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# **MASSES**

**AUGUST, 1929**

**15 Cents**



*Mexican Worker With Machete—Drawn by Rufino Tamayo*

THE STORY OF  
**A GASTONIA STRIKER**

**Upton Sinclair · John Dos Passos · V. F. Calverton · Wm. Gropper · Michael Gold**

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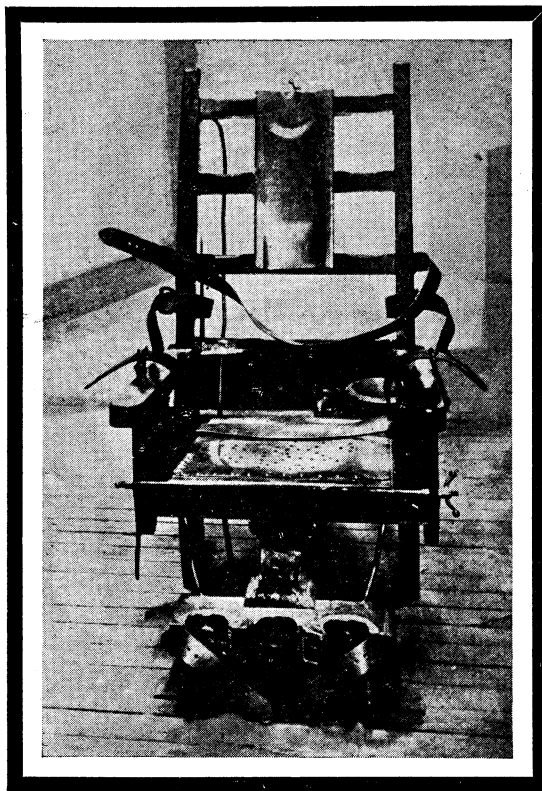
**Upton Sinclair · John Dos Passos · V. F. Calverton · Wm. Gropper · Michael Gold**

# SHALL SACCO *and* VANZETTI HAVE DIED IN VAIN?

## Help Smash the Gastonia Murder Frame-Up!

THE RIGHT OF THE  
WORKERS IN THE SOUTH  
TO ORGANIZE AND BETTER  
THEIR CONDITIONS IS  
MENACED!

THE STRUGGLE OF THE  
SOUTHERN TEXTILE  
WORKERS IS  
YOUR CAUSE!



15 TEXTILE WORKERS OF  
GASTONIA FACE THE  
ELECTRIC CHAIR!

8 OTHER MEMBERS OF THE  
NATIONAL TEXTILE  
WORKERS UNION  
FACE LONG YEARS  
IN PRISON!

RALLY TO THE DEFENSE OF  
THESE HEROIC STRIKERS!

## EVERY GASTONIA DEFENDANT MUST BE SAVED FROM THE ELECTRIC CHAIR!

NO PRISON SENTENCE FOR ANY DEFENDANT  
Unconditional Release of all 23 of these innocent men  
and women.

RALLY TO THE DEFENSE

I hereby enclose \$..... for the Gastonia Defense.

I pledge \$..... per week.

Name .....

Address .....

City & State .....

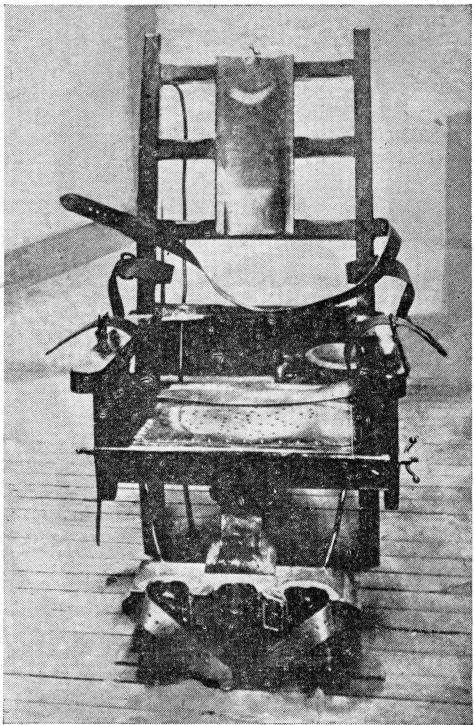
THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS are needed to Defend  
the 23 Strikers.

The readers of the NEW MASSES—millions of work-  
ers must contribute—and demonstrate—to save and  
free them.

**RUSH ALL FUNDS TO  
INT'L LABOR DEFENSE**

80 East 11th Street, Room 402, New York City.

*If you must ruin this copy of the Masses to send the blank—we'll be glad to send you another. Tell us you want one.*





# NEW MASSES

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## WE ARE MILL PEOPLE

By ELLA FORD

### 1. MOUNTAIN PEOPLE

I am one of the strikers in the Gastonia textile strike. It was the first strike I ever was in. I was raised in the mountains of the western part of North Carolina. It was near the Balsam mountains. My parents died when I was small and I was raised by my grandparents. They rented land and raised corn, beans and such things, and had chickens, cows and hogs to make meat for the winter.

Then I was married at an early age. My husband and I took up some land in the mountains but it was hard living. You can get enough to eat, but not enough for clothes. That's why we went down to the cotton mill one winter. Many of the mountain folks did that. They worked in the mills winter to get their clothes and shoes then went back to the farm for the summers. Sometimes the mills sent men up to the mountain towns and farms. They would go around and make all kinds of promises and ship off a whole trainload of farmers and their families to work in the mills. They said it was free transportation, but when we got there they took the fare out of our first week's wages.

They liked to ship off big families, because then there'd be lots of children for the mills. At first none of the farmers would go down to the mills. They didn't like to leave the farms. They called the people who went the "poor trash." But as times got hard everyone started going to the mills.

Once people were down in the city they got into the habit of living there. They liked the movie shows and the radios, and being surrounded by people. And they got to buying dresses and things on the installment plan, and that kept them working, too. So fewer and fewer mill people went back to the mountains.

I worked in the Loray mill for seven years. My first job was in the spinning room, but it was hot and there was too much noise. It made me sick, and I quit after two and a half days. But they just kept coming after me, and they gave me a place in the spooling room, so I went there and liked it better. I spooled for about two years. Sometimes I spooled, sometimes I untangled yarn. I made about \$12 a week.

One of my boys worked a few days and quit too. It was too confining for him in the mill. He was beginning to look bad, so one day I told him to get work elsewhere. He worked in a grocery for some years but then went back to the mill because there was no other work for him.

*This is the story of a Gastonia striker. No effort has been made to improve the literary quality of the story. It is a simple narrative of a mountain woman; her first experience in a highly developed industry, her first contact with vicious speed-up methods and the resulting struggle. At this moment fifteen men and women go on trial for their lives in Gastonia for fighting against such slavery. This story we believe is an important social document. It is an indictment of conditions as brutal as those in England a hundred years ago.—Ed.*

Then I was given a beam clerk's job. I worked on that job for four years. I had to talk to most of the warpers and creelers in the mill. Lots of times they worried when they could not make a week's pay. It was piece work, and things often went wrong, and then they had to work faster and faster. Children work in the mills. I have seen small boys not over 10 but they said they were 14. They work a 12 hour shift. In the morning you will see whole families going to work. The families run big down our way. When a mother works in the mill and has a small baby she takes off time to nurse it. The company has a community house for the small children. Of course the mother loses time by the nursing and doesn't draw pay.

In 1927 they first began closing in on us. A new manager came out there, but we finally got him away. He was scared. He thought we would do something with him and he left town. Then we celebrated and the streets were full of people going around the town.

But other managers came. That's when the stretch-out system began. It wasn't long before two beam boys were doing the work of seven. They doubled up all over. They put in new machinery and that knocked out a lot. They put in automatic spoolers and warpers. 16 new warpers could do the work of 72 old warpers. One man was doing the work of about three under the old system. They cut all thru the mill.

Jobs got hard to find. Lots of times the hands would get talking about a strike.

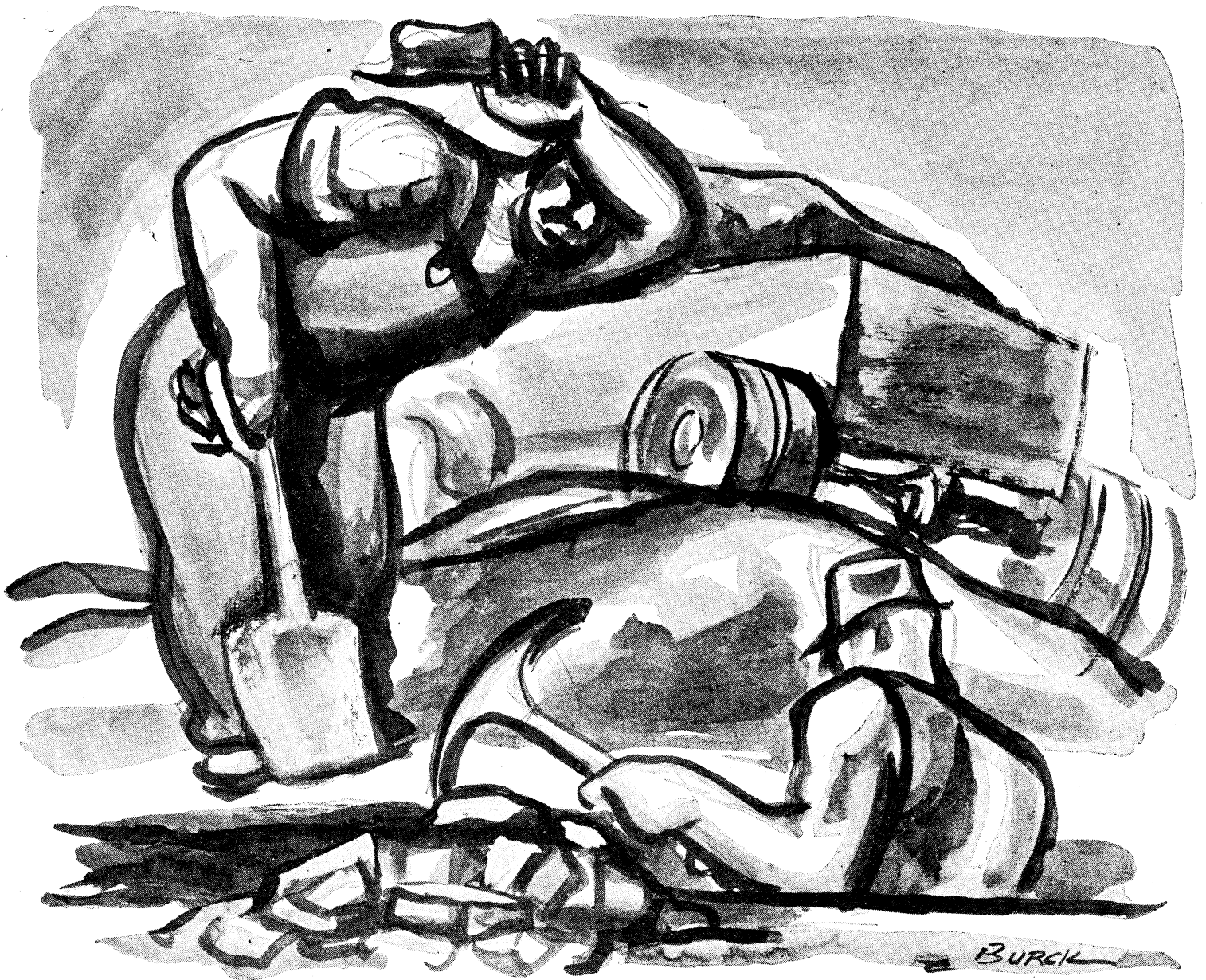
### 2. STRIKE

The first time I knew anything about this strike is when one of the men who was running a warper asked me if I would join a union if there was one. I said I could not do anything different. "Well, here," he said, "sign this card. Be quiet, don't say anything."

That was the beginning of the strike. On Saturday I went to the open meeting and on Monday I went out. I never did go back.

Along that evening about four o'clock on nobody worked. We waited until the whistle blew and then went out.

That night the girl that got my job came in to work. I asked her not to go in. She never answered me. I could have stomped her.



*"Hey, Bill, the boss says it's the humidity."*

*Drawn by Jacob Burck*

There was a tremendous crowd around the mill. Only a few went in.

On Wednesday we were not allowed to picket. They roped us off and would not let us get to the gate. Then the National Guard came and we were not allowed to get nearer than two blocks from the mill.

I got to the employment office once when I was trying to get to the manager to see him about our union. I went with two men of the National Guard who were sent with me. I did not get to see the head manager. He sent word that if it was anything about the union he did not want to see me.

It was the night after that that a mob of 100, from the mill, the deputies and the police, tore up the headquarters in splinters. Then they went to the store of the Workers International Relief broke the windows, threw out the food in the streets and wrecked the building. Later we found police badges, blackjacks and some tools from the mill in the wreck.

