sensation because of its new, non-narrative form, and its audacious handling of subjects which are, as a rule, only lightly touched upon in novels. The format of the book itself is a new departure in the history of American publishing.

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## "MODERATELY PROSPEROUS" FARMERS

*The Farmer's Standard of Living*, by Ellis L. Kirkpatrick. The Century Co. \$2.00.

A professor of finance at the University of Pennsylvania recently stated that "the American farmer receives an average return of \$790 a year for his own labor, the work of managing the farm, the labor of his family, and the return on his investment; at least 30 per cent below any other wage group." The earnings of farmers run about one-half those of industrial workers.

Such facts must be kept in mind in reading a book on the farmer's standard of living by a Federal expert whose style is that of a government report, and whose outlook is narrowed by the specialized field in which he has earned his living—and captured a Ph. D. All his book aims to do is to tell us—and with the most crushing detail—the kind, quality and amount of goods, facilities and services the farmer uses during the year. It is all here. Nothing is omitted. We learn what percentage of the farmer's slender income goes for insurance, patent medicines, funeral expenses and chewing tobacco; what proportion of rural housewives sew their own nighties; what percentage of farm dwellings have pig pens obstructing a view of the front porch; how many families use cockroach powder; and what percentage consumes buckwheat flap-jacks for breakfast.

The study is really a government investigation of the moderately prosperous white farmer's family in some eleven states. And it finds that \$1598 (the advertised reduction price of one good mink coat in a Fifth Ave. shop) covers all the goods, facilities and services used during a year including the value of all the goods furnished by the farm itself—food, shelter and so on.

These were the "moderately prosperous." Tenant farmers ran much lower (\$1357) and hired-men families still less (\$1238). Negro families consumed less than one half this amount (\$611), while those of Negro crop farmers were the lowest (\$536).

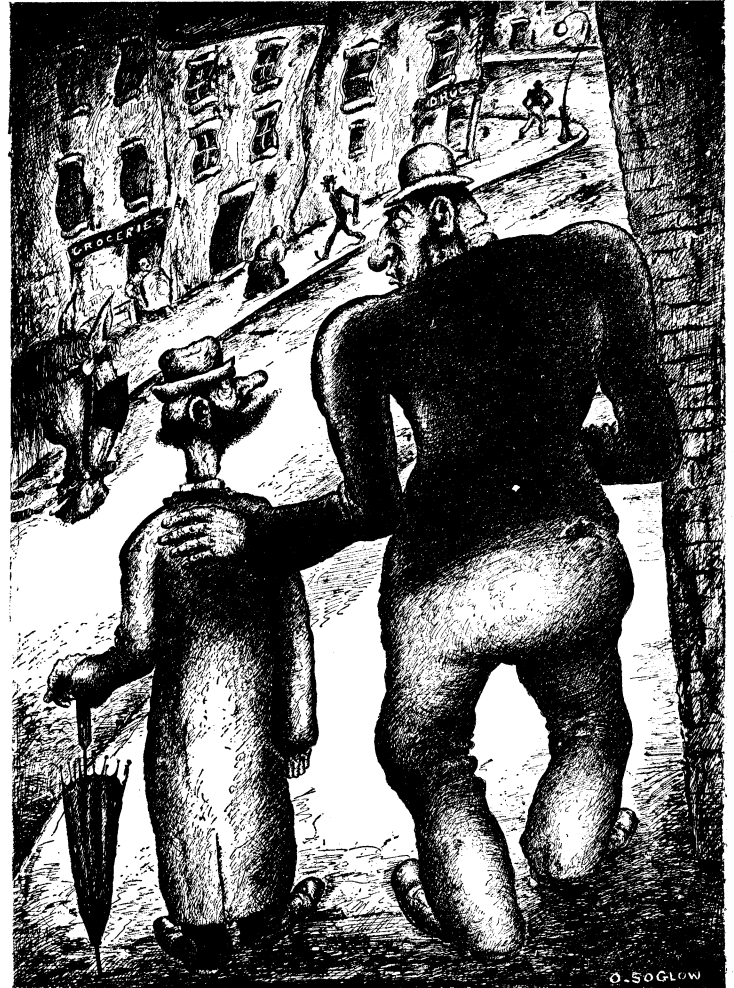
Savings? Bank presidents and A. F. of L. insurance agents urge us to save. The farmer tries to take the advice. "We made a payment on the mortgage; I reckon that is saved," and "We fix up the house, if you call that saving," were "typical replies" to questions on savings put to the farmers. One group of farmers studied, actually saved an average of \$38 in one year!

