

# **NEW MASSES**

**SEPTEMBER, 1929**

**15 Cents**



*Unskilled Labor—Photograph by Tina Modotti*

## **A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN AGITATOR**

By **CARLO TRESCA**

**CHARLES YALE HARRISON — MICHAEL GOLD — HUGO GELLERT — ED FALKOWSKI**

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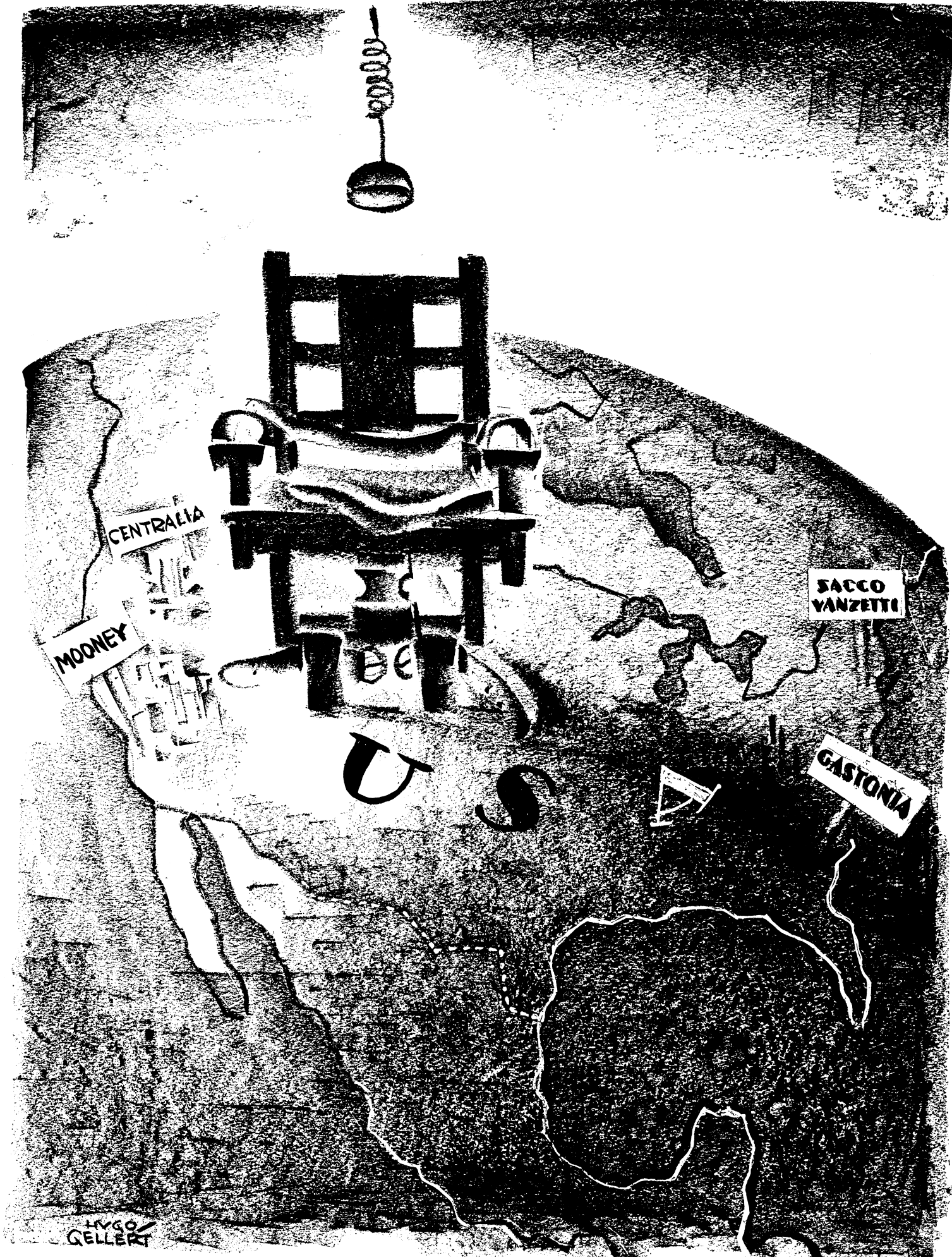
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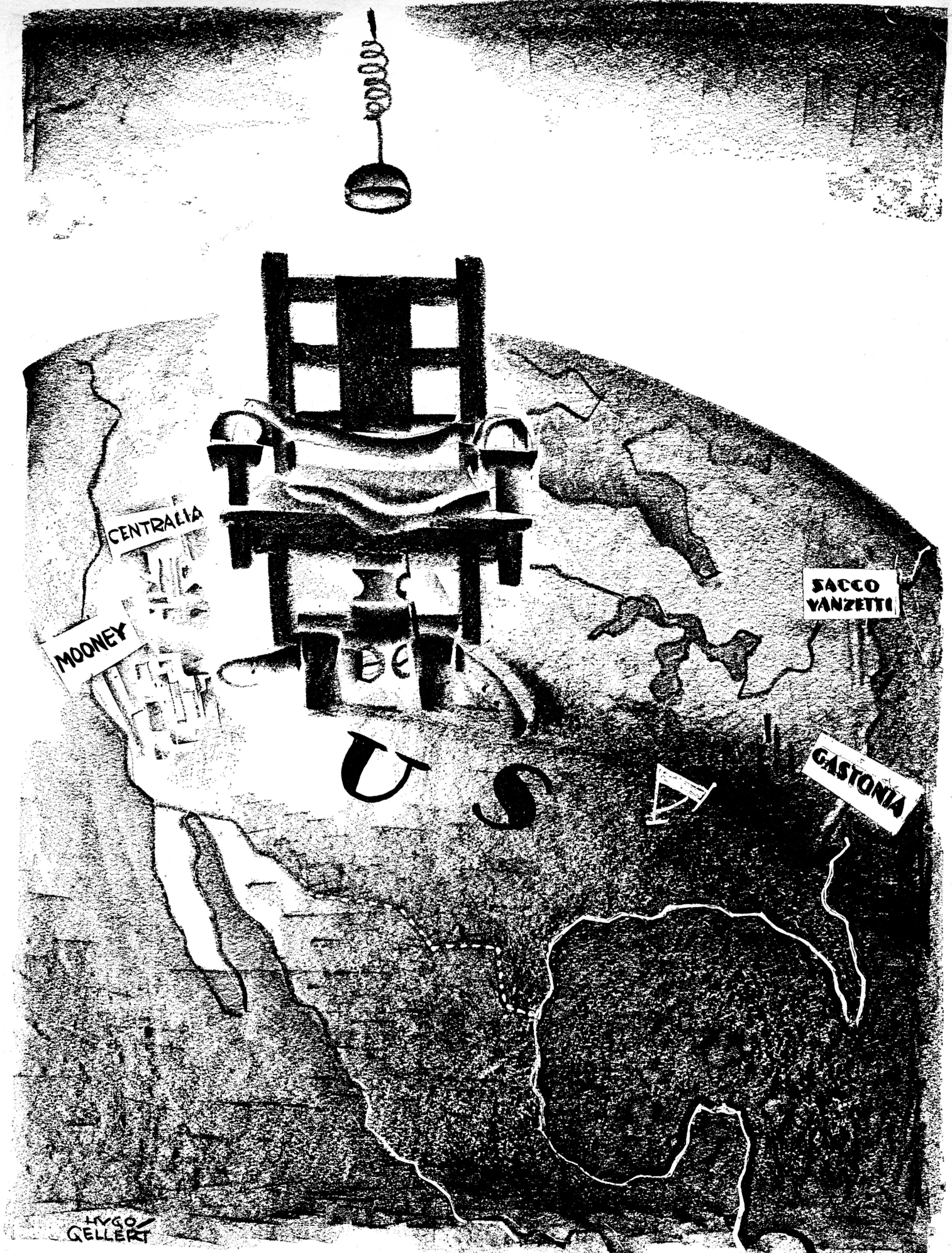




**THE DIAL**

IT CASTS ITS SHADOW WHEREVER MILITANT LABOR IS ORGANIZING

*Drawn by Hugo Gellert*



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# NEW MASSES

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## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN AGITATOR

By **CARLO TRESCA**

I started the day with a firm resolution to get Andreichin out on bail. We were leading the Mesaba Range strike of iron miners in Minnesota. Andreichin was pining away in the county jail of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and we needed him badly in Hibbing, Minnesota. The young man was absolutely indispensable. He was the only one who could speak a Slav language, and the strikers were either Italians or Slavonians. In fact, there were ten thousand Slavonian ore diggers who had gone out on strike, and none of us could say a word to them outside of Andreichin. To a large extent the fate of the strike depended upon our success in securing his release.

It was a beautiful August morning and the hills of that section of Minnesota were in a haze. The sun was shining and the prospects of the strike seemed to be bright. In Hibbing we had comparative freedom, and contact with the stalwart fighters always was a source of inspiration for me. That morning I was inspired with a bright idea. In a flash I decided to take the bull by the horns: to go to the City Judge and ask him to release the seven hundred dollar bond he had imposed on Andreichin. Jauntily I walked into the chamber that was full of deputy sheriffs and strange looking mine guards. His Honor was sitting on the bench. I approached him, and upon his asking, "What do you want?" I told him that we needed Andreichin in the interests of peace. "The Slavonians," I said, "are very restless, the situation is serious. Andreichin's imprisonment in Grand Rapids has only increased the tension." If the Judge were to release the seven hundred dollars I would go, I said, there and bring him back. I knew the proposition was a bold one, but... the Judge looked squarely into my face and then turned his gaze to the mine guards and deputy sheriffs. In a low tone he told me; "Well, I guess we'll have to do it, but don't let them know what it's all about. Come later, I will fetch the money for you."

One hour later I had the seven hundred dollars. In a few more hours I had collected three hundred more and was on my way to Grand Rapids.

### 1. G—D—AGITATOR!

Our delegation consisted of three: a local lawyer by the name of White, myself, and the chauffeur, who was a friend of the strikers and the owner of an Italian grocery store in Virginia, Minnesota.

It was about one o'clock in the afternoon when we left Hibbing

and three hours later we entered the County Court building in Grand Rapids. Our way led us to the District Attorney's office where we found one clerk. The clerk politely replied that the District Attorney would be back in a few minutes and asked us to take seats. Soon the telephone rang and there was a short conversation between the clerk and somebody on the other end of the wire. I cannot explain why that conversation stirred me. Is it because the tense situation made me supersensitive? Is it because I was in fear of danger, or did I actually overhear something? At any rate, I felt that there was danger in the air. This sense of lurking danger was nothing new to me. I had experienced it hundreds of times in similar situations. I leaned over to White and told him: "This clerk has received orders to arrest me." To which White replied: "Nonsense. They cannot do anything to you here." My assurance, however, was so great that I offered immediate proof. Whispering to White, "Watch," I took my hat and started toward the door. The clerk immediately jumped up and told me: "Mr. Tresca the Sheriff wants to talk to you." That was sufficient proof of the danger. But such is human nature that I almost triumphantly turned my face to White as if saying: "I told you so."

Just then the District Attorney stepped into the office. He was a young, nice looking American type, very polite, very correct, very officious. Mr. White introduced me to him. He shook hands with me. "Glad," he said, "to see the dangerous leader of the strike." We sat down and had a nice chat. He expressed surprise at my insinuation that I was about to be arrested. He was all courtesy and decorum. Presently, however, while this polite conversation was going on, we heard a noise outside like the tramping of soldiers' feet. Turning to the door we beheld a dramatic scene. The Sheriff in shirtsleeves with a belt of cartridges around his belly, with one gun on his hip, ferocious looking, stepped into the office with two husky deputy sheriffs at his heels. The man was red in the face, and without introduction began to shout: "You goddam agitator, what did you come here for?" I replied: "For business." To which the deputy sheriff in a still more rasping voice said, "And it's my business to run you out of this County as quick as I can." Facing me at close range, he peremptorily ordered: "Give me that gun."