They broke up the picket line every time it went out. The National Guard would not beat up the people, but the police and deputized police were the ones who did the dirty work. The National Guardsmen had guns with fixed bayonets. They just drove the crowd.

At this time about 1700 were out on strike. One evening they drove the people from the picket line up to the store. I got up on top of the counter so I could see what was happening. They

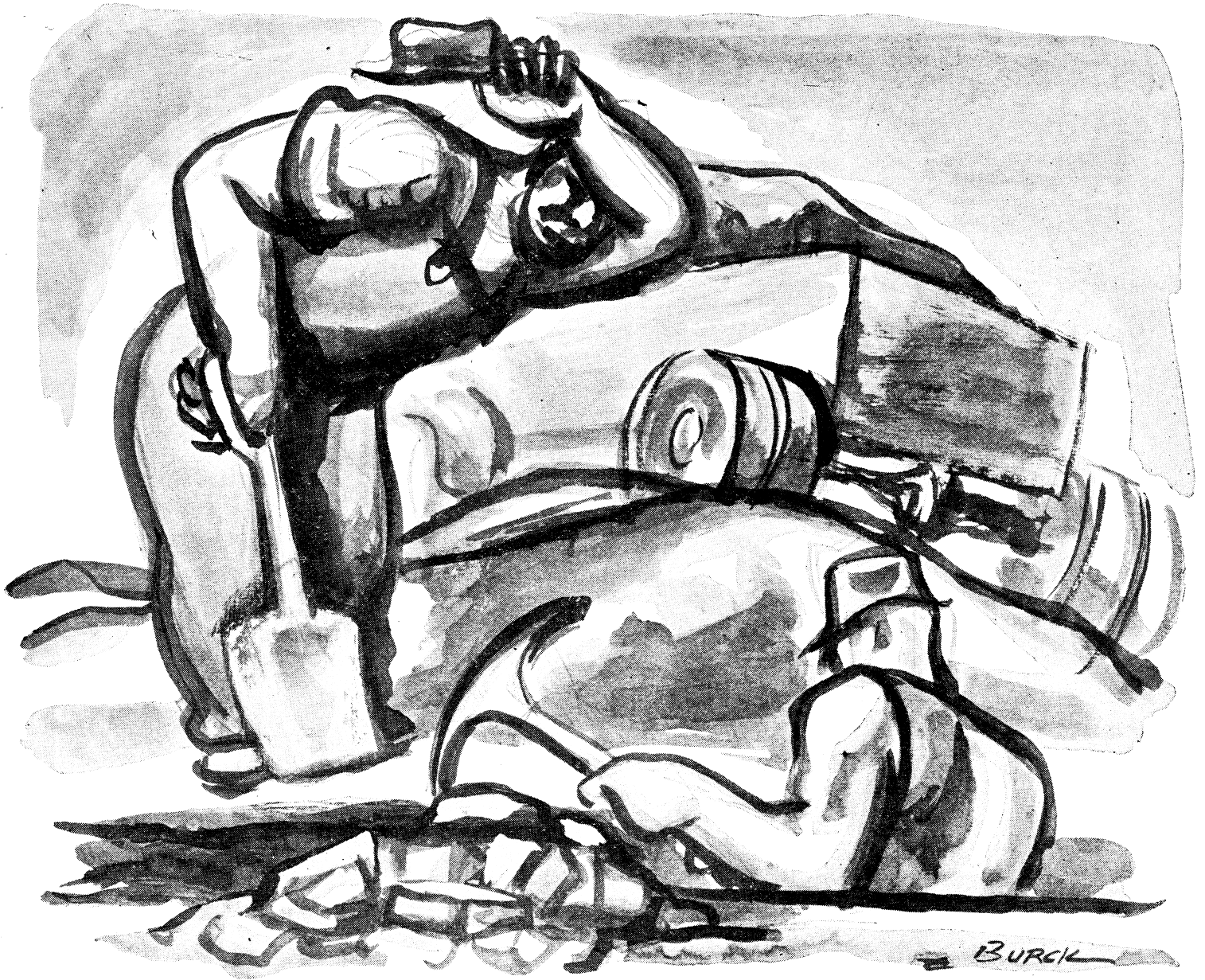
were driving the men with bayonets, guns and clubs. There was one old man who kept saying that he hadn't done anything. They twisted his arm and put the old fellow in a car. Chief Alderholt was shouting "get the hell out of here". There was a very old woman standing close to me when I went out of the store and one of the deputies kept jumping her with his bayonet. Her back showed blood where he kept sticking the bayonet. Then three policemen came to her and grabbed her by the arms and twisted them around and they took her to jail where she was beaten terribly. Her face was an awful sight when she came out.

All these things only made the strikers stronger. Most of our American people are proud and they won't be driven like in slavery. The use of the guns, bayonets and police clubs, and the wrecking of the W.I.R. relief store made us stick. It made people see things more clearly. There are over 100 cotton mills in Gaston County. We got people from all of them to join the union.

Nobody would rent us a store for relief or for headquarters. Everyone was afraid it would be burned down.

Then they began throwing people out of the homes. There was no place to go. Some of the things lay in the streets for a week. Some fixed their beds on the street and they would cook the food there that they got from the W.I.R. We finally got a place just to store things away.

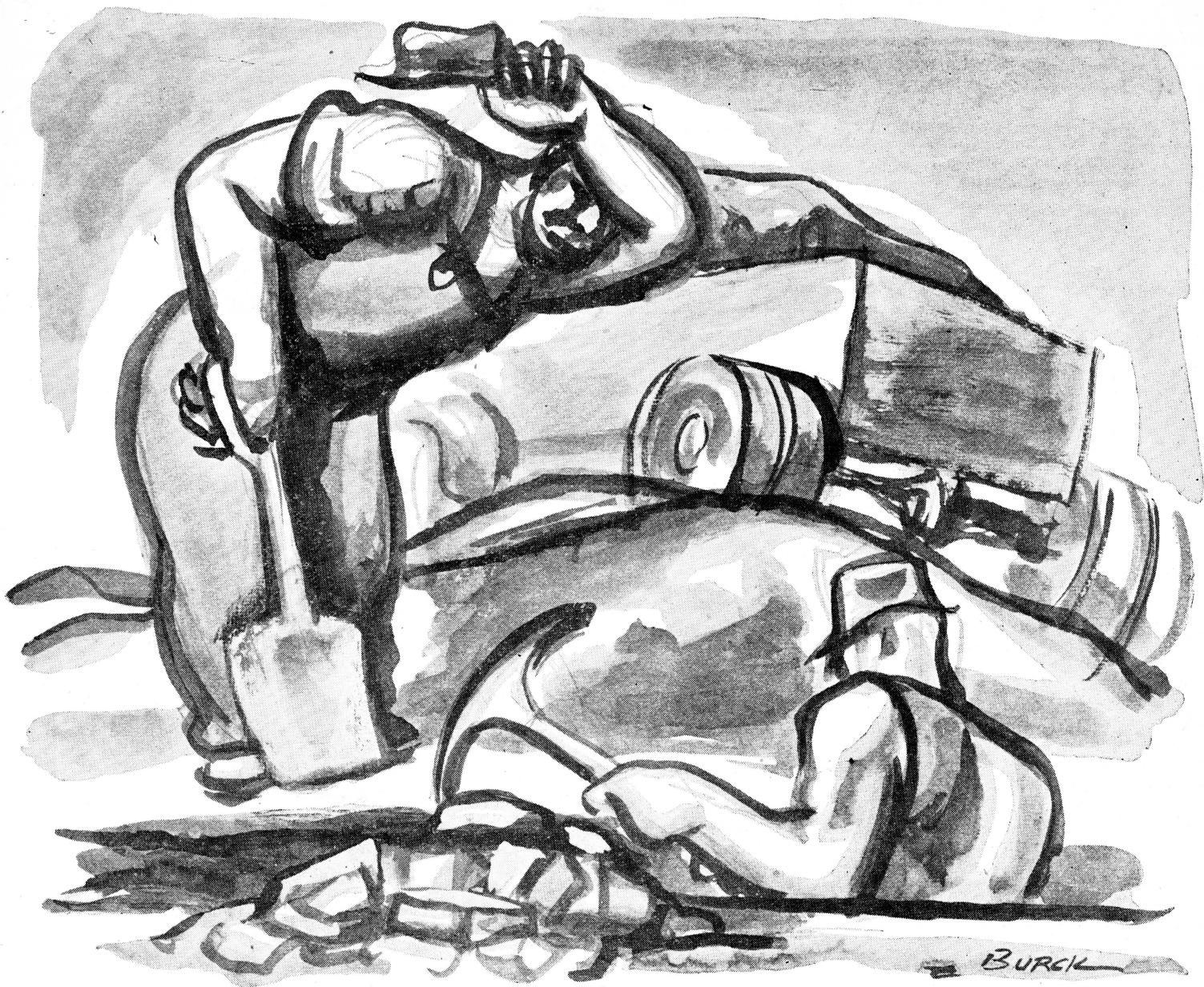
We were looking out for the women and children first. The W.I.R. sent us tents and moved the families in them so the children would have some where to stay.



*"Hey, Bill, the boss says it's the humidity."*

*Drawn by Jacob Burck*





*"Hey, Bill, the boss says it's the humidity."*

*Drawn by Jacob Burck*



One night some of the millmen on the Committee of 100 came down to the open meeting and began to throw rotten eggs at our speakers. The police did not take a single one of them to jail.

### 3. GUNS, BAYONETS AND BLACKJACKS

Then the strikers formed a picket line to march on the mill. The police broke it up. Soon we learned that the chief of police and his men were going to raid the place. We had some men and boys guarding the headquarters. When they came down in cars, the police started firing and Chief Alderholt was killed. No one knows who killed him but police shots were flying everywhere.

Our people had to run. The mob from the mill did not tear down the headquarters but they destroyed all the union books and the little groceries we had. Then they went over to the tent colony and searched the tents all night.

They took the men to jail and told the women they would also be arrested if they would not go. Some of the women took their children and walked for miles that night.

The tents were scattered and the floors were taken up. Some of the strikers had their furniture scattered and were never able to find it.

Early the next morning I went with Caroline Drew to get relief for the people who were hungry. Her check was refused for groceries and as it was only 8:30 in the morning we started out for the bank in town. On the way we stopped for coffee. While we were there the police walked in. They knew Caroline was in charge of relief and they were after her. They twisted her arm and threw her into a car to take her to the station. I was also arrested.

Four of us were packed into a tiny cell. Three of us were kept there for a couple of nights. From Saturday until Wednesday following we were kept without water to wash our face in. They gave us two sandwiches in the morning, nothing for dinner, and two sandwiches for supper. We all had to drink water out of one rusty cup.

Long after midnight we could hear the police abusing the boys. We could hear them knocking them around while they were handcuffed. I saw them when they were led away to court. One was being hit with a blackjack and the blood was all down his back.

The women were not taken. But on Wednesday night just outside the window we heard a man telling another how to hold his hand and the way something was to be thrown into the union hall. Just then a tear bomb was thrown through our window. The gas was in our eyes and ears and throat and my eyes smarted terribly. We finally lay down to sleep under an old blanket.

On Thursday we were taken to the county jail where we had a good supper of corn bread and milk. They put us in a big room with plenty of beds and blankets and I did not wake up until the next morning.

I was finally released after being held on charges for carrying a deadly weapon with intent to kill. Those who were guarding the tents were all held.

### 4. FRED BEAL, OUR LEADER

There are many down there who would like to railroad all those workers to the electric chair. They know that would bust up the union in the South. The South would not be organized; we would have to go on working like before.

We would not be able to do anything if it was not for the people in the North from whom we get our food. We think if we could get one meal a day we could fight and stick it out until we won. We are getting our shelter from the tents the W.I.R. sent us.

At first the bosses talked a lot about the Communists. They kept saying the Bolsheviks and Reds were free lovers. We were told that Russia was an awful place. This was new for us at first. You have to realize and study about these things before you understand them.

Not many Negroes work in the Loray Mill where I was. In Bessemer City, 150 Negroes work in the waste department.

At first the members of the union did not understand how to deal with the Negro workers. Now they are working side by side with them. Everybody realized they had to be organized with the whites. If we stood apart the boss would get the benefit.

The mill owners were especially after our leader Fred Beal. They printed leaflets saying that he was a Bolshevik and that he did not believe in God. Most of the workers are Methodists and Baptists. But they would pay no attention to the leaflets. They tore them up. Everybody there likes Fred Beal. We know the people that are working for us.

The majority of the people are for the strikers. The workers are all back of the people on trial now. But they are broke and they can't do much unless the people in the North will help them.

The strike would go on forever if only the children did not suffer so much. So many have Pellagra, they eat too much of one kind of food. Their arms and their bodies break out, they get thin and they waste away. In the mountains we never had clothes but there was always enough to eat. We had canned beans we picked in the fall and sauerkraut we had made.