That's as far as this book goes. It leaves the feeling that one would rather not be a "moderately prosperous" farmer. As for being a farm-hand, not so nice either. The wages of hired farm labor, even when board is not furnished, are a little over \$500 a year, or less than one-half that of workers in other occupations. This helps to explain why some industrial workers, receiving much less than a minimum "health and decency wage," say they are better off than they would be back on the old farm. The capitalists, of course, play up this point in fighting wage increases in industry, just as they shriek about low factory wages in other countries when putting through wage cuts.

To appreciate a book of this kind, dealing with a very limited phase of a problem, certain basic facts with regard to American agriculture must be remembered. One is that the percentage of the national income going to farmers is now about one-half what it was pre-war. Another is that absentee land ownership now predominates. For if we include tenants, managers, part owners and mortgaged owners of farms we find that about 67 per cent of the farmers here actually do not own the land they till.

In a word, this basic American industry is broke. And no amount of tariffs, equalization fees, freight rate adjustments, tax revisions and progressive Senators will help it. The goods the farmer buys are about 75 per cent above pre-war prices, while the products he sells stand only about 54 per cent above the pre-war level. Farm tenancy grows; mortgaged farms increase; the control of bankers, speculators and insurance companies is a rising curve. The farmers' standard of life will continue to sink. His exploitation by railroads, meat packers, elevator combines, grain brokers and bankers will continue.

The Wall Street boys look forward to a growth in big capitalist farming. American business is preparing to reorganize farming along industrial lines. Within a few decades great farming corporations, as large as U. S. Steel or General Motors, will be hiring tens of thousands of workers. A class of overseers, skilled workers, and gang bosses will be developed. Below these the great mass of farm hands will be virtually bound to the soil with wages still



## NEW MASSES CRISIS CONTINUES

*Harvard Lampoons the New Masses. Alumni yell "Bolshevik!". Education in a helluva fix. Military training. Petting and Gin. Papa hasn't sent a check this week. We didn't get one either. Soglow to Gold: "Let's see if we can stand off Tony for another plate of beans."*

lower than in all other industries. The owners and investors, as usual, will live handsomely off the exploitation of these workers.

Such a revolution in agriculture is on the way. It is necessary to begin now to build the unity of farm and industrial workers to throw off the yoke of capital. An association of poor farmers, farm laborers, and especially Negro farmers, is needed. This is the angle from which American industrial workers must approach the farm problem.

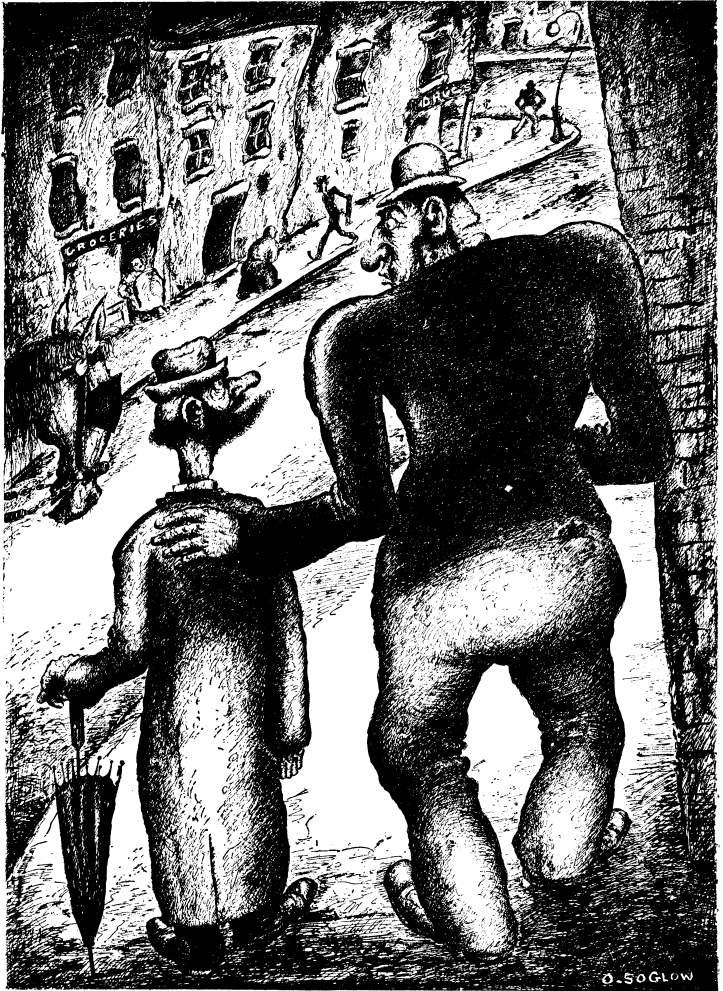
ROBERT DUNN.