Tense as the situation was, I didn't fail to realize the comic side of it. I did not reply. The man approached me very closely,

shouting into my face: "Give up that gun." I said, "Why don't you take it?" The Sheriff hurled at me a number of very ingenious insults, and only after giving vent to his temper did he order a deputy sheriff to search me. Of course, no gun was found on my person. This only increased the Sheriff's ire. I looked at the District Attorney. I was really interested to watch his reactions. He finally interfered. He took the Sheriff by the arm, led him to another room where they had a brief consultation. Presently the young, polite fellow returned and informed me, first, that I had no business to come to his County; second, that White had nothing to do with the case; third, that he would not let me see Andreichin, and fourth, that I must get out of Grand Rapids and back to Hibbing as fast as I could. I tried to protest. In fact, I exchanged a few very sharp and unpleasant words with the Sheriff, but I decided to go back promptly. There had been three mass meetings organized in Hibbing for that night, and I couldn't really stay away. In turning toward the door I said goodbye to the District Attorney in a courteous way, to which that polite and charming young officer replied, "Get the hell out of here, you S. O. B." This was about too much for me, I stopped, looked squarely into his eyes and told him, "Look here, you are many and I am alone. You are armed and I am unarmed." But before I finished, I felt the muzzle of the Sheriff's gun at my back and the Sheriff was shouting, "Get out. Get out." There was nothing to do but leave.

## II. THE LYNCHING PARTY

There begins now our journey back to Hibbing—a trip I'll never forget as long as I live. It was more than a trip. It was a procession. Our little truck was followed by two other cars with the Sheriff in one and a number of armed men in the other. At a distance of three blocks from the Court House three more cars appeared from a side street, filled with men holding rifles in their hands. The three cars joined the procession. Soon we had left Grand Rapids and the country stretched on either side of us. We were alone,—three men followed by five cars filled with armed, hostile keepers of the Law.

In a few minutes we were approaching the mining town of Mis-haevaka. Mr. White again seized my arm and nervously pointed at something ahead. There, at the entrance to the town, two columns of men many of them armed with rifles were lined on either side of the street, watching in silent gloom. White said to me: "This is a lynching party for you." The only thing I could say was: "The sooner, the better."

There was no misjudging the character of the groups that awaited us. My chauffeur became very excited. Mr. White was becoming whiter and whiter. Both were speechless. I saw that it was upon me to take the initiative. I said to White: "Let me get out of the car and walk back of it very slowly, while the chauffeur and you remain in your seats. Let's go through the crowd facing them calmly. Never mind what happens to me. Take care of yourself. If this is a lynching party, let me be the victim. If we escape, then we'll get into the car after the danger is over."

Thus our strange procession entered the space between two lines of enraged, armed men. We heard curses on either side. "Damned agitator." "Sucker". "Damned foreigner." "Get the hell out of here." Fists were being clenched; distorted faces emitted words of insult; some of the men in the lines were about to throw themselves on us, but I soon discovered one element in the picture which made me breathe more easily. Behind the lines of armed men I noticed groups of miners in threatening postures. I heard shouts from the distance: "Courage, Tresca! We won't let 'em hurt you. Hurray for the strike!" I presume that this and our composed demeanor held the crowd in leash.

Amidst the storm of shouts, threatening gestures, curses and general bedlam, we proceeded to the end of the town. The imminent danger was over. We soon reached the county limit. By this time I was back in our truck. The Sheriff stood up in his car surrounded by the four other cars and gave us the last warning: "Remember forever that this place is not fit for you. When you come again I will kill you. Go, and keep going." I certainly did keep going for more than an hour until we reached Hibbing late in the evening with my mission unaccomplished.

## III. EXTRA! EXTRA!

I was almost ready to say: "This is the end of a perfect day," when I realized that the end of the day was not yet. Passing through Main Street, opposite the office of the local paper, we



Drawn by A. Z. Kruse.

## WINDOW CLEANERS

saw boys rushing with shouts of "Extra! Extra!" There it was, printed with fresh black ink: "Clash in Biwabick. Deputy Sheriff Murdered." Biwabick was another mining town where the strike was on. The murder of a deputy sheriff was not to be disregarded. There seemed to be more trouble ahead.

While I was reading the paper, a crowd of strikers and sympathizers surrounded me, only to confirm the alarming news. Three strikers had been killed, they told me, and the situation was very bad. I hastily took leave of Mr. White and rushed to the local strike headquarters, only to find the place deserted, closed and dark. I had the creeping feeling of impending danger. I couldn't rest. I had to go to Virginia which was the headquarters of the strike committee and also my own headquarters. I asked the chauffeur to drive there. The poor soul replied: "I'll be damned if I do. For God's sake, let's stay here; I'm afraid." I didn't blame the man, but I had to go and was about to take the trolley car. The faithful soul didn't let me go alone, however, "I don't care what happens," he said, "I must go with you." And so we started out for Virginia, the very same evening.

What a deserted city! What gloom! What an eyrie feeling! All stores closed. Headquarters deserted. Dark. Nobody walking in the streets. I was looking around for any one of the Committee. Could find none. Nothing remained for me to do but to go to that little Italian house where I used to spend my nights. It was a modest one story frame structure owned by one of the strikers. I used to sleep there because I felt protected: eight young, strong Italian strikers always slept with me in the same house, all armed with guns and ready for action. They did not sleep all the time, either: they kept vigil in turn. I found them on the spot.

My first question was about Frank Little, who was among the



# NEW MASSES



*Drawn by A. Z. Kruse.*

## WINDOW CLEANERS

**NEW MASSES**



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**WINDOW CLEANERS**



leaders of the strike. I was particularly concerned about Frank because I knew he did not feel well; besides, he was practically alone since the strikers were either Italians, Slavonians or Finns with hardly a native American among them. To my consternation I learned that he had gone to sleep in a hotel, contrary to the advice of my Italian friends. Under given conditions this was a foolhardy step, to say the least. The only thing I could do was to go to his hotel and beg him to go hiding. I explained to him that, owing to the Biwabick situation, there was every likelihood that we would be arrested; that the only thing to do was to stay away. Frank, half asleep, muttered: "You are seeing red, Carlo! You mustn't get excited." When I insisted he said: "Oh, go to sleep. Let me alone." I: "They will come, Frank, and take you." He: "Aw, let 'em come. What do I care?" It was rather amusing to see this fighter displaying such a degree of equanimity. He turned his back to me and fell asleep. Still, I did not want to leave him alone, I sent my Italian body guards back and took a room in the same hotel, keeping only one man with me, the I.W.W. organizer, Gildea, a native American.

IV.—GUNS AT NIGHT

It was about four o'clock in the morning when I heard loud knocks at my door and harsh voices shouting: "Get out there." I jumped out of bed asking who it was. Through the window that opened onto the corridor (the room was dark while the corridor was lighted), I saw two searchlights playing and the muzzles of two guns pointed into my room. It was a very interesting play of silhouettes against the opaque glass. I cannot say that I felt very comfortable, yet I knew that I had to be firm. I said: "I won't open before I am told who it is." To which a still harsher voice shouted: "You are wanted by the sheriff." When I asked about a warrant, the strange voice replied: "We don't need no warrants for fellows like you." Whereupon I said: "If that's the case, you might as well break the door at your own risk."

And thus we stood in the room, Gildea and I, without lighting the lights, ready to meet the assailants in case they should break the door. It was the part of wisdom to stay inside from the window, through which the guns were stretching their threatening muzzles. Soon new voices were added to those outside. There was a tramping of feet, a hubbub of conversation and a woman's voice screaming at a high pitch: "For heaven's stake, Mr. Tresca, come out and spare us the trouble, or else our hotel will suffer damage." To which I replied with all the gallantry I could muster: "Well, Madam, I never fail with ladies. If you tell me who is there, and tell me the truth, I will open the door." There was some whispering and shuffling behind the door, then the lady imparted to me the cheerful news that there were outside of the door eighteen plain clothes men with a chief. The information made it advisable for me to surrender. I said: "Well, Madam, if you tell me to open the door, I obey."

In the County jail where we were temporarily interned, we found Sam Scarlett, an I.W.W. organizer and Frank Little, without a coat, but in a very cheerful mood. "You see," Frank said, "they did spoil my good sleep, those rascals." Before long detectives and policemen invaded the jail, handcuffed all four of us and took us out without telling us where we were going. As I looked around, I realized that we were being escorted by a large number of policemen and deputy sheriffs, armed with rifles.

V. CHARGED WITH MURDER

There was little time for meditation, however. It was not long before we reached the little railway station where we found a special train, consisting of an engine and one car. We were ordered to enter the car where we found four men, three of them handcuffed to each other by the wrists, while the fourth was lying on a bench badly wounded in the legs. All of them were without coats; their shirts were badly torn and bespattered with blood; the head of one was all bandaged. Nor were the strikers alone. There were other deputy sheriffs there and the whole thing bore the marks of something very mysterious.

As soon as we entered the coach, our handcuffs were removed and we were seated, each on a bench with two detectives on each side.

It was all very queer. I was used to all the vicissitudes of labor struggles, but this journey in the early morning in a special train was something new. I asked my "companions": "Where are we going?" The reply was: "I don't know; I don't care to tell you. But be sure you won't see Virginia any longer."

As the train sped on through meadows sprinkled with dew, among clumps of trees swaying in the light morning breeze, under a clear sky that looked bathed after the night's gloom, the tension relaxed. We began to talk to each other. The guards relented, and we soon learned what happened in Biwabick. Four deputy sheriffs had gone to the house of a striker by the name of Philip Masonovich with a warrant for the arrest of one of the boarders. The men of the Law were very rough and they beat up Philip's wife. There were three Montenegrin workers boarding in the house. The fellows were former soldiers who had participated in many a war in the Balkans. They were courageous fellows. They could not allow the deputy sheriffs to continue their dastardly acts. So they dashed against the four deputy sheriffs, took away their guns, killed one and severely wounded another. There was a real battle between deputy sheriffs and the strikers, and they were all arrested. These were the four men that we found in the railway car. They were all being conveyed to Duluth to be imprisoned on a charge of murder in the first degree. As to Little, Gildea, Scarlett and myself, we were also charged with murder as *accessories before the fact*. This is why we were in the car. We were being accused of a murder that took place in our absence in a different town. We were being attached artificially to the murder case in order to eliminate us from the strike picture.

It was about ten o'clock in the morning when we finally landed in the Duluth jail and I could tell myself that one day of my life had been completed. 'Twas a crowded day, indeed.

Gastonia

As we go to press, 23 strikers go on trial for their part in the Gastonia strike. 16 of them face a death sentence. The rest are in danger of long years in prison. This is the price the most militant must pay in every labor struggle. This is the shadow cast over all labor history in America.

The next issue of the *New Masses* will carry a story of the trial. Meanwhile, the International Labor Defense is defending these strikers. A joint campaign for funds is now being conducted by the I. L. D., Workers International Relief and the National Textile Workers Union.

A Million Men

Two men  
Die.  
Two men  
Are dead:  
Are utterly unable now to cry  
Aloud again,  
With only this scant handful knowing why  
Their lives were sped.  
Shall we stand by?  
Why are we mute, instead  
Of shaking all the corners of the sky,  
Raising our voices in a single cry  
For other men?

Shall it, then,  
Be written as it was before?  
Not two men,  
But a score?  
Shall Carolina add another sore  
And shall it be again?  
Shall there be more?

Two men  
Dead.  
Two men  
In silent death.  
But one said,  
Our cause is lost unless a million men  
Rise. But then,  
These men are dead,  
Shall this all be again?

FREDERIC COVER.

# BARRAGE

(From A War Novel)

By CHARLES YALE HARRISON

## I.

Over in the German lines I hear quick, sharp reports. Then the red-tailed comets of the *minenwerfer* sail high in the air making parabolas of red light as they come towards us. They look pretty, like the fireworks when we left Montreal. The sergeant rushes into the bay of the trench, breathless. "Minnies!" he shouts and dashes on.

In that instant there is a terrific roar directly behind us. The night whistles and flashes red. The trench rocks and sways. Mud and earth leap into the air and come down upon us in heaps. We throw ourselves upon our faces clawing our nails into the soft earth in the bottom of the trench. Another! This one crashes to splinters about twenty feet in front of the bay. Part of the parapet caves in. We try to burrow into the ground like frightened rats.

The roar of the shattering explosions strikes terror to our hearts. I taste salty liquid on my lips. My nose is bleeding from the force of the detonations.

S. O. S. flares go up along our front calling for help from our artillery. The signals sail into the air and explode giving forth showers of red, white and blue lights held aloft by a silken parachute. The night is lit by hundreds of fancy fireworks. The air shrieks and catcalls.