Sometimes people get to wishing they could go back to the farm but they don't have certain pay days there. Once you get in the mill it is pretty hard to get out.

You work from six in the morning until six at night. There are always payments to be made. Sometimes we can go to the movies.

For the last two years I only missed a day and half outside of Sundays. I would get one or two days off for Christmas. You don't get any holidays. Even on the fourth of July you work all day until six o'clock and the mill has fireworks in the ball park in the evening.

We are used to another kind of life now. I think most of us will never go back to the mountains. We are mill people now.

## FACING THE ELECTRIC CHAIR

In the Gastonia Trial the following are charged with murder: Fred Beal, Louis McLaughlin, Amy Schechter, Wm. McGinnis, Vera Bush, George Carter, Sophie Melvin, K. O. Byers, Joseph Harrison, J. C. Heffner, Robert Allen, Russell Knight, N. F. Gibbons, K. Y. Hendricks and Delmar Hampton. Eight others are held on charges of conspiracy. The International Labor Defense is conducting the defense of these men and women. The American Civil Liberties Union is assisting.



Drawn by Wm. Gropper

## The Savior of Gastonia



*Drawn by Wm. Gropper*

## **The Savior of Gastonia**

# SUMMER TOADSTOOLS

(From A Book of East Side Memoirs)

By MICHAEL GOLD

Joey Cohen! you who were sacrificed under the wheels of a horse car, I see you again, Joey! I see your pale face, so sensitive despite its childish grime and bruises. You are precocious in the Jewish way, full of a strange kindness and understanding. There are dark rings under your eyes, as under mine—we sleep very little in summer. But morning is here, and, Joey, your father gave you a whole nickel. Together we set out to spend it.

We are in bare feet. The pavement blisters us, but we like this fierce contact, and dare each other to walk over the hottest places. We wear no caps. Our heads are shaved, to help our mommas fight the summer lice.

Joey is in cotton undershirt and pants supported by one suspender and a safety pin. Myself about the same.

First we buy two lollipops, a red and a green, at the candy stall on the corner. We suck prodigiously, and sometimes exchange sucks as we loaf and watch the happy dancers around a hand-organ.

My sister Esther is dancing with Nigger's sister Lily. The sun blazes. The street roars. My sister's face is flushed with joy. In her ecstasy she does not see me. Her pigtailed fly, as she jogs in and out the mazes of a Morris dance. There are other dark little skinny girls. Their little bodies are aflame with rhythm. They have followed the handorgan from street to street, but after hours of dancing are still unsated. Only the Italian organ grinder seems glum and bored. He grinds out a gay two-step as if he were in a factory and holds up his cap for pennies.

That's all he cares about. But the dancers make everyone else happy. Some of the prostitutes have left their "business" for a moment, and watch with gentle smiles. The cop leans against a lamppost and smiles. A grim old graybeard with a live chicken under his arm is smiling at the children. A truckdriver has slowed down and watches them dreamily as he rattles by. Mothers watch from the tenement windows. A fat important little business Jew bursting like a plum with heat, mops his face, and admires the children.

A humpbacked old witch in a red kerchief hobbles by, pushing a baby carriage covered with cloth. There is no baby in there, but a big pot full of hot black-eyed beans.

"Bubkes!" she wails in a kind of Chinese falsetto, "buy my hot, fresh bubkes!"

We forget the dancing, and remember the pennies burning a hole in Joey's pocket. We order some bubkes. The old wart-faced crone lifts the cloth, she measures a penny's worth of beans into a paper poke.

As we eat, Joey is thinking. Only two pennies are now left, and they must be spent wisely.

"Let's go to Cheap Haber's!" he says. This is a candy store on Rivington street, famous for miles among the East Side kids for its splendid bargains. So we mooch along there on one of our adventures of a summer day.

2.

Oh, I like the summer. So much happens then. Winter is fun, too with its snowball fights, but summer is a big circus. Yes, then everything happens. Winter is mostly spent indoors. Summer one lives in the street. The street never bores one. There is always something to do and see in the street.

Jake Wolf is standing in front of his saloon. He picks his magnificent gold teeth that everyone admires so much, and curls his moustache. His white vest sparkles in the sun. Jake is a great man. He belongs to Tammany Hall and runs the elections every year.

"Hello, Jake!"

"Hello, kids!"

"Can we have some pretzels, Jake?"

"We're going to Cheap Haber's, Jake."

"That's good. Look out for the Indians."

"Aw, there's no Indians in New York, Jake. Can we have a pretzel? Tell us about the time you killed that Indian out west."

"Some other time. Run along, boys."

We leave him reluctantly; the great man is kind to boys, generous with free lunch pretzels, and full of fine stories. He spent a year in the west, in Chicago, and saw the Indians. They looked like Jews, he said, but were not as smart or as brave. One Jew could kill a hundred Indians.

A bum was suddenly bounced out of the saloon. He did a funny somersault, and fell on his face, scraping the hard pavement. His cheek gushed with blood; he cursed and groaned. Jake Wolf looked down at the bundle of bloody rags, picked his teeth, spat, yawned and turned away.

"Beat it, boys!" he smiled winking genially at us, "I'm busy."

3.

There were many bums in the milk and butter store. They flocked there every morning to drink buttermilk at five cents the quart. Iced buttermilk soothed their inflamed stomachs after a long drunk. Mary Sugar Bum told me that in one of her lucid moments.

On the bench in front of the livery stable the drivers were having a load of fun. They were feeding beer out of a can to Terry McGovern the goat.

Most saloons had mascots. Terry was the mascot for Jake's saloon. He was a big dirty mean he-goat named after Terry McGovern the prize-fighter. His horns were gilded, and he wore a large dog-collar studded with brass knobs. His name was engraved on the collar, and the address of Jake's saloon. Terry lived on free lunch, and garbage, newspapers, tin cans, any old thing. His eating habits were the talk of the neighborhood. And he also was crazy about beer. He lapped it up like a thirsty bum who has just panhandled a nickel on a hot day. Then he frisked his tail, and butted everything in sight. It was great fun. The drivers spent many dimes buying beer for Terry.

Once I saw a drunken sailor lie down on the sidewalk and butt heads with Terry. What a damn fool. The goat cracked the sailor's head open, and an ambulance had to be called.

4.

Oh, the summer. A fire engine screamed by on the next street, cutting through the traffic like a cannonball going through a regiment of soldiers. Then, what excitement, an ambulance only a minute later. Wagons, pushcarts, men, women and children, scattered like rats. Joey Cohen and I debated: which was the most heroic career: fireman or doctor?

We saw a scissor grinder. He was an old German, with silky white whiskers and eyeglasses. He looked like a doctor, so neat and dignified. He rang a bell, and pushed his grindstone on its big cartwheel in front of a butcher shop. He came out with an armful of knives and cleavers. We watched the golden sparks fly.

Then there was a big sightseeing bus. A gang of kids chased it, and pelted rocks, garbage, dead cats and stale vegetables at the frightened sightseers. "Liars, liars;" the kids yelled, "go back up-town!" Joey and I joined in the sport. What right had these stuckup foreigners to come and look at us? What right had that man with the megaphone to tell them lies about us? Kids always pelted these busses. The sport is still popular on the East Side.

5.

How many temptations beset us. How often Joey and I halted to debate as to whether spend the money now or march on to Cheap Haber's. But we were strong and went on.

There was the mysterious lemonade man. He appeared every summer, a tall swarthy bandit with fierce pointed moustaches. He wore a Turkish fez, white balloon pants, and a red sash. On his back hung a brass kettle with a long graceful spout. For a penny he bowed to the pavement as if in prayer, and from the spout over his shoulder Turkish lemonade poured into the glass in his hand. It was a splendid performance, worth a penny to command.

And we met a merry-go-round, a little one with six wooden steeds mounted on a wagon and pulled by an old horse. The man in charge turned a wheel and made the kids spin until they were



Drawn by Wm. Gropper.

### EAST SIDE

dizzy. The man was small, dark and broad as a beer-keg. He was a Jew, but looked like an Italian. He hated kids. The ones who had had their rides but still lingered on he drove off with his whip.

Then we saw a fortune-teller with a hand-organ and a parrot. The parrot and the man had big noses. For a penny, the parrot picked a printed slip out of a box and gave it you. It told you your fortune.

6.

Oh, this was summer. And an old melancholy Jew limped by, with six derby hats stacked one over the other on his head, and a burlap sack on his shoulder.

"I cash clothes!" he wailed, gazing with weary eyes, up and down the tenement walls. "I Cash Clothes!" he wailed, and it made one's heart ache, strangely, like the synagogue lamentations at Yom Kippur.

In my ears still ring the lamentations of the lonely old Jews without money:

"I cash clothes, I cash clothes, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

7.

Summer. Everywhere was garbage. Plop, bung, and another fat, spreading bundle dropped from a tenement window. Many of the East Side women had this horrible custom. To save walking down stairs, they wrapped their garbage in newspapers and flung it in the street. In summer the East Side heavens rained with potato peelings, coffee grounds, herring heads and dangerous soup bones. Bang, went a bundle, and the people in the street ducked as if a machine gun sounded.

Summer heat. The asphalt bubbled underfoot. The horses pulled their hoofs with a loud sucking noise out of boiling tar streets. One's own bare feet sank in the tar, and left a print.

Joey and I saw an old lady sitting on a stoop, surrounded by people. They had taken off her corset and orthodox wig, and were fanning her, and offering her cold soda water to drink. She was sunstruck.

Flies, bedbugs, sick cats, sunstruck horses and men and women, and busy saloons, and street circus—Summer.

In the maelstrom of wagons, men, pushcarts, street cars, dogs and East Side garbage, the mothers calmly wheeled their baby carriages. They stopped in the shade of the Elevated trains, and suckled their babies with big sweaty breasts.

Summer's morning. Joey Cohen and I walking to Cheap Haber's.

8.

We never got there. A summer nightmare intervened. At Chrystie and Rivington streets, opposite the Mills Hotel, a man called to us from a doorway. I did not like him from the start. He was a bum in mouldy wrinkled clothes saturated like a foul kitchen rag with grease. His knees showed through the pants, and he was spotted with the sawdust of some saloon floor. He had a rusty yellow face covered with sores. He was gruesome. He was like a corpse in the first week of decomposition.

His hands twitched and bulged in his pockets. His eyes were bright as a rat's, and blinked incessantly.

"Come here!" croaked this scarecrow, "do you want to earn a nickel?"

I was frightened. The man's bruised mouth slobbered, and I feared his pinpoint eyes. But another nickel tempted Joey, and he was braver than I. He went over to talk with the man.

The man took him into the tenement hallway.

I waited in the street. A minute or two passed, but it seemed longer. I fidgeted nervously. An old bearded Jew peddling apples serenely read a newspaper by his pushcart. I stood beside him and looked at the apples.

Suddenly I heard a scream. Joey rushed out of the tenement pursued by the scarecrow corpse.

"Momma, momma!" Joey screamed. "He tried to take my pants off!"

The old peddler stood up, his glasses falling down on his nose in amazement. Joey flung himself into the old man's arms. The scarecrow, grinding his teeth and making queer strangled noises in his throat, knocked the old peddler to the sidewalk, and grabbed Joey. What eyes. They bulged, red and swollen from the sockets, and the eyelids flapped frantically.

Joey fought and screamed. The man held him. Suddenly a stout little Jew in a flannel shirt and cap walked up. He was smoking a pipe, but he took it out of his mouth, and hit two powerful blows at the corpse's face.

"You goddamned pervert, let that kid go!" said the stout snub-nosed stranger. The bum was staggered by the punches. He released Joey, and looked around him wildly. Other people had gathered. A knife flashed. The pervert had slashed the face of the stout little man a red crooked line like lightning. It was all swift as lightning.

Then two Italian laborers who had been digging a sewer nearby were electrified with rage. They swung their shovels over their heads, and crashed them with full force on the skull of the bum. He collapsed to the sidewalk without a sound. And then there came an epidemic of madness on the sudden crowd. Bedlam, curses, blood, a tornado of inflamed cruel faces. Everyone, even the women, kicked, punched and beat with shovels the limp ugly body on the sidewalk. One told the other of what this man had done. It turned people quite mad. If a cop had not arrived, the pervert would have been torn into little bleeding hunks.

Joey and I, forgotten, escaped from the scene. Joey was sobbing bitterly, and I did not know what to do for him. Neither of us now had the slightest desire to go to Cheap Haber's or to find any other adventures that morning. We wanted to be back on our own block. We broke into a trot, Joey gulping with sobs even as he ran.

And then, at last, we arrived in safety at our own block. And there the little girls were still dancing around the handorgan with such joy. The grownups still watched them with caressing smiles. Their world was still the same, though ours had forever changed. Never would Joey or I quite trust a stranger again. Never would we walk without fear through the East Side, for now we knew it as a jungle where wild beasts prowled, and toadstools grew in a poisoned soil—perverts, cokefiends, kidnapers, firebugs, Jack the Rippers.