## POEMS OF A CHINESE STUDENT

*Poems of the Chinese Revolution*, by Hsi-Tseng Tsiang. Published by the Author. Columbia University, N. Y. \$0.25

As far as the rules of poetry go this young Chinese student has not written good poetry but he has written inspired poetry, and that is more than you can say for those that write technical verse. The spirit of revolt has so taken hold of this young man that it gives him a facile expression that needs no rules. In reading poetry of this kind it is necessary to feel it, and not to study it.

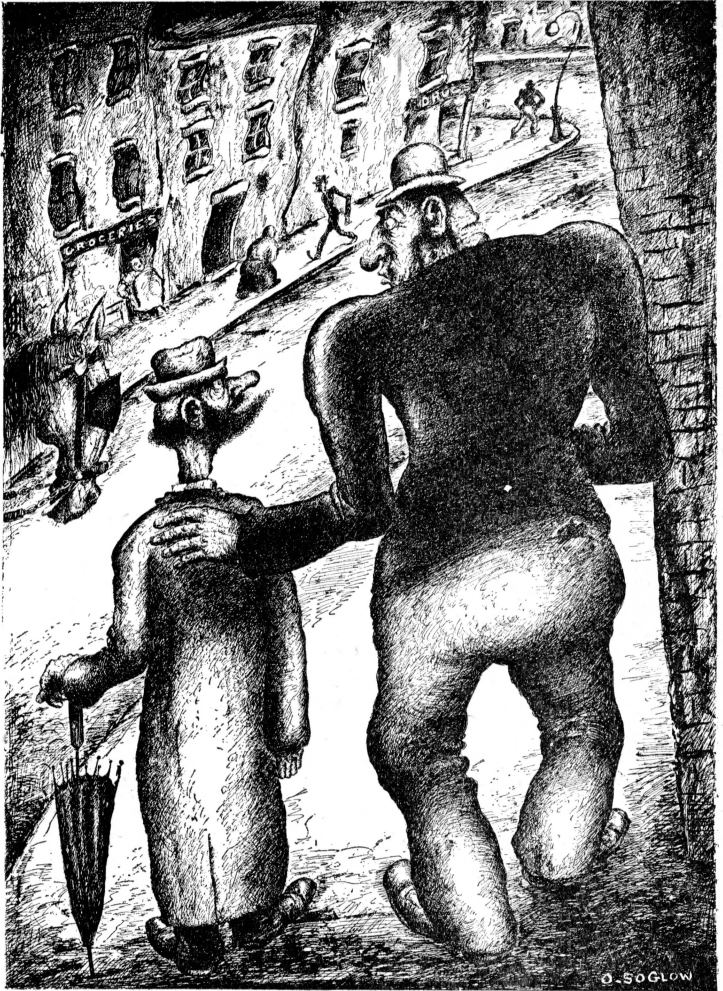
He portrays the revolutionary mind of the "Rickshaw Boy," "Laundry Man," Chinese students, and Chinese workers. In the poem "Laundry Man" he says, "Bosses are robbers everywhere." In his poem "Shanghai" he makes an appeal for internationalism. The poem called "Canton Soviet" is a lyrical drama in itself. The poet uses the setting of the establishment of the Canton Soviet in December 1927 and its consequent destruction by the Chinese Nationalists, the White Terror. Revolting against Feudalism, Capitalism, Militarism, and Imperialism, as in all the poems, this