Still they come. I am terrified. I hug the earth digging my fingers into every crevice, every hole.

A blinding flash and an exploding howl a few feet in front of the trench. My bowels liquify. Acrid cordite smoke bites the throat, parches the mouth. I am beyond mere fright. I am frozen with an insane fear that keeps me cowering in the bottom of the trench. I lie flat on my belly waiting . . .

Suddenly it stops.

The fire lifts and passes over us to the trenches in the rear.

We lie still unable to move. Fear has robbed us of the power to act. I hear Fry whimpering near me. I crawl over to him with great effort. He is half-covered with earth and debris. We begin to dig him out.

To our right they have started to shell the front lines. It is about half a mile away. We do not care. We are safe.

Without warning it starts again. The air screams and howls like an insane woman. We are getting it in earnest now. Again we throw ourselves face downward on the bottom of the trench and grovel like savages before this demonic frenzy.

The concussion of the explosions batters against us. I am knocked breathless. I recover and hear the roar of the bombardment. It screams and rages and boils like an angry sea. I feel a prickly sensation behind my eyeballs.

One lands with a monster shriek in the next bay. The concussion rolls me over on my back. I see the stars shining serenely above us. Another lands in the same place. Suddenly the stars revolve. I land on my shoulder. I have been tossed into the air.

I begin to pray. "God—God—please . . ." I remember that I do not believe in God. Insane thoughts race through my brain. I want to catch hold of something, something that will explain this mad fury, this maniacal steel hatred that pours down upon our heads. I can find nothing to appease my terror. I know that hundreds of men are standing a mile or two from me pulling gun-lanterns, blowing us to smithereens.

I begin to cough. The cordite smoke is thick. It rolls in heavy clouds over the trench blurring the stabbing light of the explosions. A shell bursts near the parapet. Fragments smack the sandbags like a shower of steel hail. A piece of mud flies into my mouth. It is cool and refreshing. It tastes earthy.

Suddenly it stops again.

I bury my face in the cool, damp earth. I want to weep: But I am too weak, too shaken for tears. We lie still, waiting . . .

## II.

We are relieved. Down the long, winding communication trenches and at last out on to the open fields. It is shortly after mid-

night and we straggle past belching light field artillery and silhouetted, silent, waiting tanks.

We reach a road. We are ordered to fall in. Horse and tractor drawn guns, monster swaying supply-lorries roar, clug and clatter on the cobble-paved road. The horses strain at their harness. Chains clank. Drivers stand on their seats lashing the hides of the beasts with their leather whips and the night with their impotent profanity.

The enemy knows that here is a cross-road. He knows that the road is alive with troops and traffic at this hour. So he sprays it with overhead shrapnel.

Whiz-z-z-z, cr-r-r-rung.

A long drawn-out hiss and wail and then a vicious, snarling explosion overhead. The dark is stabbed with a burst of red flame. We duck our heads and hunch our shoulders instinctively.

Instantly there is confusion everywhere. The drivers yell furiously at the animals. The chauffeurs grind their gears into high speed.

More red stabs into the blackness over our heads. They come faster and faster. The air whines. One bursts directly over our heads. The metal balls rattle on the cobble stones in front of us. We take to the fields.

But the vehicles must stay on the road. A lorry gets stuck and blocks the traffic. Whips snap like revolver shots over the heads of the struggling beasts. They rear on their hind legs, their mouths drip white flaky foam. Their eyes are distended like those of frightened women. The drivers crack their whips calling them foul names involving their paternity.

We ask one another why we must wait here under this fire. No one knows.

The rain of steel continues. A horse is wounded. We hear the beast's shriek above the howl of the bombardment. It is one of the four horses drawing a light field-piece. The wounded animal whirls around dragging his mute, pawing mates with him. The team careens for a moment and crashes into the stalled lorry. A shell burst over the lorry. The driver is hurled from his seat. He is wounded. His cries mingle with the shrieking of the wounded horses. Two horses are now prone and the other two rear at the harness kicking wildly at the cannon. Two stretcher-bearers appear and try to extricate the lorry-driver who is being kicked to death by the frantic horses. The road is an inferno.

The fire subsides. We hear the explosions on another road to our left . . .

We are ordered to fall in. Four men in our company are wounded. They are carried away to the field dressing station nearby. We begin our trek towards billets.

We march for hours. Down dark, shell-torn roads, past ruined gutted corpses of houses which once lived peacefully here. We march at a quick pace even though we are unutterably tired.

We have been marching for two hours. The stately poplars which line the road here are less scarred. Here and there we see a peasant's house which is not destroyed. We see a faint light showing from behind the tightly drawn blinds. People live here! Our set faces relax. We look at one another and smile wanly.

At last we come to a narrow-gauge rail-head. It is still dark. We are ordered to halt. The heat of our exhausted bodies loosens the foul trench odors which cling to us. We throw ourselves panting on to the softness of a bordering field.

Nearby the tiny narrow-gauge engine puffs energetically, giving off little clouds of white feathery steam which float slowly over us. We look about us with hungry eyes. Smoke that is not the harbinger of death! A field which is not the hiding-place of thousands of men lurking in trenches to tear each other apart! The dark, silent, brooding sky above us which does not pour shrieking, living steel upon our heads . . . !





*Drawn by William Gropper*

**"To the Next War!"**

III.

It is warm and Fry has discovered a little stream about three kilometres from the village. We decide to go swimming. About ten of us set off across the fields. It is late afternoon and the sun slants down upon us as we shout and laugh.

We have lost that aged, harrassed look which we wear when we are in the line. We are youngsters again. Most of us are under twenty. Anderson, the ex-lay preacher, is the only matured man among us. He is forty.

We plunge naked into the clear water splashing about and shouting to each other. Only Anderson does not undress fully. He wears his heavy, gray, regulation underwear. We tease him. He walks gingerly to the water's edge and pokes a toe into the stream. Fry creeps up behind him and shoves him splash into the water. We shout and yell and come to his rescue dragging him to the bank. Broadbent starts to undo his underwear.

"Come on, Anderson, let's see your body. We know you're a boy," he says in baby-fashion.

Anderson fumes, sputters and strikes out. His face is red and he shouts deadly threats. We laugh and leap into the water.

We duck one another and throw water in each other's faces. A few lads from the village stand on the bank and look at us in silence. They have the faces of little old men. We motion to them to join us but they shake their heads gravely.

Who can describe the few moments of peace and sunshine in a soldier's life? The animal pleasure in feeling the sun on a naked body! The cool, caressing, lapping water! The feeling of security, of deep inward happiness . . .

In the distance the rumble of the guns is faint but persistent like the subdued throbbing of violins in a symphony. I am still here, it says. You may sleep quietly at night in sweet-smelling hay, you may lie under a tree after drill and marvel at the fine tracings on a trembling leaf over your head, but I am here and you must come back to my howling madness, to my senseless,

volcanic fury. I am the link that binds you to your future, it mutters.

But the water is cool and inviting and the afternoon grows older. The stream gurgles and swishes against the bank on which we stand. I shake the thought of the guns from my mind.

About a hundred yards up towards the line there is a bend in the stream. "Let's race to the bend and back," Fry shouts. "The last man back buys the wine tonight."

We dive into the water and start upstream. Cleary comes to the surface last but turns and swims towards the bank again. He stands on the bank and calls us in a strange voice. He points to the water nearby. We clamber out and crowd near him. We look following with our eyes his pointing finger. There is something dark in the water near the bank. It is a dead body. It is wearing the field-blue French uniform. We see the thin red stripe running up his trouser-leg. An underwater growth has caught a bit of the uniform and the body sways to and fro moved by the current. In the water it looks bloated and enormous. Our day is spoiled by this lonely dead soldier carried to us by the sparkling, sunlit water of the Somme.

We do not say anything to each other. We dry ourselves on our underwear and start to dress. He is different somehow this Frenchman, from the hundreds of corpses we have seen in the line. We thought we were safe. We thought we could forget the horrors of the line for a brief few weeks—and here this swollen reminder drifts from the battlefield to spoil a sunny afternoon for us . . .

IV.

We race across the wheat-field. We carry our machine-gun and ammunition on our backs like pack-mules. At last we reach the foot of the hill. We start up.

The blood rushes through my head like a thundering torrent. My body is a hammering cauldron of sound. My ears ring, my head buzzes. Heart knocks like a faulty, racing motor-piston. Overhead an occasional shell bursts, but this is not what terrifies us. On top of the hill little spurts of yellow earth leap up. The enemy machine-gunners are sweeping the ridge. As we run our entrenching tools and mess-tins bang and clank against our accoutrements.

On and on! We run slowly. We are weighted down by our burdens. Our movements are slow like those running in a nightmare. On and up! We are near the top. A few more steps and we will fling ourselves down on the ridge and get our gun into action. A few more steps! Our lungs and throats are whistling. Our faces are reddish blue with exertion. The veins on our necks stand out like black, twisted cords.

I stumble and fall. On the ridge the little spurts of yellow earth still leap up as though mischievous boys were throwing stones from behind the hill. But from behind the hill comes the noise of a thousand rivetting machines. I run a few steps and fall again.

My right foot feels numb. I look at it; it is spurting a red fountain. The top of the stream glistens in the sun. I feel empty inside of me, nauseous. I am frightened. As though speaking to a stranger I say, my God, I am wounded.

I roll into a shell-hole for safety. I can hear our guns on the ridge hammering into the valley below. They have taken the ridge and are sweeping forward. The sound of the fighting moves away from me. The enemy is falling back.

Suddenly I laugh to myself. I look at my foot. It is still spurting blood. I realize that something must be done. I make my handkerchief into a tourniquet, and tie it tightly above my ankle. The spurting ceases. I am weak. I lean against the side of the funnel-shaped shell-hole. I watch the dark red blood ooze on to the yellow earth and sink in. The noise of the battle becomes fainter and fainter . . .

I am alone in the hole. Nearby I hear men groaning. I forgot all about the others when I saw the blood leaping from my heavy, dirty black, hardened blood. I am wearing a boot made of congealed blood.

Wounded, I say to myself again and again. Wounded—home—no more war now—no more lice—a bed, I am glad. I look gratefully at my bloody boot, at the blood-soaked piece of earth on which it limply rests. I am glad—glad—soon I will see lights coming from houses and hear the voices of women and feel their hands on me.

Yes, I am happy.

I begin to weep.

A sharp pain shoots up my leg. I feel in my pockets for a cigarette . . .

**SEPTEMBER, 1929**



*Drawn by William Gropper*

**“To the Next War!”**

# IN THE GERMAN BAMBUS

By ED FALKOWSKI

## 1. AFTER THE BALL IS OVER . . .

One can live a merry life in the Ruhr if one is inclined that way. Have you seen Essen's "Coney Island" with its chute-the-chutes, fortune tellers, dancehalls, hotdogstands? Or Dortmund's glittering dancehalls, or Bochum's palatial hotels? There is much "bohemianism" in the Ruhr if your pockets allow it. From painted women to genuine cocktails that would make old man Volstead throw away his trolleytops if he ever smelt the glowing liquids, or felt cottony beerfroths tickle his nose.

Well, most folks do that. Industry is always rather ugly to look at, and workingmen are so depressing. The opera offers something more elevating. Then there are symphony orchestras, coffee houses, beer halls with entertaining vaudeville skits between drinks. There are still more mysterious and secret places if you are interested in the less published vices.

The streets wear their sombre masks by day. The buildings look thick and inscrutable, like German state officials. Their gray windows frown on the restless audience below.

At night the hotels come out like gilded dames to a golden horseshoe in an operahouse. Wearing jewels of fire. Banners of blue flame advertising some famous beer. Necklaces and bracelets of glitter make the night a fantasia of gaudy splendor.

In spite of the reparations, there is a tone of gay prosperity to the streets. Bloated figures vibrate on the deep springs of their comfortable autos as uniformed chauffeurs toot impatiently for the road. Music, clink of glasses, servants, fine clothes, elegant manners, formal dress,—rumors of scandalous princes and industrial magnates "getting away with" their taxes. "Let the lower classes pay them!"

Everybody in Germany talks of "classes." Children in school are already "class conscious", and the doctor's son will never join the mudfaced miners' kids in schoolyard games.