**AUGUST, 1929**



*Drawn by Wm. Gropper.*

**EAST SIDE**

# WHITE COLLAR SLAVES

(Fragments from "Cassanod", a book of industrial Poetry)

By **STANLEY BURNSHAW**

We are three hundred strong, and every day  
Over the tables where our bodies bend,  
Our pencils juggle numbers, numbers, numbers,  
Whether it be a heap of rusting iron,  
Cutting of wages, or a newfound treasure,  
We are the ones who mark it in our numbers—  
We whom the workers scorn as "glossy pants  
Who sit all day playing with pencils" while they  
Sweat and bend for their little stack of pay:  
Yet whom they know as the stronger, since we keep  
Numbers that hold strange meanings: numbers that tell  
Secret tales that they may never know.

Only we of the three thousand here  
Know how this kingdom-city came to be:  
Here in these books of numbers: it is here  
How twenty years ago on a dirty alley  
Kern, vendor of bottles, dreamed all day long  
Of schemes to build himself a chest of gold;  
How one day an inventor came his way  
And told him tales of massive bridges and towers  
And how he might be one to build such things  
Would he but offer courage and some gold . . .  
So they began: the back cell of the store  
Was filled with drawing boards, designs, blueprints;  
And Kern had made a pact that in return  
For courage, gold, and faith he would be paid  
The most of any gold that might be earned.  
So things went on and as the dreamer of bridges  
And wondrous towers dreamed on and toiled, so grew  
The seed of his mind; and in a few packed years  
Engineers, tables, and blueprints cluttered the room,  
And Kern drew schemes to seek out other men  
Who walk their days halfblind with far-off images  
And cry for help to make their visions bloom.

And time passed on. Its passing brought such men:  
One by one with the years they came . . . till now  
We who read these books of numbers, today,  
Know how these acres came to be a kingdom  
Of roaring flames, machines, and wheels turning  
To the secret motions born of wondering minds—  
Secrets turned by the will of men, to build  
For him who vandals dream, a treasure trove.

Armed with such tales as these, we go, the three-hundred,  
Three hundred strong . . . We know the hidden meanings  
Of numbers, numbers, numbers. On we go  
With facts and figures blazing in our brains,  
Whirling about in furious order of meanings:  
Whirling, whirling, buzzing, blazing, whirling  
Again, numbers, fact, figures, numbers,  
Until sometimes it seems we cannot see  
A stray laborer going down the road  
But instantly we call to mind his wage,  
The kind of job he does, his shop, his foreman,  
How many hours he worked last week, how often  
He comes in late or early, spring, winter.  
Sometimes it seems we cannot hear a word  
But we must translate every syllable  
Into meaningful numbers, numbers, numbers . . .

And it is so we wander, morning, evening,  
Having come to see all shape and word and deed  
As numbers—everything we think or do  
Whirls, buzzes, whirls, till suddenly  
It finds a place in the brain, a number, number!  
We of the number-hours, three hundred strong.

All day the rain. And here all afternoon  
The soft sky drizzles and the world is dead.  
The only sound to break the monotone  
Of darkened dullness, is the sudden stab  
Of a railroad whistle screaming thru the air  
The coming of an endless line of freighters.

Outside below, the stockyards and the cars:  
Only the sound of steel clanging on steel  
Cuts this stillness—and the shouts of the men:  
Great-limbed handlers juggling hook and grapple,  
Crowbar and sledge, yelling curses and roaring  
Straddling the wet steel bars beneath the rain.

Some inside the buildings stare thru windows  
To look out on the drizzling earth; and smile  
Contented to be one of those inside,  
So warm and dry, while outside dripping bodies  
Of steel-bar handlers toil on in the rain.

So warm and dry above their desks all day.  
These movers of pencils, men of the mind!  
Who earn their bread by what some tricks of thought  
Have made of sheets of paper marked with symbols!  
The minds of the world of fortune, now beholding  
In pity those who move and hurl and raise  
Loads of iron, mountains of strength, now cursing  
Now laughing in their mad game under the rain.

Pitiful there, these pitiers stand, alone  
With none to tell them how the ways of truth  
Would have the great-limbed movers look at them  
With pity: they, the strong mind of the world  
Now pitying the strong men! . . . And they stand  
Looking outside contented, never dreaming  
That men were made to feel the wondrous play  
Of muscles bending, to delight in the strain  
Of shoulder and thigh—and thus to earn their bread  
By that same strength that is the clean, full glory  
Of sun and wind and rain and thus to make  
At last, the work days an ode to joy.

Secure they stand there in their pitiful way  
Glad to be dry and warm, thanking the heavens  
That made their souls content, and wise to thank  
Their fate for what they are . . . Tho all their lives  
They will not glory once in the singing joy  
Of thigh and muscle straining; of the rain  
Beating on bodies swaying now proud and strong  
Beating like waterwind, free—as on the faces  
Of these strong men now hurling bars of steel,  
Great-limbed jugglers, grapplers, straddling the bars,  
Roaring, cursing, laughing under the rain.

## WARNING

It is well you should realize  
Not death but life  
Went militantly forth  
From the embrace of your electric chair  
Scattering red roses  
Blossoming into redder flags  
Symbolic of flames licking up from a hell of hatred  
Destined some day to engulf all Fullers and Thayers!

HENRY GEORGE WEISS.



*Drawn by Wm. Gropper*

**ANOTHER KID**

# THE INTELLECTUAL WASTELAND

By V. F. CALVERTON

T. S. Eliot has startled many of his followers by his recent declarations of attitude. In the preface to his volume of collected essays *For Lancelot Andrewes*, he has made clear his intellectual position and one may even say his philosophy of life. My "general point of view" writes Mr. Eliot, "may be described as classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion." Such words in our day seem to have an antiquated echo. Yet they should not come as such a sharp surprise to those readers who have watched the curious changes in the literary thought of our generation. The reversion toward the religious has been pronounced in the attitudes of many of our contemporaries. Ever since the War this religious mysticism has become conspicuous. In Massis's *Defense of the West* it attains the form almost of a passionate supplication. Romain Rolland, Malraux, Paul Morand, and Count Keyserling have all adopted at times a mystical attitude toward the East that is essentially religious in dedication.

Beneath all this attitude and sentiment is the cry of heart-break. The decay of old values has come upon us with such swift descent that most minds, socially unprepared for such change, have been unable to orient themselves amidst the current chaos. Hence they turn back to outworn dogmas or alien cults for escape. The disintegration of the bourgeois concepts of economic and political existence, and the good life, has thrown the age into a mood of confusion and despair.

It may seem a far cry from the esoteric criticism of T. S. Eliot to the obvious lucubrations of Walter Lippmann and Joseph Wood Krutch, and yet there is a familiar and binding element in the logic of the three of them. In Lippmann's *Preface to Morals*\*\* and Krutch's *Modern Temper*\*\*\* there is the same cry of heart-break, the same disenchantment and despair. And this despite the fact that Eliot is a pure litterateur, Lippmann an unadorned pragmatist, and Krutch a philosophic critic of the revolt and reevaluation that have come over our intellectual life. The age has gotten into them all. There is one distinction in the conclusions of Krutch and Lippmann however, that stands out as signal. While both end their analyses with a note of impotency, Krutch at least accepts the end of his age of gold with the courage of a defeated warrior, but Lippmann surrenders his ideals to the sickening escape of complacency.

Eliot returns quietly to classicism in literature and anglo-catholicism in religion; Krutch dreams painfully of an age when men were "noble men" and the light of grandeur had not gone out of the universe; and Lippmann unctuously discourses on "the philosophy of the spirit," the presence of the "kingdom of God within you," and the wisdom of being above the battle so that you can "take the world as it comes, and remain quite unperturbed" while Negroes are lynched in Georgia, mill-workers shot in Gastonia, and Sacco and Vanzetti are executed in Boston.

Sick stuff this for a sick world!

*The Modern Temper* "is at once a study and a confession," writes Mr. Krutch in the Foreword to his volume. In reality it is more of a confession than a study. Nevertheless, in fairness to Mr. Krutch it should be said that it is as much of a confession of the fears of the liberal mind in general as of those of its author in particular. In this respect, its confession has an extraordinary significance. It is more than an elegy in the form of a solo. The same fears that in many ways trouble Mr. Lippmann also worry Mr. Krutch. The disappearance of the old certitudes: the concept of an absolute God, the belief in an absolute morals, the faith in an absolute science, has shaken men's minds out of all confidence and conviction. We wander today among uncertainties as a consequence, argues Mr. Krutch, and there is nothing

any longer upon which we can fasten our faith. Even the ideal of love, which had replaced God in latter-nineteenth and early twentieth-century thought, has begun to recede in influence and meaning. Today the idea of love is ridiculed as sentimentality, and faith in it as an individual or social curative has vanished. Beginning with the Copernican astronomy which dethroned man in the universal hierarchy of things, modern thought has made man into a sport of creation instead of its Lord. As a result of all this revolutionary change in man's attitude toward the world, himself, and the values he once thought eternal, a great transformation ending in intellectual despair has come over the human soul. The old ideas represented the world as man liked to have it; the new as "he gradually comes to discover it." Hope has become an irony. Skepticism has become the prevailing attitude of thought. All this is what Mr. Krutch sees as having happened to us, and, seeing it in the way he does, he realizes that "ours is a lost cause" in a world that is too much for us.

It is easy to describe such logic as sentimental. A more important task is to examine the nature of the argument in terms of its premises. In the first place, it is the loss of the humanistic spirit which Mr. Krutch particularly laments. This humanism, as Mr. Krutch himself realizes, is individualistic in spirit. It is natural, therefore, that any new order of society in which this individualism is less conspicuous, or evanescent, would promise no escape from his despair. On the other hand, it would deepen it. And turning for a moment to certain of his statements concerning man in his more "magnificent" estate, we are brought face to face with the spirit of his argument. In discussing *The Tragic Fallacy*, and drama during the days of Shakespeare, Mr. Krutch contends that "the tendency to lay the scene of a tragedy at the court of a king is not the result of any arbitrary convention, but of the fact that the tragic writers believed easily in greatness just as we believe easily in meanness." Such a contention is purely sentimental. Why then should we have all tragedies laid in "noble" or "royal" surroundings as long as plays were mainly written for, and encouraged by, the aristocracy, and laid in non-aristocratic environments after the power of the aristocracy waned? Mr. Krutch's very excellent interpretation of Restoration drama in an earlier book of his should certainly have convinced him that the aristocratic conception of tragedy was indeed an "arbitrary convention" that was deeply-rooted in the social life of the time. And then for him to further assert that "we do not write about kings (any longer) because we do not believe that any man is worthy to be one and we do not write about courts because hovels seem to us to be dwellings more appropriate to the creatures who inhabit them" is carrying sentimentality to an even further extreme.

What do we have here? Is this not familiar lament for an age of gold which never existed except in the minds of those poets who dreamed of it, a lament that has been heard many times and in many places? Is it not in this instance as in many others a logic of escape based upon fiction and not upon fact? "We can no longer tell tales of the fall of noble men," Mr. Krutch adds "because we do not believe that noble men exist. Did not the dramatists tell tales of noble men in those days because *noblemen* employed them for that purpose? And did they not begin to tell tales of middle-class men when the middle classes became their source of support?"

And then in such an observation as this:

"If the plays and novels of today deal with littler people and less mighty emotions it is not because we have become interested in commonplace souls and their unglamorous adventures but because we have come, willy-nilly, to see the soul of man as commonplace and its emotions as mean."

are we not confronted with a revelation of attitude that is anachronistically aristocratic?

Is it any wonder then that Mr. Krutch can see no hope any-

\**For Lancelot Andrewes*, T. S. Eliot, Doubleday Doran. \$2.00.

\*\**A Preface to Morals* by Walter Lippmann. MacMillan. \$2.50

\*\*\**The Modern Temper* by Joseph Wood Krutch. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.50.



where? If the very democracy of spirit, which is repudiated in his words, can mean nothing to him, then there can be only despair in the rise of this sentiment in the modern world. Do not these sentiments explain something of the more sweeping despair which we find in his analysis of many of the other aspects of our life and thought today?

If Mr. Krutch could see in a new order of society, in which communism replaced individualism, not an invasion of the new barbarians, but the prospect of a world in which man really became the master of his own creations, and a greater lord over earthly things than he has ever been—then he would not need to revert to such despair, and might even help save hope from becoming an irony. It is only such a vision that can save our intellectuals from their sweetly-nurtured concept of futility.