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## NEW MASSES CRISIS CONTINUES

*Harvard Lampoons the New Masses. Alumni yell "Bolshevik!". Education in a helluva fix. Military training. Petting and Gin. Papa hasn't sent a check this week. We didn't get one either. Soglow to Gold: "Let's see if we can stand off Tony for another plate of beans."*



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poem comes to its climax when the Red kills a philanthropist, non-participant, poet, opportunist, benefactor, his father, and an unfaithful mistress, all enemies of the Red.

If we are to take the spirit of the actors in the poems as the spirit of this young Chinese, "the perfect voice of young China," as Upton Sinclair calls him, we can expect soon to realize the "real paradise" of which the poet speaks:

*"Pulling Rickshaw!  
How far, how far?  
Way beyond the dimming star."*

RAYMOND KRESENSKY.

**COLLEGE TRIPE**

*Natural Conduct*, by E. B. Copeland, Stanford University Press. \$3.50.

Forget the mauve cover and look inside. Forget your theories of introversion. For college professors are expected to publish their drivel. Whether they are inspired personalities in the class room doesn't count with reactionary boards of trustees and timid patrons. The fact is if they are inspiring, they get kicked out like Dr. Scott Nearing at the University of Pennsylvania. If I had some way to convert all the "listening power" wasted in college classrooms into kinetic energy, I doubt not that I would be able to compete successfully with the Electric Power Trust.

Old stuff. Stodgy. Pedantic. Worse than the drivel I try to inflict upon an already suffering proletariat.

Take the title—*Natural Conduct*. I doubt if the author, formerly of the College of Agriculture of the University of the Philippines and formerly instructor of Bionomics (whatever that is) in the Stanford University, ever in his life acted "naturally." I would like to put him in close proximity to one of our modern twin six, forty horsepower flappers, with a guarantee of absolute privacy and see how "natural" he would act. For he doesn't know a thing about modern psychology, genetics, or economics. He has never gotten beyond the elementary course in high school botany and zoology which he took a long time ago. Into this he has infused a generous dose of college metaphysics, the dope that passes as "ethics."

In the chapter on the family he unloads a bunch of antiquated hokum that "listens good" in such a dead old hole as Leland Stanford. For instance: "The undue exaltation of subsidiary family aims is one of the most dangerously immoral tendencies of modern social life." Speaking of reversions to polygamy he says: "Individual cases (of reversion) are a serious assault on the strength of the social structure and *merit any penalty* needed to repress them. The temporary disparity of the sexes due to modern wars or emigrations do not justify polygamy, sanctioned or illicit, at all. *Even a whole State (nation?) which so offends may properly be disciplined by its neighbors.* A hazy vagueness prevents the professor from making known just what state he has in mind.

Having had experience in the Philippines, the professor draws on the Bontoc Igorot to show that even savages can have a strict moral or sexual code. Since I spent some time among them myself a few years ago, I can vouch for the truthfulness of that statement. Many a time riding along the narrow mountain trails in northern Luzon, I have seen men and women, children of nature clad only in natural garments, toiling together. Yet there is the strictest monogamy among them. Apparently the relation between clothes and morals is very distant.

Copeland advocates the electric chair or hanging for marital infidelity. The spirit of the Blue Laws burns strong in this "native son" (prune) of the gilded West, for priggishly he avers in denying the right of divorce: "The ways of many primitive peoples, death or expulsion from the community, are *more effective and therefore better.*" Zeus save us from the rule (and ruin) of "ethically minded" university sadists and introverts!

Ignorant of any ethnology, except that of the Bontocs which is so simple it can be comprehended in a week, unfamiliar with the epoch-making researches of Franz Boas and others, vague and indefinite, the author drools about stale, shop-worn conventionalities that were almost forgotten in the mid-Victorian era. Ethics? *Tripe*, I calls it.