Yes, the streets and buildings are clever masks in the masquerade known as "Germany's daily life." But it's enough to please most people. Why look under the mask anyway when it's the outward performance we enjoy? Isn't that enough?

## II. IN THE BAMBUS.

The Bambus, like so many other places in the world, is one of those places everybody's always trying to keep out of falling into. It's the last sump you fall into when you hit bottom in the social sense. When you tumble out of a job, and luck clouts you on the head instead of patting you on the back, and the milk of human kindness becomes a wedge of limburger, then you see Bambus.

Every German city has its Bambus, or its Nigger Village, or its Indian Town, or its Express-Train Colony somewhere on its outskirts. It's the village for the human surplus, the dregs and castouts of the industrial system. To find yourself here is the last insult possible to human dignity. "Abandon all hope" is the invisible legend on its invisible gate.

But thousands of unfortunate workers and their families live in the Bambus of every German city and town. It requires no choice of your own to find yourself a member of this grotesque community.

If you're kicked out of a job, you're kicked out of your company house, too. You get a notice to find another dwelling within a few days. To even look for another dwelling in a land that is about 600,000 dwellings short of barely enough, is madness. So the worker hangs on to his company dwelling, half despairing, half hoping.

One beautiful day the police arrive with a huge transport. They enter the house, tear pictures from the walls, drag out the beds, and load the "klamoten" into the truck. This is the only magic required to convert one from respectable citizenship into that miserable and pitiful creature known as a Bambus-dweller.

The unemployed, old pensioners, widows of killed miners, drunks, beggars, communists and rebels of various descriptions and all suchlike trash are dumped here and form that horrible miscellany

of pain and vice lumped together under that one drumbeat of a word—Bambus.

## III. A TALE OF DUMB PROTEST.

Cities like human beings have their complexes. Complexes are confusing usually, since inferiority feelings pop out as superiority manifestations, and vice versa, so that who's who and what's what can usually be decided only by chaps more browed than most of us.

German cities like to look expansive and American-like. Miniature Waldorf-Astorias and Biltmores give them a childish pride. The prattle of traffic down the asphalt streets, as well as the jazz music wringing its hair and arms inside coffee houses are considered signals of notable progress.

But every city will deny its Bambus. Newspapers twitter, blithely unaware of these scrapped creatures. Men fat enough to occupy large space in civil life say nothing of this poverty-swamp. Union officials privately tell you "it's only trash that's there. No decent man ever finds himself in the Bambus. It's only communists and drunks there. These people don't have to be there if they don't want to. But they're infernally lazy."

The Bambus tells a different story. "No one will ever know how many tears it cost me to be here," said one pale-faced woman whose jobless husband was now busy digging a cellar under the floor of the next room "where we can keep our margarine from melting between meals."

"They can't get me out of here quick enough!" she continued. "Do you know where I can get a house? I tried in the house-office in town. The official was very gruff and important—very officially, I should say."

"'You should've been more careful when you had a decent home', he said. What could I do? I'd just love to slam him one—but that wouldn't help."

The colony here consisted of 14 barracklike houses, unpainted and weather-worn. These 14 shacks housed 120 families. Many families consisted of parents and as many as ten children. These families have to live their lives in one or two rooms. Stove, beds, tables, everything, is crammed into the one room. Everybody is in everybody's road. Kids play on the floor or in the dirt outside the house. The mother is engaged in perpetual combat against dust—which has a habit of stealing in all over again, after every cleanup.

For directly across the Bambus is the mine, with its powerful smoke-stacks spreading plumes of darkness across the golden flaked sky whose west glimmers with a proud sunset. These wavering black ribbons are soot and smoke from the boilers.

"It's really no use cleaning up!" cried the Frau in despair. "You work all day and at night you've got nothin' done anyway!"

The pensioners sit on wooden benches, their cold pipes hanging from their lips. They stare at the waddling geese along the road, at the shaft wheels turning round and round, at the old women wobbling in the yard which is crisscrossed with drunken clothes-pros leaning against sagging ropes on which the meagre family wash is drying and collecting the mine-soot simultaneously.

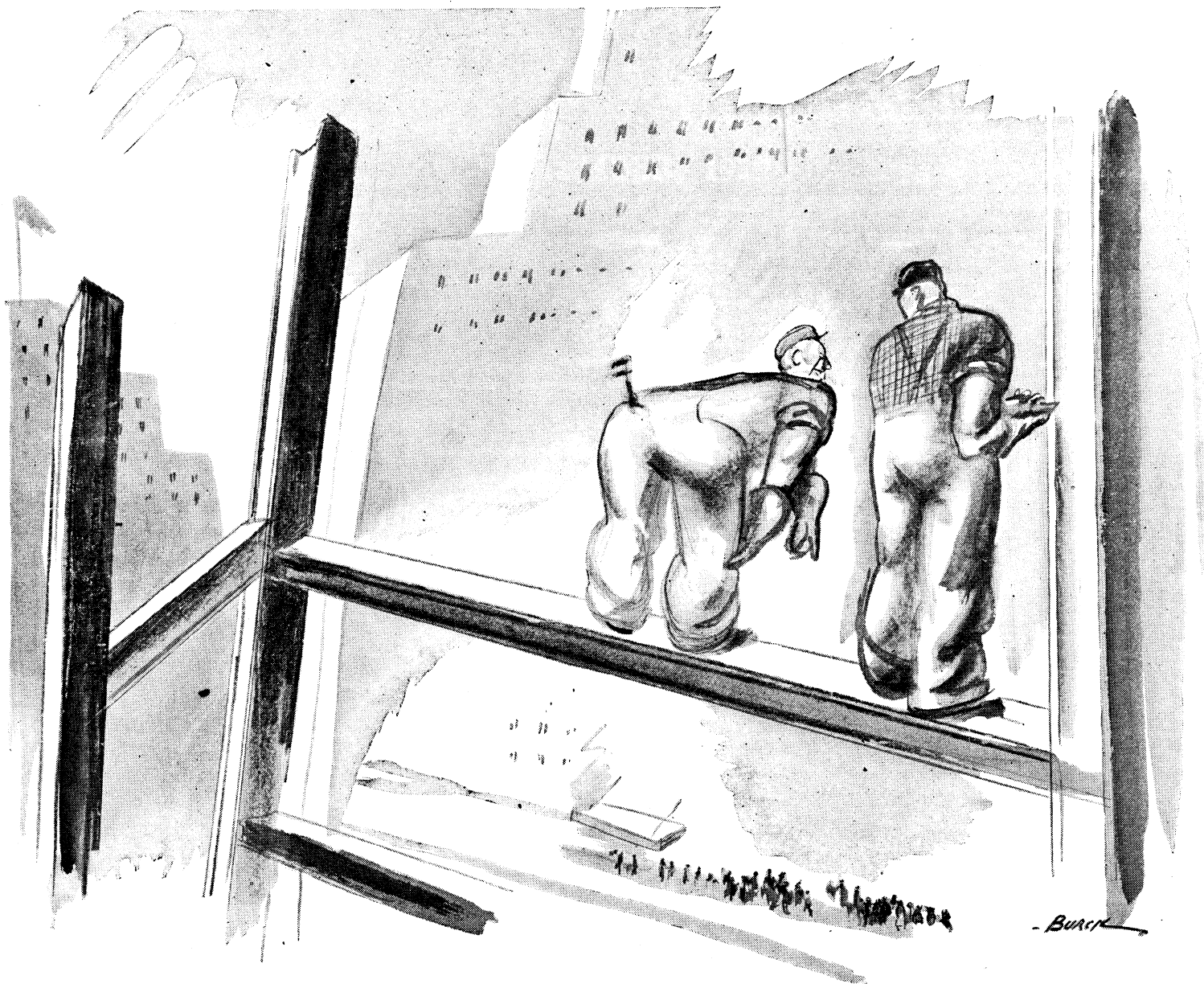
For the pensioners, life's struggle is quite over. Only a few years yet, drying out in the Bambus—and then the comedy comes to a close. Their resignation is engraved on their meek and helpless faces. Pain has given way to indifference.

There is a curious silence reigns over the Bambus. Men and women sit all day, saying little. They have learned the futility of speech. But their silence is a voice which will some day acquire accents of its own. It will become the arms and the fists which will fight to make Bambus forever impossible. Yes, words maybe are silly after one descends to this pit of hopelessness. Something deeper and more powerful than words are needed to utter the despair and the sorrow which has frozen these people into the dumb and terrible creatures which haunt the Bambus!

## IV. "WE HEAR 'EM COMING!"

"Why of course I'm a Communist!" she cried. "I've got my red card just like my man has . . . Most of the folks here have been





-Burck-

Drawn by Jacob Burck

"Hey, Bill, those people down there think they're the upper class."

out of work for a long time. Impossible to find work. Know where my man could get a job? . . . No privacy here. Everybody jammed on top of one another. The boards between the rooms are so thin, you hear next door conversations all the time whether you listen or not . . .

"We can't sleep. The neighbors always talk at night . . ."

I observed that the house was electric-wired, and good bulbs hung at the ends of the wires. "But no current. The coal company claims we can't pay for the current . . . That's true. We can't. So we have wires running through every house, but at night we've got to use kerosene lamps. People who have no money can't even afford kerosene, and when night comes, they sit in darkness until its time to go to bed . . ."

"I'll not pay any rent for this place. If they don't want me here, they can kick me out any day. I'll always be willing to go . . ."

She referred here to the fact that the town paid the rent for people who couldn't cover this item themselves. This is one of the welfare activities of German cities.

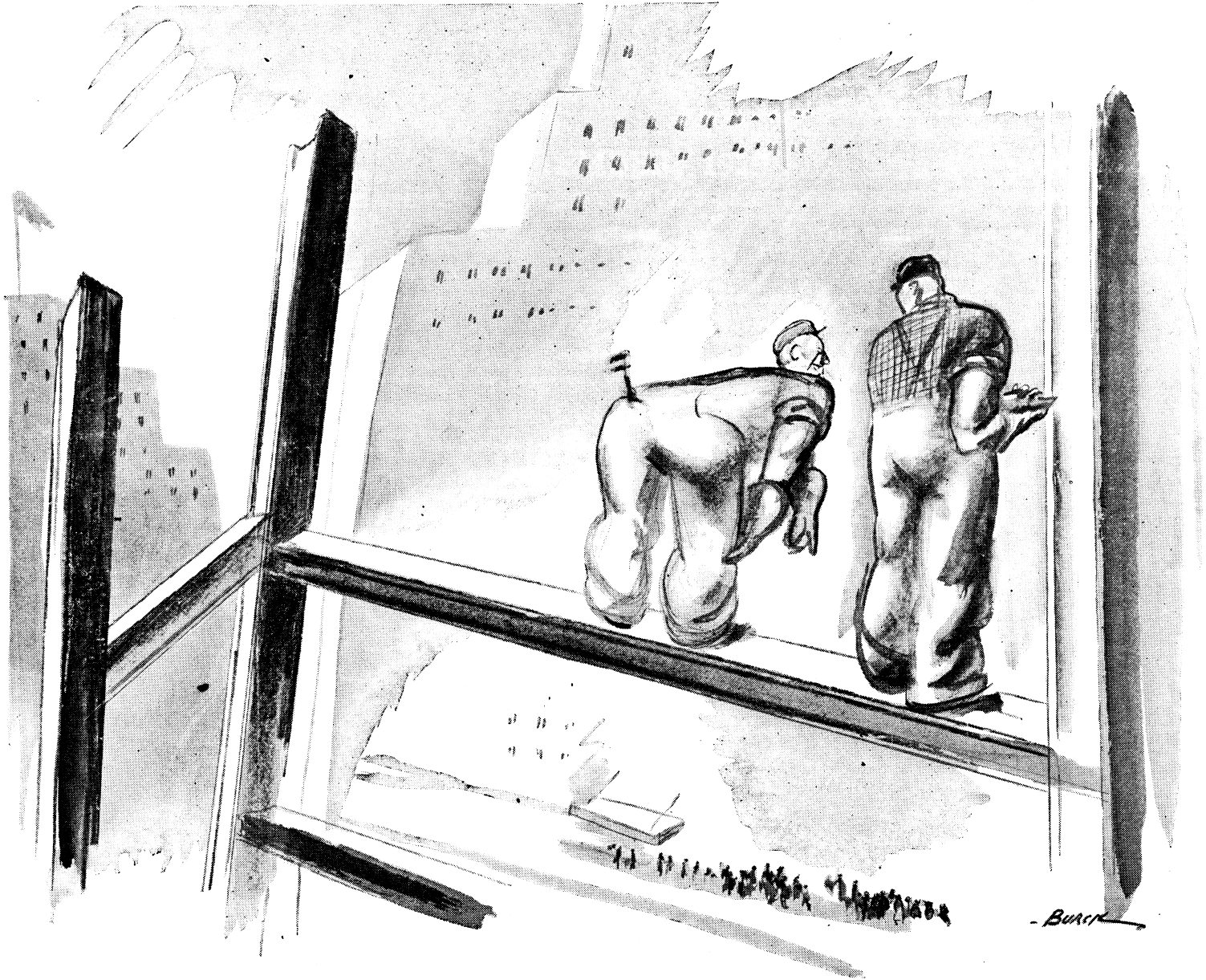
"No one can sleep at night in summer. Mostly because of bed-bugs . . . And the cockroaches? Why, at night when we lie on our pillows we actually hear them coming! You hear their feet running along the window as they look for openings. We light

the lamp and hunt around, and catch a few every night. Big, juicy lookin' ones! Mice the same way . . . It's hell to be here!"