While Mr. Krutch is sentimental—and one must note a kind of brave beauty in his sentimentality—Mr. Lippmann is sophomoric. Winding his platitudes into new forms, Mr. Lippmann does not even have the courage to face the end of his logic. From his own point of view Mr. Krutch's despair is legitimate. It is his point of view with which we have quarreled. From Mr. Lippmann's point of view the same despair should follow. But when one is a pragmatist instead of a philosopher, or when one really lives *undangerously*, one can afford to be a "wise man," and "move easily through life," without being "gnawed at his vitals." Mr. Lippmann recognizes and comments upon many of the same changes that Mr. Krutch described, the decay of the concept of God, the breakdown of our morals, the failure of science, but he will not allow himself as "a mature man," concerned with "the religion of the spirit," to be perturbed by these fundamentals. While he distrusts socialism and communism as a form of social

order, he is convinced that we can escape our difficulties "by refining the human character through a better understanding of the environment." Fortunately, in line with the logic of the liberal, he does not attempt to define words which are so conveniently vague that they are meaningless—and harmless too. But even at that it's a fine job, and a fittingly slow one, for the "refiners."

While Mr. Krutch's declarations of attitude are reprehensively inadequate as we have shown, he always endeavors to attain a clarity and definiteness of statement that cannot be described as other than admirable. Mr. Lippmann, on the other hand, is guilty of utterance that is inexorably shrewd in its evasion. It is this kind of writing that, in its deceptive emptiness, is far more dangerous than conservative text-books and reactionary polemics. As proof of my contention, I cite the following passage:

"The only kind of liberty which is workable in the real world is the liberty of the disinterested man, of the man who has transformed his passions by an understanding of necessity. He can, as Confucius said, follow what his heart desires without transgressing what is right. For he has learned to desire what is right." (whose rights we beg to ask?)

"The more perfectly we understand the implications of the machine technology upon which our civilization is based, the easier it will be for us" (does he mean the worker?) "to live with it. We shall discern the ideals of our industry in the necessities of industry itself. They are the direction in which it must evolve if it is to fulfill itself. That is what ideals are. They are not hallucinations. They are not a collection of pretty and casual preferences. Ideals are an imaginative understanding of that which is desirable in that which is possible. As we discern the ideals of the machine technology we can consciously pursue them, knowing that we are not vainly trying to impose our casual prejudices, but are in harmony with the age we live in."

Page Judas!

When words can be used to conceal such utterly shallow substance one can only wish along with Clarence Day that men were of feline instead of simian origin. So much chatter about meaningless abstractions—used to such vicious effect.

Heartbreak it is all around. Heartbreak for the literary recluse, Eliot; for the sentimental philosopher, Krutch; and for pawn-broker of the intellectual life, Lippmann.

## Moonlight on the Volga

From the upper deck of the steamer *Karl Liebknecht* I look down upon an almost indescribable heap of humanity sprawled out on the lower deck. Long-bearded patriarchs; babes asleep on their mothers' breasts; lovers making the same old promises, sitting on kegs of herring; peasants wearing leather caps, their feet tied in "lapti," sleeping, and dreaming of larger crops and lower prices on textiles.

Every inch of space is taken, either by a body or by luggage and bedding. There is a miscellaneous assortment of carpenters' tools, scythes, sausages, water-melons, huge loaves of black bread. All gently rocked on the bosom of Mother Volga.

Lights twinkling from the shore-line; strains from the balalaika floating out from the shores where a few years ago the cries and moans of the victims of famine and pestilence rent the air.

On top of a huge coil or rope sit a young couple, a boy and a girl, with a book between them, reading by the dim light of a near-by lamp. They read and talk in low tones . . . read and talk. Perched above the level of the surrounding mass, they seem to symbolize education that will lift these dark people from the muck and filth of the Russian village. These young people have forgotten sleep . . . there is so much to learn and to do.

Most of them are sleeping peacefully now, oblivious of the crowding and discomfort . . . a Red Army soldier leans against the railing, gazing out over the rippling waves of the moonlit river.

SAM RUKIN.



Woodcut by J. L. Wells

## AFRICAN FAMILY



*Woodcut by J. L. Wells*

## **AFRICAN FAMILY**



Woodcut by Gan Kolski

## PROVINCETOWN, MASS. II

### I TELL YOU THAT AMERICA SHALL RISE

*You tell me that America is dead,  
You tell me that a land of smoke and steel  
Whose poets are in exile, patriots hushed  
Is prone and ready for the conqueror's heel.*

*You tell me that the spirit of our sires,  
Has burned to blackened embers in our breast;  
You tell me that revolt's last flicker died  
With Sacco and Vanzetti hurled to rest.*

*I tell you that the hour has not yet come,  
I tell you that America shall rise;  
Your souls shall hear our Revolution's drum,  
The sky-born eagle sleeps, but never dies.*

*I tell you that the Exiles will return,  
And if they falter in the ripe, red dawn,  
The phantom army of our glorious dead  
Will seize their fallen swords, and carry on!*

LILITH LORRAINE.

### FLATBUSH AFTERNOON

*daytime slumbers on a cool midwinter in flatbush.  
nothing much even poets can care to say now.  
don't make talk talk here; here no mysteries.  
autocars ask no questions;*

*storekeepers ask no questions;  
politely inviting customers . . .  
ladies with dogs, with lap dogs  
with lap-lap dogs*

*ladies pass serenely,  
totally unconscious; total wrecks  
of women—spayed  
hens.*

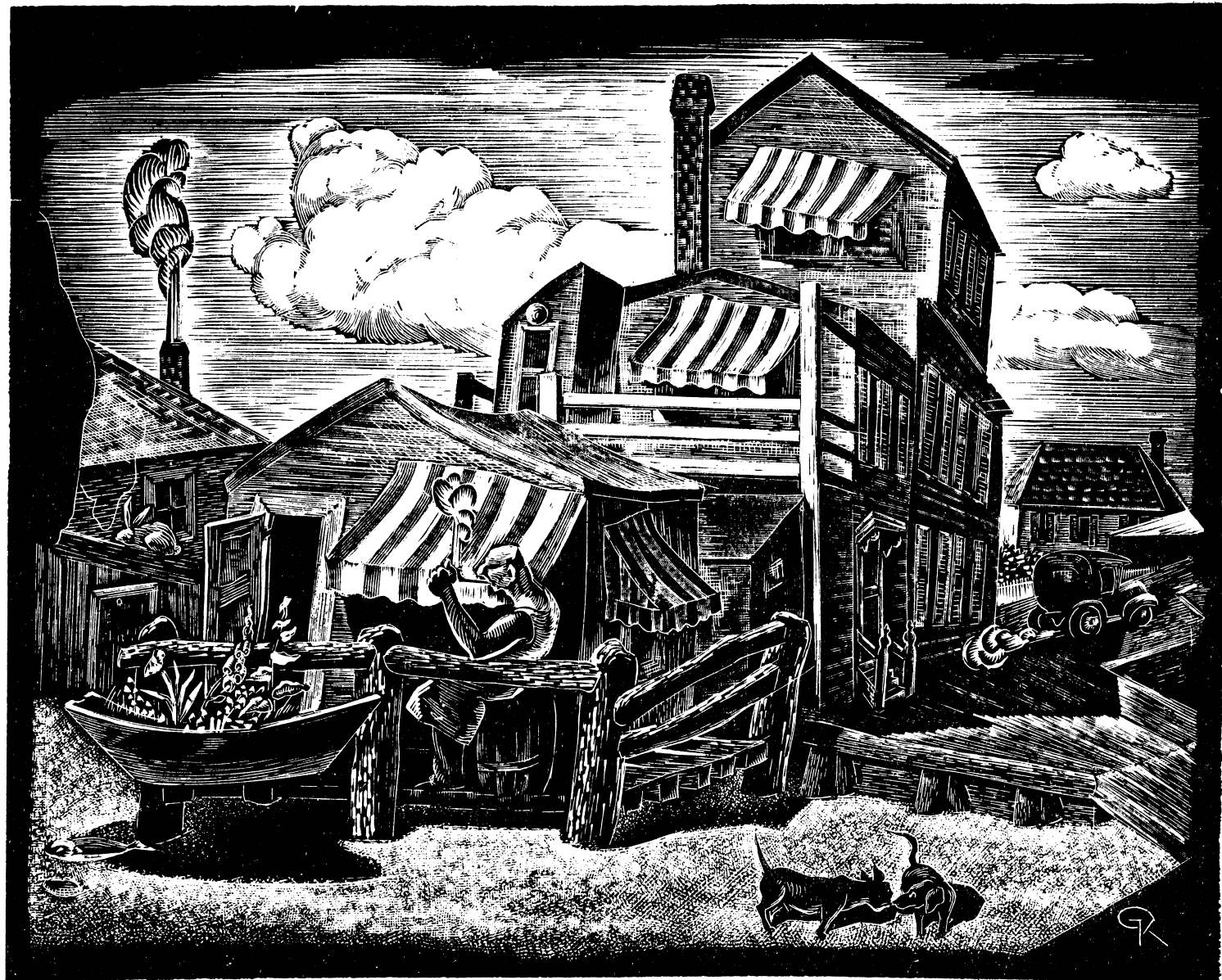
*daytime in midwinter flatbush sunnily  
yawns—not cold,  
not warm; polite.*

*courteously expects no commotion  
in the clean quiet streets  
below, here a dull hell*

*for angry devils like me.  
move south, west, east,  
young men.*

*try the bronx or canarsie.  
expect no mysteries  
in polite streets.*

HERMAN SPECTOR.



PROVINCETOWN, MASS. II

Woodcut by Gun Kolski



## DID THE NEW PLAYWRIGHTS THEATRE FAIL? By JOHN DOS PASSOS

"In the face of these results which may be important in the history of the theatre, even important politically, and which were achieved in the midst of tremendous difficulties both human and material, one may fairly say that the failure of our enterprise is relatively unimportant". Piscator in the article translated in the July issue of the *New Masses*.

This is a good text on which to hang a summing up of what the New Playwrights Theatre did and did not accomplish.

In the first place I think we can cross out political results. The American mind of all classes and denominations is too accustomed to keeping art or ideas in separate watertight compartments. Their influence on action is infinitesimal and only to be measured in generations and major emotional movements.

Now as for results in the theatre! I don't feel that the various people who have worked with and for the New Playwrights Theatre at different times need to be ashamed of their work or to feel that they wasted their time.

*Loud Speaker*, in spite of many crudities, was a fairly successful attempt to put a political farce into three dimensions, to break down the pictureframe stage and to turn a stream of satire on the audience vigorously and unashamedly. It was fairly natural that the audience, being used to the conventions of the pictureframe and to the carefully pigeonholed distinctions of farce, musical comedy, drama, didn't like it. Hatred of novelty is one of the main characteristics of the human organism. But if you want a new theatre, there's nothing to do but to have one and to let the audience recover its equilibrium as it can. You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs.

*Earth* was not a very successful production, but it was important as the incubator for the method of treating a play like a musical composition that was later so successful in *Singing Jailbirds* and that I think Em Jo Basshe is likely to develop still further whenever he gets a chance. The play itself seems to me to be a masterpiece.

*The Belt* was a success all along the line. It was a play that had something to say very much in the spirit of American workers; it said it simply and recklessly and the audience understood.

*The Centuries* was an experiment with multiple stages carried on with great difficulty on account of the small size of the theatre. There were moments when the production came off. Anyway it was probably the first attempt in America to put an ethnological document on the stage, to move the audience with a slice of the history of a race instead of with episodes in the lives of individual puppets.

*The International*, I feel, was the most interesting experiment we made. Many people disagree with me I know. The form of farce-melodrama it seems to me is one of the best for transmitting large-scale ideas to an audience. The enormous popularity of this form in Russia at present more or less proves that. In Lawson's play it was combined with a series of direct lyrical outbursts like those of the choruses of Greek tragedy. In the production all the conventions of the pictureframe stage were dropped and an attempt was made to introduce the audience to a set of conventions much nearer those of the ballet or operatic pageant. You couldn't show 'em a thing. People of all shades of political opinion united in damning it. I think in many cases it was the successful scenes annoyed people most. It was obvious that there were many weaknesses in the last act of the play and that much of the acting was poor and a large part of the production rather sketched in than accomplished. But I think that the reason why the abuse was so universal was that in *The International* a new type of theatre was taken for granted. And everybody was trying to see it in terms of a three act problem play by Pinero.

*Hoboken Blues* was more or less of a failure, due partly to what Mrs. Eddy used to call the malicious animal magnetism that by that time surrounded the theatre, and partly to the fact that nobody would take for granted the rather childish but unpretentious blackface minstrelshow method of presentation.

*Singing Jailbirds* was the best example presented of the method

of production where the director treats the play as if it were a musical score. I think it got over so easily to the audiences because it did not depart too far from the methods of expressionism with which they were already familiar.

About my own play I can only say that in spite of much adverse criticism, from my own point of view the production was very successful: the best acting we ever had and a method of setting and direction that made the audience accept the elimination of the proscenium arch and curtain without batting an eyelash.