HENRY FLURY.

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## SOILED INTELLECTUALS

*The Treason of the Intellectuals, by Julien Benda. Translated from the French by Richard Aldington. William Morrow and Co. \$3.00.*

This book may be characterized as a fervent French rhapsody on an indefensible thesis. Enamored by the fiction of eternal verities which he holds should be the sole object of an intellectual's contemplation the author denounces as treasonable the activities of intellectuals who have "soiled themselves" by participating in the struggles of the market place. Let present day intellectuals look to the intellectuals of the past, he urges, to men who were above the battle, men without passion.

But intellectuals of all times, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously have been apostles and apologists of class, party, church or nation. When Benda, therefore, attempts to contrast the behavior of contemporary intellectuals with the supposedly more virtuous "disinterested" intellectuals of the past "who spoke to the world in a transcendental manner" he is indulging in phantasy. That his distinction is specious is evident at once upon an examination of his list of "masters" in the application of the method of impartial inquiry. Thomas Aquinas heads the list. A man who reconciled the existence of the wealthy papacy of his period with primitive Christian doctrine by advocating the principles of early Christian Communism for paradise while at the same time defending private property here below as a necessity for weak human nature corrupted by the "Fall of Man," and who condemned slavery from the point of view of natural law but condoned it as a historical necessity, is certainly not a paragon of intellectual disinterestedness. Like evidence could be presented on the other "pure" philosophers mentioned. Social philosophers are and have always been partisan, but because yesterday as well as today, most intellectuals have spoken for the class in power, a deceptive aura of disinterestedness has been invented to make their pronouncements more effective.

The author's advocacy of intellectual disinterestedness inevitably leads him into the morass of mystic idealism epitomized in his pious reactionary caption: "The world is suffering from lack of faith in a transcendental truth." He attempts to restore credence in a "universal morality" disproven by the accumulated data of ethnologists, and would have intellectuals pose as the priestly interpreters of this esoteric code. Undiscerningly, he condemns alike the force used to perpetuate and extend the power of an exploiting few and force used to liberate the exploited masses. Yet in spite of all his zealous, passionate pleading for objectivity he manifests the typical French patriot's vindictiveness toward Germany. The war was to him a conflict "between two fighting nations one of which had attacked the other contrary to all its pledges while the other was only defending itself." Pure reason is here working true to form.

BENNETT STEVENS.

## VOODOO MAGIC

*The Magic Island, by W. B. Seabrook. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$3.50.*

Once in a coon's age a human being with eyes, a thinking brain, and the trick of telling simply and directly what he sees writes a "travel book" that doesn't smell of hotel rooms and cooktours. Such a book is W. B. Seabrook's *The Magic Island*, which turns the klieg lights on Haiti.

Seabrook is no beginner. He lived in tents with the Arabs many months while gathering material for his *Adventures in Arabia*.

He lived in Haiti with Negro Voodoo worshippers so long that he acquired understanding of that religion and the Negroes' practice of it. This book took two years to write. And it's worth it if only because the author spent a lot more time with the natives around their midnight fires than he did dancing with the "beautiful chocolate-colored damsels" in Port-au-Prince, the capital of the Republic of Haiti.

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But the truth is a tangled thing in Haiti, Seabrook shows. And I am convinced that he did not get the full truth, although his intentions were good. At times, he makes use of rumor in a way that certainly helps to keep alive popular ideas about folkways in Haiti that should either be scientifically investigated or let alone in a book which purports to be the "truth" about an important phase of folkways. Again, he is writing for sales as well as for satisfaction of a praiseworthy desire to get at the truth. This leads him to a sort of unbalanced fairness objectionable to a reader who is sincerely after real facts. In the way of bourgeois liberals everywhere, he cannot make up his mind as to the justice of the American Occupation in Haiti.

Seabrook has written a thrilling book from many angles and he has got at a lot of the truth about the Voodoo religion. But many a reader will finish the volume still feeling that, when it comes to vitally important economic and social problems in Haiti, the author of *The Magic Island* is a "blind man walking on eggs."

SOLON R. BARBER.