Among the 120 families on this particular Bambus, seven were those of communist comrades—men who were kicked out of the mine for having tried to start a protest strike against the Berlin bloodbath of Mayday. They were instantly transported to the Bambus where their protest continues as sturdily as ever.

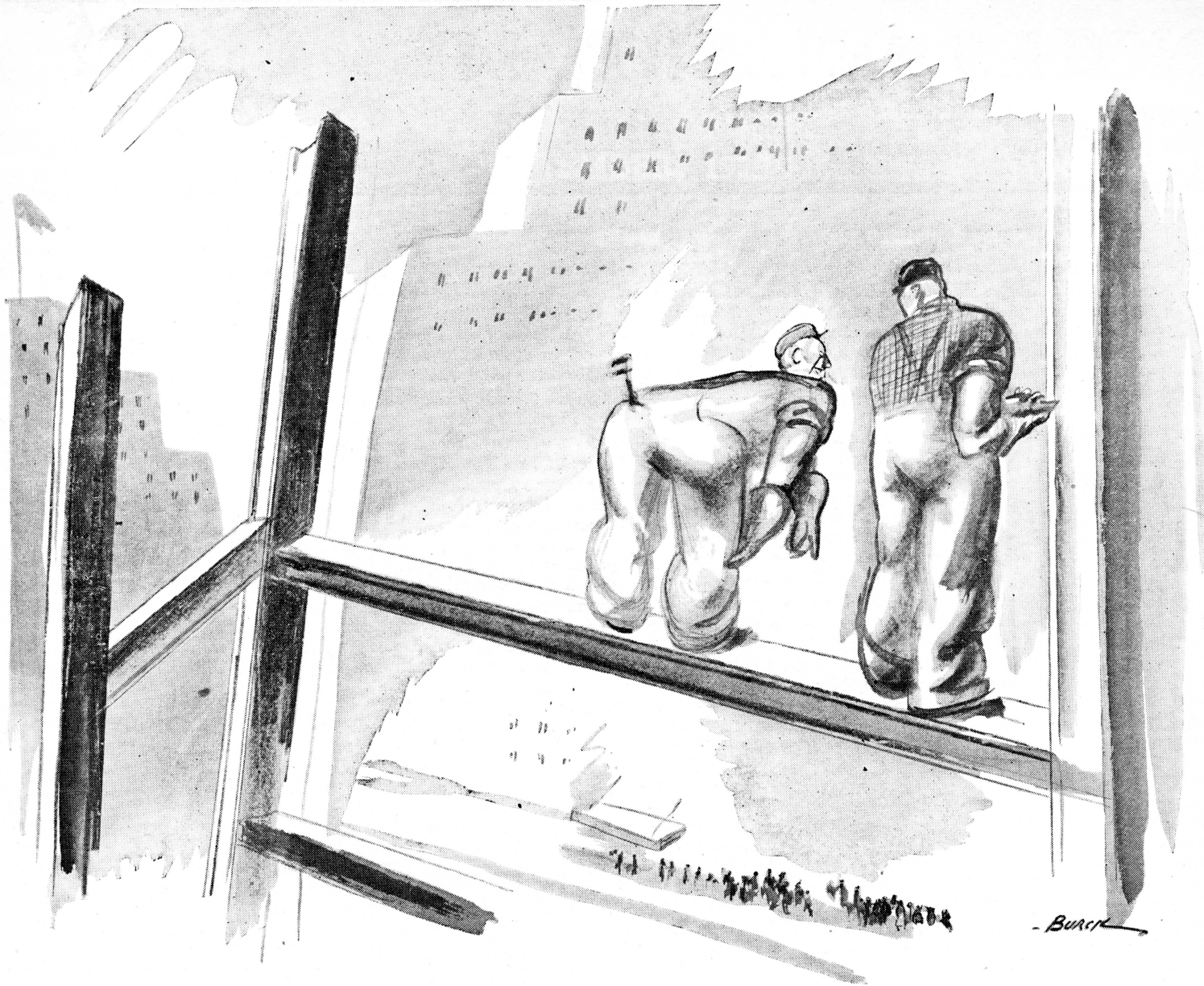
"These people here take it very seriously", said one comrade, as we sat drinking barley coffee and munching bread with margarine. "But it's only part of the class struggle to be here, that's all. Just an incident. The sooner they see this, the better it'll be for them. And the cure doesn't lie in getting drunk as many of them do. It lies in understanding the causes of things like this, and knowing how to protest and fight to make these Bambus colonies together with slums and workprisons and all other torturing equipment impossible.

"When one understands, one can sit in the Bambus and find out it's not so terrible. No more terrible than the capitalist system itself. And this we must fight to the last breath inside of us. Not only Bambus but all that makes Bambus possible. This is our task. And we are pushing forward with it day by day. In the end, Bambus will triumph—but not before the German proletariat triumphs as a whole."



*"Hey, Bill, those people down there think they're the upper class."*

*Drawn by Jacob Burck*



"Hey, Bill, those people down there think they're the upper class."

Drawn by Jacob Burck



# NOTES ON ART, LIFE, CRAP-SHOOTING, ETC. By MICHAEL GOLD

Marxian theories of Art have never been demonstrated in America with such precisely laboratory proofs as in the rise of the guilds—theatre and literary.

There was no audience for these culture-trusts before the war. They could not and did not exist. That they now flourish is no accident, but a reflex of America's financial conquest of the world.

The reservoir from which their audiences are drawn is our newly-enriched middle class. Less than a hundred financial Leviathans administer America, in a dictatorship as real as Mussolini's.

While Mussolini is too insecure to permit democracy among his own followers, but is forced to hold them down as harshly as the rest of the population, the American bankers are gloriously secure. Middle-class democracy still serves their ends. It is their useful mask. They permit, therefore, a great portion of the middle class to share in the spoils.

And what spoils! Never before was there such imperial wealth flowing into a nation. Never was there such a vast, feverish, ambitious, middle class spending it in the history of the world. The American *nouveaux riches* have become a spectre of banality that haunts the world consciousness. In their hundred-thousands, they swarm through the capitals of Europe each summer, to acquire canes and cultural attitudes. They buy the castles, paintings, women and liquor and opera singers of Europe. They have created Florida in less than five years. They have created "modern" furniture and "modern" department stores. They have built Park Avenue.

They have created, out of their need, institutions like the Theatre Guild and Literary Guild. These enterprises were foreshadowed by the interior decorators, who for years were hired by *nouveaux riches* to supply a fixed amount of artistic taste in exchange for a fixed amount of dollars. Now the Guilds supply the literature and drama to a greater group.

There is nothing immoral about all this. It is only part of current history. It would help young writers with the adolescent flair for rebellion to understand why bitter work can never be acceptable to these guilds.

It is because the prosperity of their audience is based on stock market gambling. One portion of America thinks, slaves, and produces in brain-sweat and muscle-sweat the great machines that dazzle and conquer the world. The other portion shoots crap. "Our" prosperity is based on the next roll of a set of dice. Was there ever such a stock market? Were there ever such millions of speculators swarming like blue-arsed flies around the world's sugar bowl? It is these crap-shooting bourgeoisie who are the new "culture" audience. They buy things in the blind, frantic moment of a gambler on his lucky day.

Spend it fast. Tomorrow the luck may turn. Tomorrow there may be another world war. Anything may happen tomorrow to disturb "prosperity," and the curb prices. Some gamblers take to liquor; others to jewelry and women. Still others take to "culture".

The crap-shooters demand two things of their culture:

1. It must distract them, make them forget the uncertainties of their stock market lives (Amusement: such as Joan Lowell, *Abie's Irish Rose*, *The Guardsman*, *The Story of Philosophy*, *John Brown's Body*, etc.).

2. It must placate their ever-present fear that the *status quo* can be disturbed; (Spiritual Problems: such as Werfel's *Goat Song*, O'Casey's *Plough and the Stars*, *Bridge of San Luis Rey*, *Abie's Irish Rose*, etc.).

I am not comparing the merits of the above books and plays. *Abie's Irish Rose* is cheap; it is for low-browed crap-shooters; Werfel's *Goat Song* is exalted and epic; it is for profounder spirits among the crap-shooters. What I am hinting at are the fixed limits within which they all move. They are meant for the same audience.

They fall into a clear formula. I would advise young "rebel"

writers, most of whom really suffer from a lack of adaptation, to study this formula. It is quite easy to write for this market, and to achieve money, fame and other things wanted by most young rebels in America.

Formula:

1. Never be bitter. (Crapshooters cannot work up an interest in your loves and hates. There is only one emotional reality for them; the stock market. Everything else is pale.)

2. Amuse them at any cost. (They are tired at night, when at last they have time to come to you and Culture.)

3. Assure, reassure them, make them feel safe from market upsets, revolution, etc. Adopt the old formula of melodrama: put Virtue through every species of tragedy, danger and horror, but have Her triumph in the end. (Virtue, in this case, is the crap-shooting capitalist system.)

I have read no sound American criticism in years outside the pages of the *New Masses*. The bourgeois critics are too near to the things they attempt to criticize. They have little of that Olympian detachment that should distinguish a critic, as formerly a Van Dyke beard was the mark of a Doctor.

It is rumored that many of these critics play the stock market themselves. How can one crap-shooter criticize another for his own crime?

And some critics have read nothing later than pre-war Croce and Santayana; and others have joined the Catholic Church; and others are sexually impotent; and others drink too much unripened American beer; and others have wives and children to support; and others live in art colonies: and nearly everyone of them is a college graduate.

I present them my formula none the less. Try it once or twice. Do not let prejudice blind you. Kick yourself out of the book reviewing rut, and study the sociological and esthetic effect of crap-shooting on art. It is enormous.

Come, sixes, buy poppa two Theatre Guild seats.

## 2. WHAT IS A MOB?

Intellectuals despise the "mob," and the "mob spirit". By "mob" they mean any mass of workers, whether at a baseball game, a lynching bee, a revolution; at an *Abie's Irish Rose*, or at a Meyerhold's Theatre.

It is chiefly for its credulity, gregariousness and ignorance that intellectuals despise the mob.

But there is no abstract thing called the "Mob." Let us settle this once and for all; it is unscientific to say the "Mob" is one thing or another.

There is no "Truth": there are only truths, there is no "Mob": there are only mobs.

One kind of mob is the lynching mob. None of us care for it. Another mob is the patriot mob; and the church mob; and the H. L. Mencken mob; and the Theatre Guild mob; and the *New Yorker* mob, etc., etc.

A "mob" is only a group of persons with some common temporary passion, such as art or drinking, for instance.

Most intellectuals can stand the working-class mob when it is baseballing, or Coney Islanding, or being trivial. They hate it like death when it begins to think, to create, to establish its own culture, as in Russia.

Because that is different from what the intellectual "mob" wants out of life.

## 3. IN THE ZOO

I don't like the intellectual mob. It is not intellectual enough. Almost always it lives in the past.