It may seem silly to many people, my continued harping on abolishing the pictureframe stage where the audience let itself be tricked into imagining that it is *really* seeing a slice of life. I think it is very important. That form and content in the theatre are indissolubly linked is a sort of axiom that needs no argument. The revolutionary theatre will aim to justify the ways of politics (mass action) to the individual-in-the-mass much the way the Greek theatre justified the ways of the priestinterpreted gods to the citizens of the cityrepublics. The whole scale and category of ideas is entirely different from that of the bourgeois theatres which aimed to make the private lives of wealthy or hopetobewealthy people interesting, exciting tragic or funny to them for a couple of hours after dinner. The first step towards realizing a revolutionary theatre seems to me to be to work with new tools. This neither radicals nor reactionaries are willing to grant, or the fact that the first attempts with new tools are sure to be clumsy.

Eisenstein said last summer that Meyerhold had carried the theatre as far as it was possible to take it in every possible direction and that the theatre was dead for the modern world. I don't agree with him, though I think it is fairly obvious that all that function of the theatre which came to be more economically and successfully taken by the Talkies is doomed. It seems to me that the theatre still has enough vitality even in America to carve out an empire for itself if it can show enough flexibility to use the tools that are being discarded by dying circuses and vaudeville shows. It's nip and tuck and the theatre director must have the means to use each living instrument at hand and discard everything that shows the slightest taint of death and decay.

I think the New Playwrights Theatre failed, in the first place because authors are largely too preoccupied with their own works to make good producers and secondly because the problems involved were not seen clearly enough in the beginning. But the fact that it existed makes the next attempt in the same direction that much easier. One thing is certain: the time for half way measures in ideas or methods has gone, if indeed, it ever was.



Drawn by I. Klein

"I want to get thru madam. If you can't move, would you mind leaning backwards?"



*Drawn by I. Klein*

*"I want to get thru madam. If you can't move, would you mind leaning backwards?"*



## A TRIAL OF CHINESE REVOLUTIONISTS

### A GYPO IN SAWDUST

By JOSEPH KALAR

As damp aromatic loads of whitepine, norway, spruce, tamarack, poplar, pulled into the lumberyard by sweating, puffing, flatulating horses pounded on tense gargantuan rumps by cursing teamsters, pass him, he smiles with the imbecile expression of a man winning on the stockmarket, with the blatant joy of a bookkeeper getting a cigar from the boss. Years of piecework have turned him into a cursing vicious automaton, a monomaniac whose nights in bed are made wetly hideous by nightmares of lumberpiles toppling into allies with a madness of flying planks, of skyhigh piling machines remorselessly dropping huge planks on his head, bearing lumber to him so rapidly he cannot take it away.

On warm days the sun beats tenderly on Lars. He is getting old. His body begins to creak. Rotgut and homebrew have ravaged muscles bulging with much hefting of pitch-heavy lumber. "You take a gypo," the dayworkers say, "you take a gypo now. Two or three years they gypo and then they aint human no more. They get lumber hungry. They never get enough lumber. Look at the way they tear into the loads, like a mad bull tearing the guts out of a dog."

To Lars, life hangs in the balance on the number of feet the scaler has allowed him on the famous blue ticket. So many hundred feet, so many thousand. He looks at the blue ticket, his face becomes red with rage, he roars, "Well, Jesus Christ, is that all that lousy bonus bastard gave us for this load? Well, suffering Christ, it don't pay to pile lumber no more with a stoolpigeon like that!"

When Lars dies heaven will be for him a huge lumberyard

basking under an eternal sun; heaven will be for him a huge piling machine creaking skyward slowly with hooks placed ten feet apart, each hook bearing a 2x10 plank, and on each plank a gigantic schooner of beer, damply cool, erupting into white lava of foam.

### GASTONIA STRIKE SONG

This song was written by Odell Corley, 11 year old Gastonia striker and "poet laureate" of the strike. It is sung to the tune of a typical Southern blues melody and has become popular among the textile workers of Gastonia.

*May I sleep in your tent tonight, Beal?  
For it's cold lying out on the ground,  
And the cold North wind whistlin' upon us,  
And we have no place to lie down.*

*Manville-Jenckes has done us dirty,  
And he set us out on the ground  
We are sorry we didn't join you  
When the rest went out and joined.*

*Oh, Beal, O please forgive us,  
And take us into your tents  
We will always stick to the union  
And not scab on you no mo'.*

*You have tor' up our hall and wrecked it,  
And you went in and threw out our grub,  
Only God up in heaven knows  
What you scabs done to us.*

ODELL CORLEY.



**A TRIAL OF CHINESE REVOLUTIONISTS**



# THE BETRAYAL OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

BY MAXWELL S. STEWART

Events in China have undergone such rapid and unforeseen changes that very few foreigners, even those dwelling within the country, have been able to grasp their full significance. It is generally known that the Kuomintang, presumably the party of Sun Yat-sen, has "unified" the country under its control, and that today the flag of the white sun on a blue field flies over a country which is united for the first time for a dozen years. It is true that this peaceful picture is occasionally disturbed by reports of "communist" uprisings from this or that section

of the country, but after the first report these are usually never mentioned again and the public assumes them to be mere sporadic outbursts without any real significance. What the outside world does not see is the fact that the present government is the revolutionary party of Sun Yat-sen in name only, and that militarists of a new school, indistinguishable from the old, have usurped the name and authority of the Kuomintang and thus neatly side-tracked the whole revolutionary movement.

The press has contained very little of the stories of counter-revolution, intrigue, and wholesale slaughter which have been carried on under the pretense of ridding China of dangerous "Reds" and "communist agitators." What actually has happened is that under the guise of ridding the nation of dangerous trouble-makers, the militarists have been able to suppress the true revolution by means of one of the most drastic reigns of terror in all history. China has seen a change of rulers, but the great mass revolt which enheartened the oppressed of all countries three years ago has been set back for some decades.

The "Nationalist" government which now rules China is controlled and dominated by these very militarists who have so effectively stamped out all revolutionary activity. Even the pretense that it is a people's government was very largely dropped when at the Third Kuomintang Congress sixty per cent of the delegates, virtually all that attended, were nominated or named by the government itself. The party still exists and many civilians are active within its ranks, but it has been deprived of all of its power, and must content itself with ineffectual criticism. It dare not go further. The true revolutionary elements, however, such as organized labor and the smaller peasantry, have absolutely no voice even in party affairs. Their only recourse is apparently the sporadic uprisings which have been so drastically put down by the present regime.

At the inception of the Nationalist movement, every effort was made to organize the workers and peasants, and to secure their active cooperation in the war against the Northern warlords. The Nationalist advance from Canton to Hankow, and thence to Shanghai was made possible only through the use of the worker and peasant unions by the Kuomintang. The climax of this movement came when Shanghai was captured by Chiang Kai-shek in March, 1927 by the aid of a general strike and the arming of the workers throughout the Greater Shanghai district. The turnover here, as elsewhere, was quiet and without bloodshed, but would have been impossible without the active assistance of the trade unions.

But almost immediately after the capture of Shanghai, General Chiang Kai-shek declared his independence of the Nationalist Government in Wuhan, and set out ruthlessly to destroy the workers' power within his territory. At that time thousands were arrested, and hundreds were executed, while all the legitimate trade unions were driven underground. Then in July 1927, the military leaders at Wuhan staged a coup d'etat against the Nationalist Government, and immediately launched out on a "party purging" campaign which was designed to effectively dispose of all who were even suspected of revolutionary tendencies. From July to September of that year there were 950 executions, 890 imprisoned and over 4,000 refugees from that district alone. The victims

*We have just received this article from China, written by a professor at Yenching University. The author, writes from the scene of a social drama involving four hundred million people. While not agreeing with all his opinions, in view of the new developments in China we believe his article assumes special interest.—Ed.*

were for the most part students, both men and women, and those who had distinguished themselves in the newly-formed peasant and labor unions. Hundreds of innocent men and women suffered along with those who were undoubted radicals. The success of the coup d'etat was a signal to militarists all over China to rid themselves of all those who threatened their rule by the simple device of calling all their opponents "communists." In Honan, under the rule of Feng Yu-hsiang, 350 cotton mill workers in the Weiwei district were killed that August. During the

year which followed over six hundred revolutionaries were arrested and imprisoned, while in the neighboring province of Shensi, also under the "Christian General," peasant uprisings were ruthlessly put down with a loss of over 600 lives. In Hunan under Tang Sen-chi, 1900 were killed during the last four months of 1927.

However it was in Kwantung, the birth-place of all progressive and radical movements in China, that the toll of counter-revolution has been the most appalling. In the fall of 1927, after the defeat of the so-called "Red" army at Swatow, two thousand are said to have been killed. The soviet uprising at Canton in December of the same year was put down amidst scenes of cruelty and barbarity which are almost beyond human credulity. One dare not even record here the revolting methods of torture practiced by the "white" armies, or the unbelievable maltreatment of the bodies of the dead. The killing seems to have been practically indiscriminate. All who gave the faintest sign of modernism were acclaimed revolutionaries and killed on the spot. After two thousand workers and peasants had given their lives in a vain defense of the revolt and the remainder had fled, no less than 5,700 men, women, and youths are reported to have been slaughtered in cold blood. Hundreds of houses and stores were looted on the pretext of searching for "Reds," and whole villages were set afire. Elsewhere in the province five thousand persons are said to have been executed or slain during the spring and summer of 1928. Many villages were razed to the ground and the entire population killed or driven into exile.

To go thus through the provinces of China and list the number of victims of the frantic campaign of the militarists against the revolutionary elements would be a tiresome and sordid task. It is sufficient to point out that scarcely a province in the whole of China escaped the sword of the political executioner. Although accurate figures are not available due to the semi-secret nature of the terrorist activities, and although the figures which are available may be greatly exaggerated, yet it is semi-officially reported that no less than 172,159 persons lost their lives at the hand of the counter-revolutionists. 4,000 others are reported to have been slain in battle; 21,000 houses are said to have been burned, and 18,740 persons imprisoned. These figures are quoted from the report of the Chinese Aid Society, a group organized for the relief of the victims of political oppression.

It is scarcely necessary to point out that among these thousands of dead are some of the most promising of China's youth. The cream of the nation was included in the revolutionary leadership. Right or wrong they gave their lives for what they felt to be the cause of justice and freedom. Heroes throughout history have done no more.

It may well be that the activities of these men and women were misdirected, but one has only to look at this report of unparalleled cruelty and stupid repression to understand the dire necessity which must have existed to drive men and women to brave such a fate; and one can well understand the violence wrought by the workers and peasants during their brief interval of power. History tells us that the violence of an uprising is in direct proportion to the ruthlessness of the oppression which provokes it. One cannot but wonder who is to bear the brunt of tomorrow's revolution.







LOUIS LOZOWICK 29

*Lithograph by Louis Lozowick*

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LOUIS LOZOWICK '29

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# BOOKS

Upton Sinclair

Charles Yale Harrison

REVIEWED BY:

Walt Carmon

Will Herberg

Edwin Rolfe

Stanley Burnshaw

S. S. Adamson

*Steel Chips*, by Idwal Jones, A. A. Knopf. \$2.50.

There is a certain fashion in writing which rules in America just now. The young fellows who went through the war are old and grim; they write with cold precision, scorn all emotions, and deny themselves the luxury of having any ideas. Nothing shocks them, nothing moves them—or if it does, they would not commit the bad taste of letting you know it. This fashion will pass, like others, but meantime it makes me feel old and out of place in the world.

I note especially the limitations of these writers. They have seen battles and bull-fights, wild parties and all kinds of sexual adventures. They have been everywhere that money is spent and human life and energy wasted. But apparently no one of them has ever been in any place where wealth is produced; no one has ever seen any useful labor; no one has ever heard of a strike, or a revolution, a political prisoner, a conscientious objector, a martyr or a hero. It seems strange to me—or rather it would seem strange, if I had not my Marxian formula all pat and ready to account for it.

But now a publisher, or rather his wife, sends me this book called *Steel Chips*, by Idwal Jones. I had heard of the writer in the *American Mercury*, and also from my friend George Sterling. I knew he was a Hearst newspaper man, having come to New York by way of San Francisco, and that did not sound promising. The scene of his novel is a machine shop, and I thought to myself, with my Marxian formula: "Here is where the modern objectivity and aloofness will break down."

But it didn't, and I am happy to have been disappointed. Mr. Jones has done his job honestly, and for the first time I find the new formula to my taste. He spent four years in a machinshop, so the jacket tells us, and he gives us the whole thing in his book, in the modern manner—cold, precise, as dependable and exact as one of the fine machines his characters are making. He declines to get excited about anything; he tells you about it in the aloof and hard-hearted manner of the boy who has come back from battles, and doesn't want to think about it any more. "Oh, hell!" he says, and you have to supply the emotions for yourself.