**MANICURED POETRY**

*The Devil Is A Woman, By Alice Mary Kimball... Alfred A. Knopf. ....\$2.50. Ballyhoo for a Mendicant, by Carlton Talbott. Horace Liveright. \$2.00.*

The twilight sleep into which American poetry has fallen, drowsy, like an aged, spent woman, has no more lucid illustration than these two volumes. Where vitality and ecstasy in dealing with the subjects which both Mr. Talbott and Miss Kimball have treated are indispensable, here we find only feebleness. In the first, Mr. Talbott, a rather clever trickster and rhymster, produces a sort of facile doggerel. In the second Miss Kimball attempts the impossible task of trying to dig beneath the surface of the rocky New England soil with highly polished and manicured fingernails. She fails, because she closes her eyes to the shovels, the manure, the broken-in farm houses of the people of the soil growing poorer and poorer. A rather clever representation and caricature of a small-town set of politicians, members of the K.K.K. and D.A.R. does not save the day. Miss Kimball coddles the characters of her major narrative poems, not only the poor Italian immigrant against whom the wrath of the 100 percenters is directed, but also the highly respectable skirt-chasing members of the city council and the jingo patriotic societies.

This is not good for poetry. This makes poetry oily and saccharine-sweet like the sickly artificial maple-syrup served on Childs' restaurant tables. This does away with the enthusiasm and gusto which gives writing its vitality. Strength is needed, the power to hate as well as love, the power to write the way one feels and acts. I would not trade a line of Joe Hill's wobbly songs, crude as they may be, for both these volumes.

EDWIN ROLFE.

**ROUGHNECK CHICAGO**

*Reporter, by Meyer Levin. John Day. \$2.50*

Here is a competent job, shot thru with occasions of good lusty writing. Hectic Chicago is its background, pictured tabloid fashion thru the eyes of a cynical reporter.

It moves rapidly. It goes thru all sections of the city and all social strata of life in the Loop and around it: from Caponi-ruled Cicero to Uppety North Shore. It is familiar ground to those who have often had a whiff of the Yards.

But it is authentic photographically only—as if taken by Cats-nuts Maloney, the unscrupulous press photographer who accompanies our reporter on most of his assignments. It is barren of any social feeling and analytical insight. Our reporter believes nothing, like most reporters, and like most of them knows very little. The world is a crazy-quilt of patches and he does not understand the pattern.

Gangsters, politicians, Rotarians, morons,—all the thousand and 57 varieties of Chicago's four millions flash by, vividly but usually like marionettes and they get nowhere. It is like observing teeming millions of human bugs under a glass. In this way the book is interesting. There is an unusually well done scene of a gangster dinner.

WALT CARMON.

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## From San Quentin Prison

Comrade Mike:—

I enjoy (?) a position of unique advantage. I am not plagued by bill collectors, panhandlers, salesmen or Babbitts. Unemployment does not exist in our "city." Marital woes, taxation, the class struggle or the scramble for food shelter and clothing are not in evidence. True I work in the jute mill and contribute my share of labor-power to further enrich this state. Yet when meal time rolls around I line up with the rest of the 4,000 and take what "food" my master allows me. My shoes, cap, and clothes, are made for me or repaired when necessary and I, like a good willing slave, wear them knowing that I am still under the master and shall remain so world without end amen, until some day—

I hope you will not be unduly influenced by the go-getter style of boosting I have given this place and attempt to crash the front gate. Better men than you tried it and failed miserably. Upton Sinclair threw rocks at the front gate for many years and has been here only once or twice and those times were visits to class war prisoners.

You have the one and only magazine in the country that is not afraid to get out and lambast things on the economic field. I liked that article about the Yids in New York. Better still the one about Bill Haywood was wonderful and you may tell Tre-sca that it went over with a bang in here. From the comments I hear you have far more well wishers in here than you will ever know about.

Many men I talk to in here tell me they would like to visit the U.S.S.R. I informed them they would not be wanted if they went there to live a parasitic existence. They counter with the fact that were it not for the unjustness of this system they would not be among those present in here. Then along comes the New Masses with a big "ad" inviting students and workers to U.S.S.R. and the prospective visitors want me to eat the "ad." Mike, I think Russia has too much to do to be entertaining every hoosier. More, I do not think that any of the hoosiers in this country or for that matter you or I are entitled to any of the benefits the new social order is producing in Russia. If we want benefits let us bring about the change in this country.