A new H. L. Mencken is needed to give himself to the trivial task of listing the follies and credulities of the bourgeois intellectual mobs.

It is enough to make a taxi-driver take up knitting to observe

some of the enthusiasms that give our thinkers brain-orgasms:

1. *Gurdejef*. This is a cult started by a Russian emigre in a chateau near Paris. Among the disciples may be named Waldo Frank, Jean Toomer, Katherine Mansfield, Gorham B. Munson, Jane Heap, Lincoln Steffens, etc., etc. The object of the cult is to make supermen and superwomen out of people who write books. Self-control—for what? Yogi: Emerson: Physical exercise: "The sense of the Whole." Simple life: Everything. I read an article about it in the *New Republic*. The place sounds like a thinly-disguised sanitarium. The invalids worship the Doctor. He is a big but jolly cynical Russian, who performs such miracles as drinking wine, making epigrams, eating lots of food, kissing the gals, being coarse and "earthy." He laughs at his patients and calls them fools, and they adore it; it is Spiritual Wisdom. He put one poor pale intellectual to cracking rock for a solid year, to help his soul. It was the best thing I heard about the place.

2. *Neo-Catholicism*. Others of the intellectual mob are being stampeded into the Church. T. S. Eliot, Wyndham Lewis, Ernest Hemmingway, etc. The science of the past hundred years is nothing. Voltaire and Darwin and Einstein have worked in vain. The Neo-Intellectuals prefer to stupefy their minds with such feeble childish inanities as Immaculate Conception, Trinity, Absolution, Papal Infallibility, etc. How can a mature mind take these toys seriously? It is suicide. This "mob" is in a panic of fear.

3. *Bourgeois Pessimism*. A small mob of faded lilies, under leaders like Joseph Wood Krutch, write books and essays to prove that the world has also faded away. They prove that people feel no more sexual love, no more faith in science, art, beef-steaks, beer, revolution, wind and sun. But the world goes on sexualizing and believing despite the books. I wonder how and why?

4. *Primitive Bunk*. A great many of the "mob" are going he-man and primitive. Tutors in female seminaries give us hard-boiled intimate novels of gangster's life. Cerebral hermits like

D. H. Lawrence chant praises to the bold, cruel, "beautiful dark soul" of the Aztec. There are 12 million Negroes in this country. Nearly all of them are hard-working family men, working in steel-mills, brick yards, section gangs, barber shops, pullman trains, cotton fields and textile mills and such. And Sherwood Anderson mysticizes over their "black" laughter, their careless sexuality, their indifference to American hurry. But they are really the worst-driven slaves in all America. He envies them because he likes to imagine they are "free and primitive." He yearns to be like them: all right let him go to work in a steel mill.

5. *Miscellany*. You can read essays by American intellectuals to prove that Ramsay MacDonald will bring world peace; that Herbert Hoover will bring world peace; that a man can live with three wives; that it is sorrowful to be a Lesbian; that mental telepathy really works; that the soul of America is to be found in Walt Whitman; that the soul of America is to be found in Henry Ford; that Prohibition will ruin the arts and sciences; that there is a fourth dimension; that sex should be free; that painting ennobles the soul; that music ennobles the soul; that liquor ennobles the soul; that there is "pure" poetry; that when a bridge breaks, God is Love; that Poe was sexually impotent; that Henry Clay was oversexed; that, Carrie Nation, Bryan, Sidney Lanier, Buffalo Bill and Bob Fitzsimmons all suffered from the inferiority complexes, that Martha Washington suffered from an Oedipus complex; that John Brown was both a religious maniac and a horse-thief; that Benjamin Franklin was a rake and our first civilized American; that since Plato every philosophy has been the product of a bad liver, a complex or an unhappy marriage; that Henry the VIIIth made British history because he was oversexed; that Abraham Lincoln made the Civil War because he was undersexed; that history is sex; that America is sex; that sex is soul; that soul is all; Oom, Oom; *pfui!*

#### 4. THE LITTLE REVIEW

*The Little Review* recently gave up the ghost. One by one every organ of independent thought is being killed off in America. It is not a censorship; it is worse than that. There are left almost no intellectuals in America with a "different" philosophy of art or life they think worth fighting for. All have become crappshooters.

*The Little Review* was printed for some 13 years: I prefer, of course, the *Masses* tradition; but next to it, the *Little Review* was the best literary magazine. Every able writer over 30 in this country first appeared in or read *The Little Review*.

It was often an art-poseur. But it had extreme intellectual courage, which has always been rare here. Its arrogance bore fruit. It proved to be the mother of all so-called "modern" art in this country. (Mostly gone into luxury advertising now.)

In the valedictory number, one of the editors, Jane Heap, says:

"The revolution in the arts, begun before the war, heralded a renaissance. The *Little Review* became the organ of this renaissance. . .

"No doubt all so-called thinking people hoped for a new order after the war. This hope was linked with the fallacy that men learn from experience. Facts prove that we learn no more from our experience than we do from our dreams.

"For years we offered the *Little Review* as a trial-track for racers. We hoped to find artists who could run with the great artists of the past or men who could make new records. But you can't get race horses from mules. I do not believe that the conditions of our life can produce men who can give us masterpieces. Masterpieces are not made from chaos.

"We have given space in the *Little Review* to 23 new systems of art (all now dead) representing 19 countries. In all of this we have not brought forward anything approaching a masterpiece except the *Ulysses* of Mr. Joyce. *Ulysses* will have to be the masterpiece of this time. But it is too personal, too tortured, too special a document to be a masterpiece in the true sense of the word. It is an intense and elaborate expression of Mr. Joyce's dislike of this time.

"Self-expression is not enough; experiment is not enough; the recording of special moments or cases is not enough. All of the arts have broken faith or lost connection with their origin and function. They have ceased to be concerned with the legitimate and permanent material of art.

"... But I hold no disappointment, despairs, or fears for the future. I hold no negative emotions. The actual situation of art today is not a very important or adult concern (Art is not the highest aim of man); it is interesting only as a pronounced symptom of an ailing and aimless society.

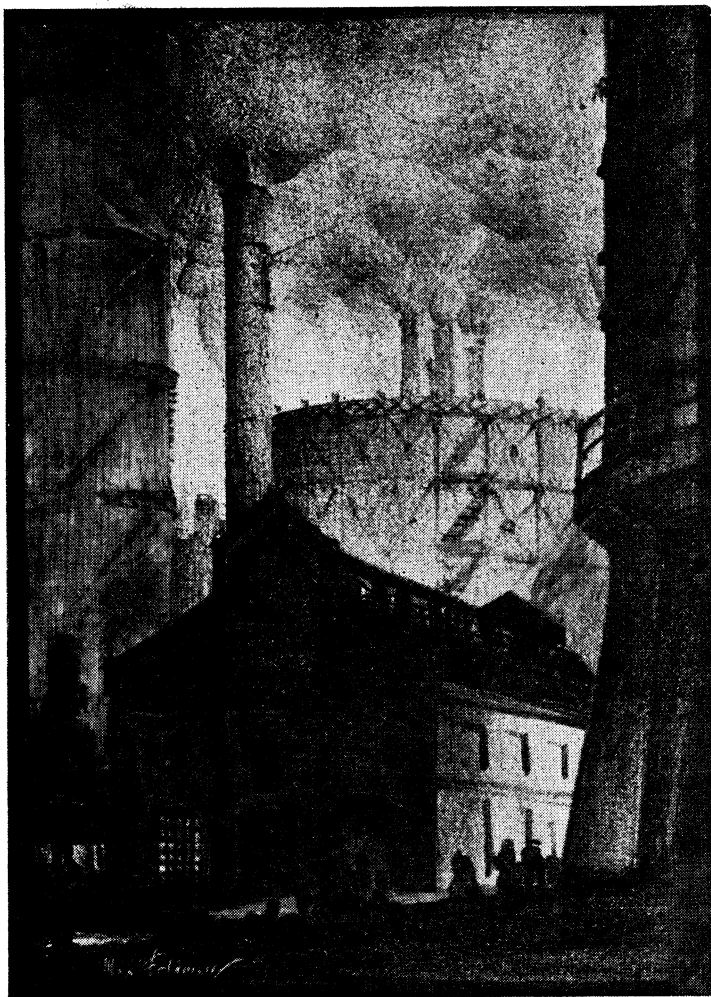
"This is the situation as I see it. . . . But I am not going out to try to reform or reorganize the world-mind. Nor am I going to sit and brood about the passing of the arts. The world-mind has to be changed, no doubt; but it's too big a job for art. It is even quite likely that there will have to be reorganization on a very large scale before we can again have anything approaching great objective art. . . or approaching life.

"Perhaps the situation is not so hopeless as I have described it. Perhaps it doesn't matter. Or perhaps it would be more than an intellectual adventure to give up our obsessions about art, hopelessness and *Little Reviews*, and take on pursuits more becoming to human beings."

#### 5. THE DEATH OF BOURGEOIS THOUGHT

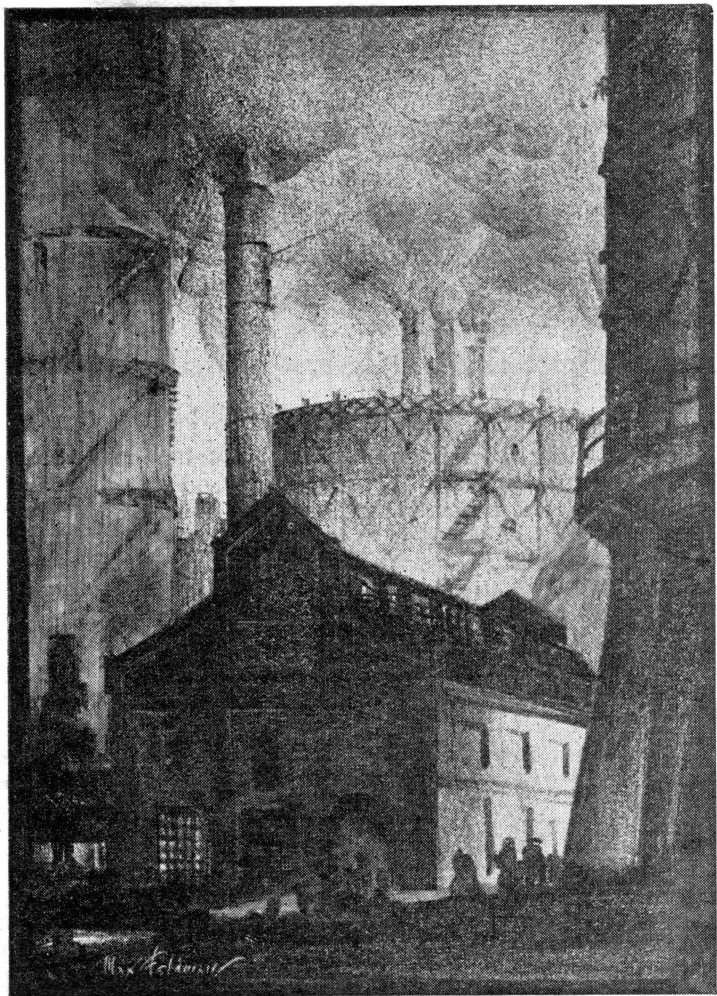
The fact is: All conscious artists today know and feel, almost as intelligently as a New York Communist vestmaker, that bourgeois thought is dying, that bourgeois art is breaking up.