But the facts are there: the huge shop, and the masses of workers, many of them sharply individualized, living their everyday lives, and at the same time having adventures. The radicals are there, and—a rare experience in bourgeois fiction—they talk and act like radicals. To be sure, they drink more than the ones I have known; but that may be because I have been unduly choicy in my radicals, and maybe, being a teetotaler as well as a Socialist, I have exercised a certain restraining influence. Anyhow, there they are, and they have a strike, and get licked, and go back to work, and the hero, who had helped to get out a radical paper, is made a boss, and we wonder what will happen to him then. But just at that interesting point the book stops; apparently it wouldn't be according to the modern formula for the reader to want to know the end, or for the novelist to think it worth while to tell him!

Don't let me complain too much, however; for this is a fine novel; solid and well made, real, alive, and a sign of the times—that the highbrows are finding out the working-class, and that a fashionable publisher is taking a chance on it!

UPTON SINCLAIR.

*Daughter of Earth*, by Agnes Smedley. Coward-McCann. \$2.50.

No woman has written like this before. I can recall not a single novel so bitterly, beautifully drawn from the fibre of life. *Daughter of Earth* brings to mind immediate comparisons with Nexo's *Pelle*, Sinclair's *Jungle* and the best of Jack London; in a measure it has features of the greatness of all of these. It is a book of one life and the experience of a class. It is a novel and a social document.

Perhaps there are many who recall the anonymous article "One Is Not Made of Wood," one of the finest things that has appeared in the three years of the *New Masses*. You will find the article interwoven in the pages of this book.

The rich soil of this autobiographical novel has been nourished by poverty. The experiences grown here have on them the warm breath of reality. All of it is born of American soil and remains close to the soil. "Workers cannot afford to take their eyes off the earth."

Here is pioneering farm life in Missouri; mining camps ablaze with class conflict; free speech fights of the I.W.W. on the coast; Hindu revolutionaries; war hysteria which sends her to the Tombs for six months. Underlying it all is the ever shadowing struggle for existence cruel and exacting. It is a tremendous experience.

Small wonder that in the record of such a life, there are occasions of warped bitterness. It is experience that has seen primarily not man's inhumanity to man but to woman. The social system that makes life a misery for man has added additional burdens to woman. It may be too, from this base, giving strength as well as weakness to the book, that future great novels written by women will spring.

The first half of *Daughter of Earth* is saturated in the acid of poverty that eats into the lives of a whole family and destroys it. Her father, a half-Indian, sinks his misery in drunkenness. Her mother wears her life to shreds over a wash-tub. Her sister dies of child-bearing and the hardships of a miserly Oklahoma homestead. Her brother is sent to the front in the last war. Her aunt becomes a diseased prostitute. "We belong to a class who have nothing and from whom everything is taken."

This is cold truth as firmly rigid as a skyscraper on a bare skyline. In the face of it all the illusions of a dominating class, of schools and churches, are swept aside as so much cob-web.

The latter half of the book is marred by the unnatural reactions of an embittered childhood and youth. Even her participation in the Hindu revolutionary movement is that of a true daughter of earth, still bitter, still in the struggle, but transplanted to other soil.

It would be unjust to rest on minor defects here. The broad healthy stride of this novel is that of a woman, a proletarian to her marrow. Let us make *Daughter of Earth* welcome. She is a fellow-worker. She is one of us.

WALT CARMON.

*Red Tiger—Adventures in Yucatan And Mexico*, by Phillips Russell. Illustrated by Leon Underwood. Brentano's. \$5.00

As warm as a friendly drink of tequila. A writer and an artist wander through southern Mexico. Their sympathetic approach allows them to get an authentic feel of the people and the country. Illustrated with many black and white drawings and color plates. Beautifully bound and printed.

# HERE IS WAR!

By CHARLES YALE HARRISON

*All Quiet on the Western Front*, by Erich Maria Remarque. Little, Brown & Co. \$2.50.

This book is written out of the agony and torture which is war. To me, who stood in the trenches facing the author's compatriots, the book seemed, as I read it, something more than a mere piece of war literature—it was war itself. The trench rats, the screaming and hissing of the shells, the fearladen eyes of the wounded as their comrades trample them to death in the delirious rush of the attack—these are all here and told with powerful simplicity and directness.

The hero of the story, the "I", is an educated, sensitive youth of eighteen who finds himself at the front. We follow a company of German soldiers in battle, on rest, doing fatigue duty, under fire, on leave and finally in the autumn of 1918 the hero is back in the line anxiously waiting for the armistice.

The descriptions of troops under fire are among the best I have ever read. Not only are they convincing to the reader who has never heard the maniacal shriek of an oncoming H. E. shell, but to war veterans who have read the book, these passages are slices of reality itself. Listen to this:

"That moment it breaks out behind us, swells, roars and thunders. We duck down—a cloud of flames shoots up a hundred yards ahead of us.

"The next minute under a second explosion part of the woods rises slowly in the air, three or four trees sail up and then crash to pieces. The shells begin to hiss like safety-valves—heavy fire—

"Take cover! yells somebody—Cover!"

"Not a moment too soon. The dark goes mad. It heaves and raves. Darkenesses blacker than the night rush on us with giant strides, over us and away . . .

"The wood vanishes, it is pounded, crushed, torn to pieces . . ."

\*\*\*

After a year in the line the company of a hundred and fifty is all but wiped out. Only thirty-two men remain. The hero is blasted and shattered emotionally by his experiences at the front. He goes on leave.

The ten days pass all too soon.

Back at the front! The war is coming to an end. The German lines are being smashed by an overwhelming storm of allied artillery fire. For every German airman there are five English, French and Americans. How well I remember those days, endless marching, feet as raw hunks of beef, attack after attack. Tanks, heavy guns, supply lorries streaming in an endless metallic river towards the cracking German lines. The Hindenburg Line caves in, crumbles to pieces. The armistice is coming. The end.

The book has had an amazing success. It has been translated into ten languages within four months of its publication. Here in America at the time of writing it has sold 170,000 copies.

Critics of all countries have been unstinting in their praise. Time and again it has been called the finest war book ever written. *The Manchester Guardian* hailed it as "the greatest of all war books." Ernest Toller wrote: "It is the strongest document that has come out of the war." The zenith of American eulogy was reached when Christopher Morley wrote in the *Saturday Review of Literature*: "I regard any mature reader who has a chance to read this book and does not, and who, having read it, does not pass it on among a dozen others, as a traitor to humanity."

It is a precarious business, I know, to stand as a non-conformist in the face of such a sweep of wild praise, but if the truth must be told *All Quiet on the Western Front* is not the best book on the war. A true war book written today while the world totters on the brink of another international catastrophe, must have in it a biting, accusing note. This, Remarque's book does not have. There is very little in the book that will keep a jingo-inflamed youngster from throwing himself into the cauldron of another world war.

Bruno Frank, writing in *Das Tage Buch*, says of the book: "It

is unanswerable, it cannot be evaded. It does not declaim, it never accuses, it only represents . . ."

Frank is perfectly correct. Remarque never accuses. For nearly 300 pages I read of every horror of war vividly painted; his mates are annihilated in a cause which Remarque surely knows to be senseless, wanton, criminal. He sees the people of Europe degraded, starved, humiliated, crushed. He sees his own mother and sister ill-fed, he sees other mothers and sisters in northern France, as I have seen, shamed, prostituted. He sees fifteen year-old, fair, Saxon boys stuffed into grotesque uniforms and sent off to the charnel-house of the Western Front. He has felt (although he does not even mention it in his book) the calculated, heartless oppression of the German military "discipline" and out of all this suffering not a word of condemnation, not a breath of accusation.

The hero of Remarque's book is a thoughtful person. Between battles he thinks of the horror of war, of its wanton destructiveness, of how men are spiritually murdered; but never a word of accusation of the Krupps and the other munition manufacturers, the financiers, the Junkers who plunged the German nation into this howling nightmare. I looked in vain for a description of an officer shot by his men in battle. This was a fact, I know it, I saw it with my own eyes at the third battle of the Somme, Dos Passos knows it, Barbusse knows it and millions of soldiers who have lived to tell the tale know it—but Remarque has one of his characters say that all this talk about killing officers is "rot."

When the author is through describing war, and he must of necessity draw conclusions, he indulges in vague metaphysics, in confused hopelessness. As the book rushes to its close I hoped to find at least one word of warning to the youth of the world of the impending military calamity which hangs over civilization (the book was written in 1928). Instead I found this:

"Had we returned home in 1916, out of the suffering and the strength of our experiences we might have unleashed a storm. Now if we go back we will be weary, broken, burnt out, rootless, and without hope. We will not be able to find our way any more.

"And men will not understand us—for the generation that grew up before us, though it passed these years with us here, already had a home and a calling; now will return to its old occupation, and the war will be forgotten—and the generation that has grown up after us will be strange and will push us aside. We will be superfluous even to ourselves, we will grow older, a few will adapt themselves, some others will merely submit, and most will be bewildered;—the years will pass and in the end we shall fall into ruin."

This is the message which Remarque gives to the millions of German youths who today are being befuddled with nonsense about war guilt, nationalism, who are being cajoled into the ranks of the monarchist Steel Helmets. With the whole of Europe staggering under a burden of armament that dwarfs that of 1914, he sadly concludes his book with aimless stuff about rootless, "lost" generations.

The older generation which fought with us, he says, will forget this war, this calculated sacrifice, will forget the crazed ferocity of a barrage, the ripped-open bellies, the spattered brains on parapets—it will forget this—why?—because it "already had a home and a calling; now it will return to its old occupations, and the war will be forgotten . . ." If one had an occupation and a home all was forgotten! What nonsense. Those of us who have lived through the war will never forget it; the memory of it persists like some fearful dream. This is vapid confusion, it is muddle-headedness; it is the sort of stuff which the arrant militarist likes to see written about war. It is faint sad stuff which cannot bear the bitterness of reality.

As Remarque stands in his trench and thinks these misty defeatist thoughts, what is happening behind the lines? The army is breaking into revolt. The republic is being established. In the streets of Berlin the barricades are lined by men no older



than Remarque. Ground down by a murderous, unparralleled discipline the German soldier is breaking loose, is deserting, is shooting down his officers. In the streets of the German cities who is fighting the Junkers? The youth of Germany—the “rootless” ones, the “lost” generation!

\* \* \*

*All Quiet on the Western Front* is not an anti-war book, it is simply a strong picture of certain phases of life in the German trenches. A mere recital of war-horror will never stop war. Ever since men first went into battle the terrors of human slaughter have been known. In London after an air-raid I saw recruiting offices beseiged by clamoring volunteers.

Books depicting war in all its nakedness have been written before 1914—Victor Hugo, Zola, Tolstoy, Stephen Crane, Ambrose Bierce—and in spite of these, when the drums of propoganda and war frenzy began to beat men went to war heedless of the horrors which awaited them. Better to tell the youth of the world *why* wars are made, not only how they are fought. Better to tell them of international competition for oil, coal, bonds, markets!

On page 283, Remarque speaks of the days of late summer, 1918. The German army is cracking under the strain of the re-enforced allied armies. The line is breaking in Belgium, France. Fresh armies are in the field; the air is black with allied planes. He writes:

“We are not beaten, for as soldiers we are better and more experienced we are simply crushed and driven back by overwhelming forces.”

Of course,—that’s how battles are won. The god of war marches with the strongest battalions. The same was true when the German army crashed through Belgium, when Mackensen went through Roumania—they advanced because they had superior numbers.

Every swashbuckling German staff officer has been saying this since 1918—We are not beaten . . . Every German reactionary nationalist has used this argument to whip up a militaristic feeling in Germany, to rehabilitate the old goose-stepping Imperial Army. There is nothing in Remarque’s book to offend the most devout monarchist who daily prays for the return of the Kaiser. Even Walter von Molo, president of the German Academy of Letters and ardent follower of Hindenburg writes of the book: “Let this book go into every home . . . for these are the words of the dead, the testament of all the fallen.”

Many critics of the book have said that this is the best book on the war. “Best” is a word that should be used on book jackets only. There are no best books; every sincere writer writes out of his suffering and agony and from the viewpoint of what he has felt and experienced. While Remarque’s book is a fine piece of realism, I still remember Barbusse’s *Under Fire*, E. E. Cummings’s *The Enormous Room*, and our own John Dos Passos’s *Three Soldiers*. Dos Passos’s book is still fresh in my memory because of its sharp note of condemnation; he saw war and did not shrink from accusing and condemning. How can one write of war and do otherwise?

## Soviet Life

*Civic Training in Soviet Russia*, by Samuel N. Harper. The University of Chicago Press. \$3.00.

*Azure Cities, Stories of New Russia*. Edited by Joshua Kunitz. Translated by J. J. Robbins. International Publishers. \$2.50.