Keep on sending the New Masses.

JAMES McCANN.

San Quentin, Calif.

## From an English Miner

Dear Comrade Gold:—

I see the Boston "puritans" have banned one of your plays. Our "puritans" are busy begging for the Miners they are robbing—longer working day and reduced wages. The poverty and misery in mining areas is awful. If they will put back in our pay packets that which they have taken out the

Prince of Wales' appeal for subscriptions to London Lord Mayors Miners relief fund would not be necessary.

But Capitalism is capable of anything in its own interests and the Trade Union officials and labor skates are assisting. Some of the Labor leaders here are a disgrace. With the boss they have declared war on the Reds.

With fraternal greetings to American comrades,

G. J. WILLIAMS.

Worksop, Notts, England.

## From a Farm Hand

I am only a farm hand. For a pitiful wage I have slaved on Dakota farms from 4 A. M. to 7 and 8 P. M. I know what it is to bunk in a hay loft after 12 hours of pitching wheat bundles into an ever hungry self-feeder. I know what it is to shiver and freeze on a plow in late autumn from dusk to dusk. But why more of this. All your readers of the *New Masses* who are toilers know what such life is . . .

As a boy in my early teens I read every radical publication I could lay my hands on. How proud and happy I was to vote for Debs (then in prison) on my first voting . . . Then, somehow, I began to grow impatient with the slowness of the proletarian movement. I began to contemplate on the futility of everything. Little by little I became interested in men like H. L. Mencken. I dabbled a little with soothing syrup like Emerson and sickly sentimentalism of Havelock Ellis. For awhile I thought Nietzsche and his Superman theory was the thing.

But I was not satisfied with all this. I looked back on my boyhood and youth with longing. I who had Lenin's picture (from a Liberator cover) framed and in place of honor in my room. But all these things taught me something. All these years of fruitless dabbling and apathetic outlook on things have stored up a surplus of new feeling and desire to be among my own again. I had not seen the *Masses* for years. Then someone sent me a copy. I read it and the flame began anew. Now I want to be in the fight again. I'm back on the job to stay . . . There are many others, too, I know, who have faltered by the wayside. Many, who, like myself, have in our youthful impatience become tired of the sordid struggle and are endeavoring to find something worthwhile in things outside the labor movement. Can we find it in bourgeois art and literature? I think not. It is not for us. But in publications like the *New Masses* we find real proletarian art coming into blossom. Real virile art that gives us enthusiasm and encouragement and creates in us all a longing for beauty and justice and solidarity.

SELMER J. JOHNSON.

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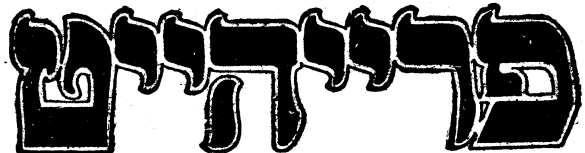
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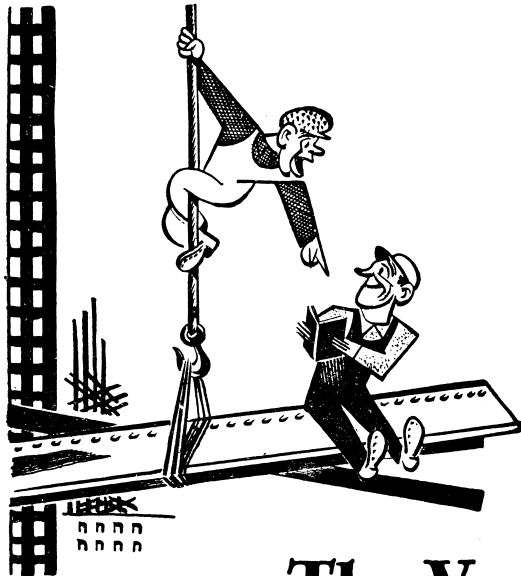
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