Can Wyndham Lewis save it? He is a British intellectual who tries to confront the problem. In one of his publications, *Paleface*,



Drawn by Max Feldman

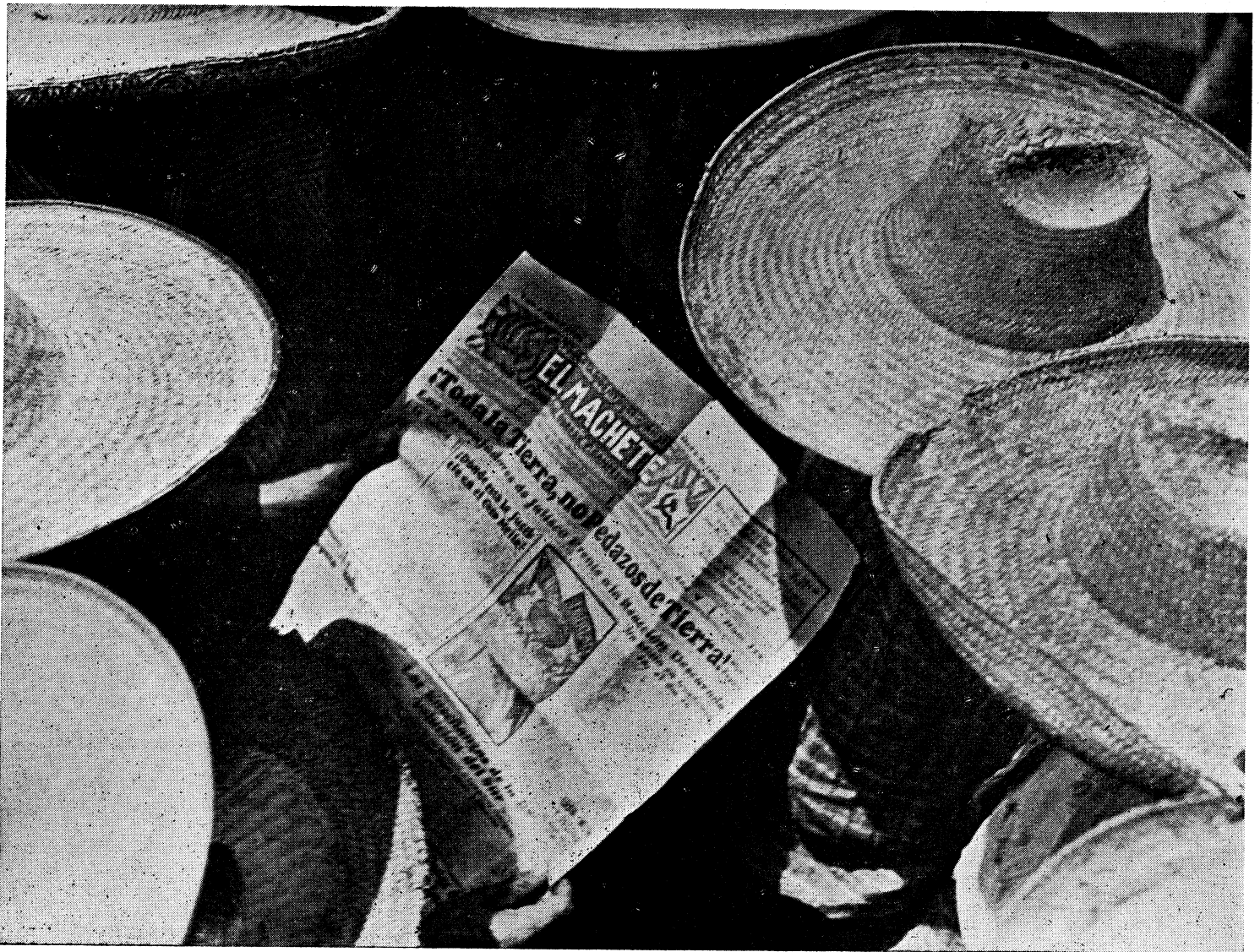
**POWER**



*Drawn by Max Feldman*

**POWER**





Mexican workers reading *EL MACHETE* Mexican revolutionary weekly, which has been suppressed. Photograph by Tina Modotti

he makes an interesting study of the flight into pseudo-primitivism by the intellectuals. He explains it as their unconscious method of preparing for the next world war. And he attacks their defeatism, their impotence, and blames it on their inferiority complex before the dark races. His remedy is to close up the ranks of the white race in a new Nordic courage and solidarity.

It is all very ignorant, silly, and pretentious. A man ought at least know his facts. Sillier, is Lewis's defense of "Reason" against the "sentimentality" of Communism. "Extreme concreteness is for me a necessity," he says, "I am for common sense, hence I find myself naturally aligned today with the philosophers of the catholic revival."

This is where Reason leads him—into kneeling like a peasant before plaster saints. He calls his magazine *The Enemy*. Against such enemies one can say nothing. They are too confused and amorphous to attack at any point. It is like fighting a cloud. The importance in Wyndham Lewis's present stage of evolution is that he is one of the forerunners of conscious Fascism among the Anglo-Saxon intellectuals. T. S. Eliot is another; he is confessedly "a royalist in politics, a catholic in religion, a classicist in art."

It is a small trickle, but it shows the dam is breaking down. Their world is doomed. They know it, and run to hide behind Mother.

Both men began as revolutionary experimenters in the arts. But they soon discovered where such a spirit leads to in real life; to proletarian revolution. So the reaction begins the full retreat. But Mother Church can no longer save anyone; she is having a hard time saving herself.

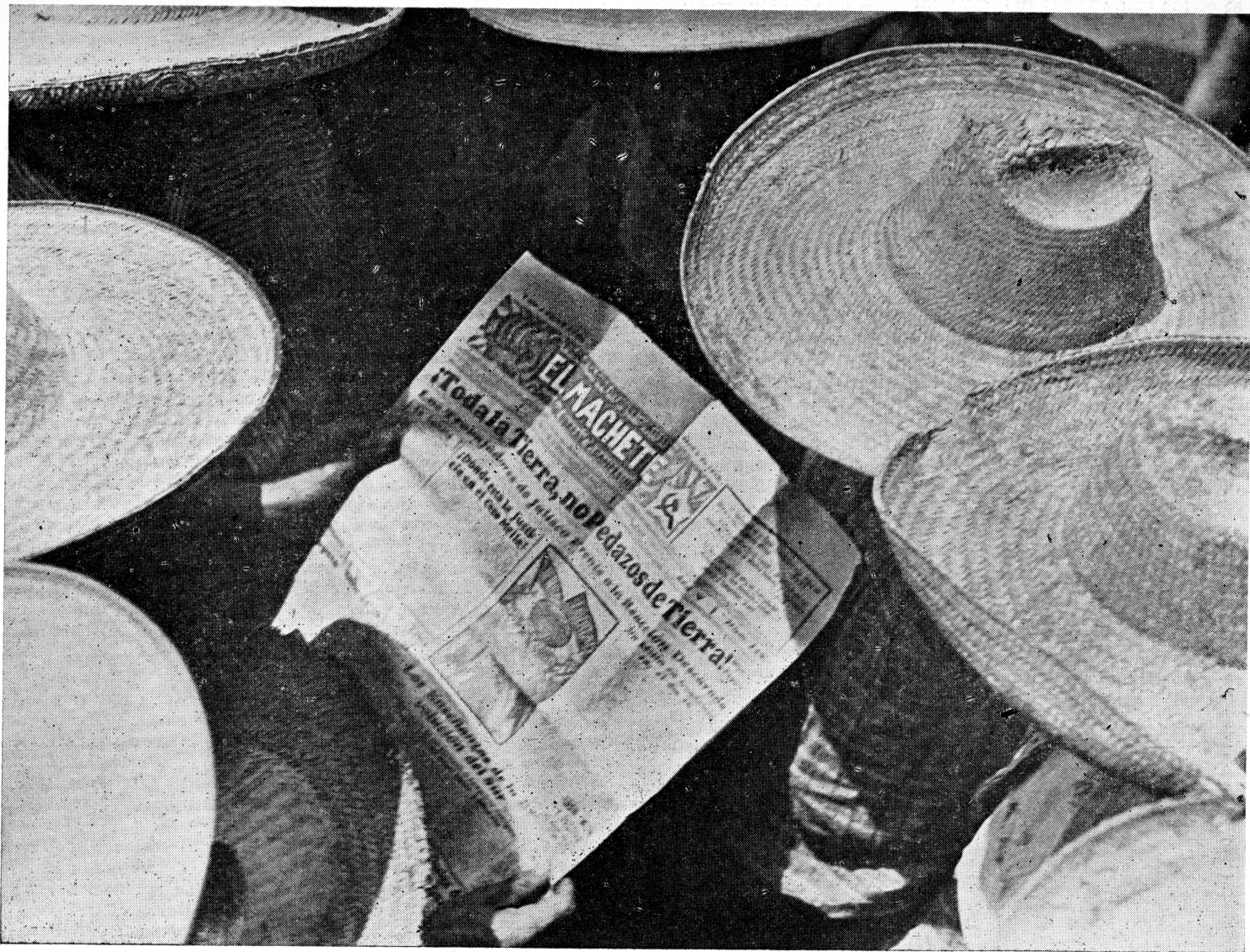
## 6. THIS FABULOUS WORLD

I always read the magazine *transition* faithfully. It is now trying to crystalize its esthetic viewpoint: recently it published a proclamation. "The imagination in search of a fabulous world is autonomous and unconfined", is one of the theses. Yet when I examine the products of their fabulous world, I understand these but too well. A man's dreams and fantasies are as real as his waking life; both are an organic whole. The fantasies of the *transition* writers are not autonomous. They are mainly horror-dreams of world catastrophe, disgust, and destruction. Their "real" world is falling down; but they will confess it only in dreams.

One does not need to create through dreams. Reality is more miraculous, more terrific, more satisfying a material. It is the great, exciting truth in which we all live. Time and Space were given us to mould; this is the great art Jane Heap dreams about. The world is our workshop; that is what the Social Revolution means: collective arts shaping the world.

It is coming fast; it will change empires, cities, workers, artists, gangsters, children, machines, rivers, cows and geniuses; organize everything into new conscious fabulous art. History up to now has been an uncontrolled animal dream. "But this concludes the primitive history of man. Now he passes definitely out of the animal kingdom." (Marx).

But first there will be another World-War among the craps-shooters.



*Mexican workers reading EL MACHETE Mexican revolutionary weekly, which has been suppressed.*

*Photograph by Tina Modotti*

# THE MEXICAN REACTION

By JUAN DE TORRES

The revolution is over in Mexico. Reaction is in full swing; the next regime now in the process of being "elected" will be wholly a reactionary one.

Pasquale Ortiz Rubio, the government candidate, and hence almost certain to be "elected" provided he is still a candidate and alive on election day early in November, although of revolutionary background is a conservative of the most pronounced type. His family is wholly old regime, one uncle having been a Bishop of the Mexican Catholic church and his own father a member of the national supreme court. He himself is a very wealthy man, of the "cultured" variety, with large estates and an imposing and hideous residence in Colona Roma, the latest wealthy residential district of Mexico City, where all the revolutionary generals reside and also house their "amigas". Rubio is a weak character and if installed as president will be the tool of the "strong" men among the Mexican politicians, and reactionaries. Evidence of his caliber is the fact that he resigned from the Obregon cabinet, in which he was Secretary of Communications, because he considered that government too "friendly" to labor; labor as represented by the corrupt and reactionary leadership of the CROM.

Should by any chance Rubio not be "elected" and his opponent Jose Vasconcelos gain the presidency it will make no difference. Vasconcelos is one of the intellectuals of the Mexican revolution, who broke with Calles when he had his row with the Catholic church, and toured the United States denouncing the government's policy toward the clericals. Vasconcelos is essentially no stronger man than Rubio. He is making his "campaign" chiefly on the anti-American imperialism issue, yet is the friend of American businessmen and has since the beginning of his campaign visited on several occasions with Ambassador Dwight Morrow, who calls him his friend. This despite the fact that in one political speech Vasconcelos bombastically announced that if he was elected he would give Morrow his marching papers the very next day.

As a matter of fact there is more than a likelihood that neither man will get anywhere near the presidency. There is current in Mexico, in official and other usually well informed quarters, the persistent intimation that before the "election" takes place that a powerful military figure will loom up; that Rubio will disappear and that Vasconcelos will also fade out of the picture.

This is not the only evidence of the fact that the revolutionary period in Mexico has passed and that reaction is ever more raising its head and consolidating and extending its power. Under the gentle effusions and good-willing of Morrow the revolutionary leaders without serious reluctance are being mesmerized into "adjustments" and "reorganizations". In this way the oil controversy was "settled", the church fight "arranged"; and the land, labor, railroad and other economic matters broached.

The labor laws are already under fire. President Portes Gil has introduced at a special session of Congress that he convened for that purpose a new Labor code, which would federalize all labor laws. This new proposal would make strikes literally impossible, by requiring government approval before the workers could down their tools and leave their benches, and furthermore require governmental authority before the workers could even organize in unions. The government would also be empowered to draft workers into the government service in case of a strike, and thus break up such industrial revolts. By federalizing the labor code the national government in the throes of reaction is striking at some of the Mexican states where radical labor legislation and their administration is being enforced.