There was a time in the early years of the Revolution when the paltriest superficiality about life in Soviet Russia was news. Visitors were few, little was known about what was going on behind the cordon sanitaire erected around the new revolutionary state, and anything from soup to the crease, if any, in Kalinin’s trousers, was good copy. But now the day of the amateur journalist, of the fly-by-night visitor, of Dreiser, Dorothy Thompson, Mrs. McCormick and Co., is done. The broad features of life in the Soviet Union are pretty well understood by those who have taken the trouble to find out. The call now is for something more profound, more detailed, and more authoritative—for the histology in brief, rather than the anatomy of the Soviet organism.

The field then, now belongs to the scholar and the artist, to those, native and foreign, who know intimately the life, the language, the literature, the art and the history of both the old and



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the new Russia—to such as, for example, are the men whose works constitute the subject of the present review.

Professor Harper of the University of Chicago has for years been well known as a student of the Russian language, history and political institutions. He visited Russia frequently before the Revolution and spent several months there in 1926. He has read hundreds of books, pamphlets and periodicals bearing on his subject, and whatever faults his book may have, they do not derive from ignorance or lack of scholarly labor and deliberation.

Professor Harper's work fills a serious hiatus in our knowledge of the mind-moulding forces operating in the social life of Soviet Russia. His method has been to present a full cross-section of the organized social life of the Soviet Republic and carefully to trace out the civic-training factors. Because of this comprehensive approach *Civic Training In Soviet Russia* is a rich mine of interesting and important facts about Soviet social life.

While it is plain that the author is skeptical about the final complete success of the Soviet scheme of things, he has achieved considerable objectivity. Yet precisely because he strives to be impersonal his book is stiff and colorless.

These defects, however, are in the face of the immense richness of factual material, easily excusable. No matter how well acquainted one is with the literature in English on Soviet Russia one is bound to find in this scholarly volume much that is illuminatingly new.

*Azure Cities* is a collection of short stories by contemporary Russian writers. Its editor, Dr. Joshua Kunitz, is more and more coming to be recognized as our outstanding authority in the field of Russian literature, post—no less than pre-revolutionary. He has here again revealed his fine critical gift, his scholarship and his understanding of the Soviet scene. These stories give one a keen sense of the flavor of contemporary literature in Soviet Russia. But they are perhaps even more valuable, thanks to the discrimination shown in choosing them, as mirrors reflecting Soviet life, its drama, its people and its problems. In his preface the editor includes a brief but informative sketch of post-revolutionary literary trends, which together with his special comments on the author of each story will prove no less interesting than the stories themselves. The translations by J. J. Robbins are excellent.

Both of these books ought to find a place in your one foot shelf of really worth-while books about Soviet Russia.

S. S. ADAMSON.

## John D.

*John D. Rockefeller, A Portrait in Oils, by John K. Winkler.*  
Vanguard Press. \$2.25.

The author of this book who will be remembered as a former employee and a recent biographer of William Randolph Hearst, gives us a sprightly, superficial, sensational, readable, mildly irreverent account—an enlarged Sunday supplement story, so to speak—but no real biography of John D.

And yet the story of John D. will well repay hard scientific labor. The man who lived thru historical epochs is certainly worthy of the best efforts of historical scholarship. The man who embodied in quintessence the truly evangelical Christian virtues of industry, shrewd business, and profit making as the chief end of man upon earth and who brought these virtues to a perfection never before witnessed in this sinful world, deserves deep study as the most representative man of his time. The man who, once the most execrated figure in the country, pictured in every village as the bird of prey, the giant octopus fattening upon the blood and marrow of millions, nevertheless emerges in his ninetieth year as the object of admiration, reverence and awe really concentrated in his own personal life the story of the tremendous changes that have been transforming every aspect of the economic, social and political life of this country since the Civil War. A real biography of John D. Rockefeller would be a personalized account of some of the most important phases of the history of the United States.

The story of John D. Rockefeller is the story of the Rockefeller dynasty. Mr. Winkler devotes some of the closing chapters of his book to the second and third generations. But he does this in order to be able to atone for his very mild iconoclastic irreverence in regard to old John D. with the most insipid eulogy of Junior and John D. III. Of course, this is in line with the rapid general reevaluation of the public estimation of John D. that reflects the

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### Full-Stomached Anecdote

*Portrait of Ambrose Bierce, by Adolphe De Castro. Century Company. \$3.50.*

This book has been largely misunderstood by many of the reviewers into whose hands it has had the misfortune to fall. It has been reproached for failing to tell a concise, scientifically unbiased story, and De Castro has been taken to task for certain personal mannerisms which have found their way into the alleged objective passages. All of which critical remarks have nothing whatever to do with the particular case. It reminds one of that classic of critic assininity perpetrated by Marion Strobel in *Poetry* when she took to task one of the completely æsthetic poems in James Daly's *The Guilty Sun* for its lack of emotion!

De Castro's book never starts to be an incisive estimate of the work nor a scientific record of the life. It is an expansive, full-stomached, breezy pot-pourri of anecdote, quotation, conversation, atmosphere, opinion, etc. which happen to be bound together by pertaining somehow to Ambrose Bierce. De Castro has compiled a rich source book from first-handed information. He sprinkles irrelevancies here and there, he makes unconvincing critical deductions, he writes in the grand manner, he is tedious at times, and if we are to believe George Sterling, he is faulty in certain matters of truth. But there is little reason to give credence to Sterling after reading his self-conscious, melodramatic introduction to the Modern Library collection of Bierce stories *In the Midst of Life*. The time for an absolute and scientific record of the life and times of Ambrose Bierce, is not yet here. This is the period for the accumulation of data, of conflicting data, of violently disagreeing reports of identical incidents. And we must therefore respect the motive and the labor behind this book of De Castro's. We must unquestionably admit that it is the fullest sourcebook on Bierce that we know of.

STANLEY BURNSHAW.

### A Reformed Crook Gets Religion

*Philosophy of the Dusk, by Kain O'Dare. Introduction by Guy Pierce Jones. The Century Co. \$2.00*

It is quite fashionable now for men who have spent years in prison on charges arising from their futile individual revolt against a society in which they could find no decent place, to repent in their later years and present the world with a volume filled with an account of their past iniquities, reeking with the tone of "then I got religion." It pays, they find. O'Dare is one of these men, and his book, mostly slushy tripe about "stars of the dusk" and "Unholy pilgrims" fully reveals his hack-work motive.

O'Dare and his "stars of the dusk" are dope fiends, sentimental whores, vicious and grossly maladjusted perverts. And they are glossed over and romanticised to such an extent by the author that they lose whatever vestiges of authenticity they may have had in real life.

Compared to this book and what it represents, it is refreshing to study the clear cut philosophies of labor prisoners, men like Tom Mooney, the Centralia boys, and those who are in prison in Gastonia today, who unflinchingly undergo tortures, not in pursuit of an ephemeral will-o'-the-wisp, but as their part in the class struggle. O'Dare's book is yellow, defeatist journalism by contrast.

EDWIN ROLFE.

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# LETTERS FROM READERS

## "Yours for the Revolution"

Dear Masses:—

A great majority of us readers have certainly felt a fine sense of relief over the fact that "Yours for the Revolution" Floyd Dell, had at last "resigned". Personally, I have wondered that his name could appear among the contributing editors of the *New Masses* at the outset, and I have a creepy feeling that some others will soon follow his example.

There stand on the shelf: *The Mooncalf*, *The Briary Bush*, and *Looking At Life*. *Janet March* was taken to Europe by a deported comrade. *Looking At Life* has shown me enough of Dell's tendency or rather desire to "settle down" to discard him as a "revolutionary" hope. How I wish I had the price of these books so I could send it to you instead of this lousy dollar which I had to borrow.

Yours for the Communist Revolution,  
*Cicero*, Ill. CHARLES WRIGHT.

## Weiss Is Wrong

Dear Mike:—

July *New Masses* is great stuff. Joe Kalar, Chas. Harrison, Frederic Cover, Ed. Falkowski and Mike Gold on Floyd Dell give me solid pleasure.

However, I don't pretend to understand any of your more intricate art theories. I don't agree with Henry George Weiss and I don't think I have any mastery of forms or that I am especially sophisticated. The fact that he mixes me up with H. H. Lewis shows he is considering "vers libre" very casually—but what the hell.

I will never write until I can breathe more freely. I assure you there is no fun being a proletarian and listening to discussions of "revolutionary art" when it stands to reason you can't slave 12 hours a day like a slob and create any kind of art at the same time.

Best wishes,  
Bronx, N. Y. HERMAN SPECTOR.

## Brisbanality

Comrades:—

I have Brisbane's editorial from *Washington Times*, July 14, 1928. He says:

"—The *New Masses* would like a notice. Here is the notice: altho by the time you look around the *New Masses* imitating the well known American hell-diver, may again have disappeared below the waters of oblivion.

... That "revolution marching on" seen by the *New Masses* may be marching on, but if it is, it is marching backwards." etc. and so on.

I am going to paste it in the July 1929 *New Masses* and move it on each succeeding July.

Carry on!  
Alexandria, Va. JOHN C. ROGERS.

## Workers Theatre in England

Dear Friends:—

The past season has been both the busiest and most successful that the Hackney Workers Theatre Group has experienced.

We have taken the propaganda of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* into many districts of London where we have not been before, and even so far afield as Tilbury and Braintree. As in the previous season, many of the fourteen complete performances of the play have been given in Working Men's Clubs of one type or another, where the invariable warmth of our reception gives conclusive proof that our work does arouse the interest and stir the enthusiasm of the non-political workers.

The receipts from these shows largely paid for the equipment bought during the season while the rest of the performances, done for expenses only, have raised considerable sums for other working class organizations e. g. the Rego Strikers, the Hunger Marchers.

The first new programme of the season was presented at The Ladies Tailors Hall, Gt. Garden Street, E. on December 16th. It consisted of four one-act plays—*Dawn* (a scene adapted from Upton Sinclair's *Hell*) *The Women of Kirbinsk* and *The Fight Goes On*, by "Trudnik", and a Song-Scena, introducing Russian workers' songs. The show was very well received and noticed in the press, and was repeated twice at intervals in the same hall, while four more performances of two of the plays were given elsewhere.

The next new item was a one-act political phantasy entitled *Malice in Plunderland*, which was given with varying degrees of success at three social events during the Spring.

The final production was *Singing Jailbirds* by Upton Sinclair, in May. Although greatly handicapped by the hall and stage on which it was produced a very creditable performance was given. This is believed to have been the first complete stage production in England of the play, and was certainly the most difficult the Group has undertaken.

The membership of the Group is now 34. The steady growth during the year has enabled us to fill successfully the places of comrades who for one reason or another have had to leave us.

Financially we concluded the season with a balance of £5 on hand.

London, England L. WEINMAN.

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## Conscience Money

Dear Friends:—

As a local petit bourgeois I am occasionally called upon to contribute to the maintenance of synagogues, churches and other institutions befuddling the workers' minds.

I just contributed a dollar to a synagogue and wish to purge myself of that sin by making a double contribution to the *Masses*.

We need you. Long life to you.

ANONYMOUS.

## Don't Be Smutty

Dear Friends:—

I like your magazine. But for the life of me I can't understand why it is necessary to use profanity and smut to bring home your ideas. I gather from many of your contributors that all you have to do in order to be a rebel is to use filthy language and make abominable drawings.

I like Michael Gold. I am an Upton Sinclairian.

Brooklyn, N. Y. GEORGE BARON.

## IN THIS ISSUE

*Rufino Tamayo* who designed our cover for this issue is a Mexican artist now living in New York.

*Jacob Burck*, young New York artist, earns his living as a sign painter. His work has appeared in the *Daily Worker* and is included in the *Red Cartoon Book* of 1928 and 1929. More of this talented young artist's work will be seen in future issues.

*Stanley Burnshaw*, is author of *The Wheel Age*, recently published. He has contributed to the *American Caravan*, *Dial*, *Forum*, *Transition* and other publications. With this issue he becomes a contributing editor of the *New Masses*.

*V. F. Calverton* is editor of the *Modern Quarterly* and co-editor of the recently published *Sex In Civilization*. He is author of *The Newer Spirit* and *Sex Expression In Literature*.

*J. L. Wells* is a young Negro artist living in New York who will be seen in more of his fine work in future issues. He has contributed to *The Crisis* and other publications.

*John Dos Passos*, author of the famous *Three Soldiers*, *Manhattan Transfer* and many other books is at work now on a new novel.

*Porter Myron Chaffee* is a young proletarian poet who has contributed to many poetry magazines. He is a restaurant worker.



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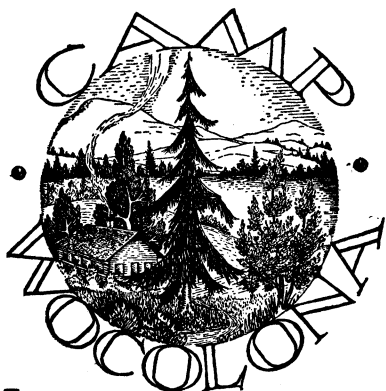
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