The fact that the employers and businessmen are opposed to the proposed new law in no respect enhances it. They are against all labor legislation and are using the protest of labor against the measure to strike at the whole idea of a labor code.

The new labor bill is the beginning of a whole series of similar legislative undertakings in other lines, land distribution, finance,

the national railways. Morrow has a neat scheme of "budgeting" the land expropriation, which if instituted will mean an end to the return of the land to the Indian villages. The scheme he is urging upon the government would include a sum in the annual federal budget for the purchase of land from estate owners, this land in turn to be sold on long-term payments. There is no provision made as to whom it should be sold, Indian villages, revolutionary generals, or foreign or native land grabbers. The fact that the Mexican budget, owing to waste and graft, is already hardly enough for domestic purposes to say nothing about paying interest on the various forms of national debt also discloses just how much land may be expected to be available to the Indian if the Morrow plan becomes effective.

And so it goes on down the line, with the reaction ever more bold and increasingly active. It was inevitable, what with revolutionary generals from Obregon and Calles on down becoming enormously wealthy men and vast estate owners, with a burgeoning labor movement and working class consciousness perverted by crooks and grafters of the type of Luis Morones, jefe of the CROM. Today the so-called revolutionary government is not even the bogey man of the State Department, which only a few years ago was crying to the wide world that Mexico was Red. The "revolutionary" government of Mexico today is hunting down left-wing leaders with blood and iron, killing them with the utmost ferocity and crushing the Communist workers' unions and organizations wherever they dare do so. Where outright force in such activities is unavailing or impracticable, dissension and internal differences are engendered, and then the weakened groups attacked and broken up.

Mexico is on the high road to reaction today. Perhaps if the swing right goes far enough *soon enough* the revolution, this time more experienced and class conscious, can rise up with heroic irresistibility once more. If not, it may mean a long and bitter fight to regain the revolutionary momentum.

## Song of the Motors

*Steel-lunged singers of industry!  
The Whirr and the sigh of the dynamo  
and the cylinder; of the truck and the  
mill; the battleship and fast express.  
At the street intersection the gear shifts  
scream in high tenor as the automobile  
changes its tune; Above, the airplane,  
rider of the clouds, hums in a deep bass  
voice.*

WILLIAM ALLEN WARD.

## A Railroad Dick

*All wise guys seem to know him by his mug.  
Try sneaking in the yards, he's sure to pop  
From nowhere with his rod in hand. A pug  
And tough as nails and hardboiled too. He'll pop  
A manifest to kick you off the top.  
He spots and decks the cannonballs to slug  
The nervy stiffs, then hands them to a cop  
Who drags them off to spend a month in jug.*

*One day, he frisked a bo caught in a blind,  
And found amongst some other junk, a few  
Blue Books by Remy de Gourmont. Opined  
He: "Ancient author; highbrow bum; great find!"  
The bum escaping muttered this adieu:  
"You clod! Some night they'll sap you from behind!"*

FRANK THIBAUT.





Photo from the Russian Movie "Her Way of Love"

## KULTUR-FILM

By WINIFRED RAY

*Kultur-Film, the Scientific Educational Film—Published by Teakino-Pechat, Moscow.*

(Contents: Introduction by K. I. Shutko; The Physiological Foundations of Cinematography, by P. P. Lazaref; What is meant by the Politico-Educational Film, by K. I. Shutko; The Scientific Film Abroad, by K. I. Shutko; The Scientific Educational Film in the U.S.S.R., by L. M. Sukharevsky; On the way to the Creation of the Scientific Educational Film; by L. M. Sukharevsky; Method of Constructing the Scientific Popular Film, by A. N. Tiagay; Method of Showing the Scientific Educational Film, by L. M. Sukharevsky; What is meant by a "Chronicle" Film, by K. I. Shutko; Problem of preparing a Foundational Staff of Workers for the Scientific Educational Film, by L. M. Sukharevsky; Special Devices in Cinematography, by V. K. Ulovitch; Immediate Tasks and Prospects of the Scientific Educational Film in the U. S. S. R. by L. M. Sukharevsky.)

At the first Party Congress held in Russia on questions connected with the Cinema, a resolution was passed to the effect that: "The Cinema can and must occupy an important place in the cultural revolution as an instrument of general education and communist propaganda"; and any one who wishes to be informed as to the means which have been taken in Russia to put this resolution into practice will find this volume a mine of information. In spite of every kind of financial and technical difficulty, Russia has tackled her film problems with a zeal and intelligence infinitely worthy of admiration and emulation. The pioneer enterprise connected with the cultural film in Russia was the Gos-Kino, which in 1923 formed a special department for developing this side of its work. In conjunction with Kult-Kino, with which it afterwards became amalgamated, this department produced the famous film, *Abort (Abortion)*. Kult-Kino also produced *The Truth of Life (syphilis)*, *Life as it is (tuberculosis)*, as well as a number of ethnographical, geographical and other films. Among other or-

ganizations which have produced educational films are: Politkino (*Electrification, The Black Death, The Great Fight, etc.*); Sevzapkino (*Scarlatina, Fishing, Life of a Textile Worker, etc.*); Sevzapkino (*Prostitution*) and Azgoskino (*The Struggle for Life, the Oil Industry, etc.*). Gosvoyenkino (State Military Kino) was founded in September, 1924, with the object of providing special films for the instruction of the Red Army and also films for the lay public; its productions include: *Sport and Manouvres, Shooting, Boxing, the Silk Industry in Turkestan, Tanks, Aviation, the Transport of Troops on the Railways, etc.* Meschrapbom has produced films on the Metric System, Alcoholism, Earth and Sky (illustrating the movements of the heavenly bodies), First Aid, The Care of the Sick, and Pudovkin's famous film, *The Mechanics of the Brain*, illustrating the theories of Professor Pavlov, as well as various industrial films (cotton industry, shipbuilding, railway construction, and the manufacture of nails, boots, books, newspapers, etc.); protection against poison gas, the motor car industry, the hygiene of food, physical culture, the film industry. Sovkino has produced films on sound, alcohol, health in the factory, the development of the amphibia, the milk industry, and has also a long list ready or in preparation, including: *The Sunflower Industry, The Fight for the Harvest, 10 Years of Soviet Medicine, Forest Dwellers, The Epoch of the Romanovs and Tolstoy, Sun, Air and Water, The Nobel Expedition, etc.*

An aspect of the cinema that has received special attention in Russia is the study of the interests and requirements of the cinema audience, for the purpose of which three principal methods have been employed: 1. the keeping of a diary recording observations of the reactions of the spectators to various films by workers specially trained for this task (direct observation); 2. the collection of wishes and opinions by means of a questionnaire; 3. observation of some particular audience over a period of from 3 to 6 months (experimental observation). In the case of illiterates the questionnaire method is of course impracticable and in their case and that of the less educated the method of direct observation has been found the most satisfactory, while for the more skilled and cultured class the questionnaire and the experimental method are employed in conjunction.

The promoters of the educational cinema in Russia have also been alive to the value of such technical devices as slow motion, rapid motion, reverse motion, etc., for the purpose of illustrating biological, chemical and other processes, as well as for that of scientific research. Rapid motion photography has, for instance, been used to illustrate the hatching of a chicken, the growth of a plant and the construction of the great elevator in Moscow.

It has also been realized that the educational value of the cinema can be greatly enhanced if it is associated with complementary organizations for the purpose of instruction, explanation and study. In Moscow, Leningrad and Odessa, for example special cinema theatres have been organized, equipped with library, reading room and foyer, and it is planned to open many more in the next few years. Explanatory pamphlets are available in the foyer for study by the audience before witnessing the actual films; such as that prepared by Prof. L. N. Voskresensky and Pr. Doc. Muller in connection with the film, *The Food Problem*, and that by A. M. Tiagay for *Mechanics of the Brain*. Further there has been organized in Russia a body of lecturers to assist at the exhibitions of the films and either explain the pictures as they appear on the screen or give an introductory explanation before they are shown, as well as to answer any questions that the audience may care to ask. Exhibitions are also organized in connection with certain films. In connection with the great *Potemkin* film a special exhibition is organized in the foyer consecrated to the events of the year 1905 and in the reading room, social and historical literature connected with this period are provided.

Another interesting article by L. M. Sukharevsky is devoted to the subject of the use of the cinema in schools and other educational institutions of the U.S.S.R., as well as to the experiments now being made with the talking film by Professor Kovalenkova in Leningrad and Professor Romanov and P. Tager in Moscow. In a short article it is impossible to do justice to all the varied information contained in this book, but no one after reading it could doubt what extraordinarily interesting and valuable work is being done in Russia in connection with cinematography and what a cultural loss is being inflicted to the English people by the obstacles opposed to the exhibition of Russian films in this country.

—From *Close Up*.





*Photo from the Russian Movie "Her Way of Love"*

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the tragedy of a  
Russian war-wife

introducing a  
Remarkable Soviet Actress  
**EMMA ZESSARSKAYA**

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“A great film  
... remarkable  
for its superb  
realism.”

The  
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THE  
ARTISTE  
“How luminous  
her acting ... a  
fascinating fig-  
ure ... a Rus-  
sian peasant  
Madonna.”

—Berlin  
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—Berlin  
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## A Letter to Workers' Art Groups

Under the surface, in capitalist America, there is quietly growing a Workers' Art movement.

It has no manifestoes, it is not based on theories, it springs from life itself.

It fulfills a need; it has grown out of necessity. It is as much a part of revolutionary history-in-the-making as Gastonia or the *Daily Worker*.

There are at least fifty small workers' theatre groups functioning in American cities and towns.

There are over a hundred workers' cinema clubs which produce, in little halls and clubrooms in industrial towns, programs of novel moving pictures with their own co-operative projection machines.

There are at least 25 workers' choral societies meeting several times a week, some of them numbering like the Freiheit Chorus of New York, a total of 600 members.

There are dozens of workers' nature study clubs; in Boston there is a workers' studio for the study and practice of the graphic arts; in twenty other cities there are workers' schools in economics, history and literature.

I have tried to figure it out; and my conservative conclusion is that 50,000 revolutionary workers in America are connected with some local group for the discovery and practice of Workers' Art.

I know that the bourgeois intellectuals sneer at this spontaneous urge toward workers' culture, and obstruct it wherever they can.

But it goes on in America, as it does so valiantly in Soviet Russia, in Germany, Japan, France, England, Mexico, and other countries. It is a world urge.

Every week in the office of the *New Masses*, we receive at least a dozen letters asking us to suggest suitable one-act workers' plays, short movies, recitations and choral pieces.

We have been unable to satisfy this demand. The reason is that the field has not been organized. It is a commentary on the situation that the most popular piece that was printed in the *New Masses* during three years was the one-act play by Harbor Allen, named "Mr. God Is Not In." This play has been presented at least twenty times since its printing. My own mass-recitation, "Strike" has been given about a dozen times in cities from Maine to California.

It is time this work were organized. It is valuable work. It is a way of reaching the youth of America. It is a way of reaching the workers in places where pamphlets and speakers do not penetrate.

It is a way of capturing the mind of hundreds of thousands of workers in a simple, natural way.

The bourgeois little theatre movement is already a national force; here we have another, ready to our hand.

One need not wait until the official leaders see the necessity of such organization. They will not do so for a long time.

Let us organize now, despite the novelty of it all. Let every group engaged in workers' cultural activities take this first step:

Send in a brief report of your membership, your recent activities, and your future needs to the *New Masses*.

Be specific. Tell us (A) how many members you have; name and address of the corresponding secretary; (B) how often and where you meet; (C) how are these meetings conducted; (D) what other activities are undertaken; (E) tell us how long the club has been in existence, and add any information you may think will be of value.

We think we can help. It is possible we can form a national league to join up with the world organization of workers' art.

We may be able to work out a repertoire of workers' movies. We may be able, if there is enough support, to publish the much-needed book of workers' one-act plays.

There are many other jobs to be done. The first step is for the secretary or most active member in each group to write us



Drawn by Louis Lozowick

a full report. We will be glad to give regularly one or two pages of the magazine to such reports, and to begin planning a national program for the future.

Let us hear from you. Even if there is no group, write us your views as an individual. No theorizing, etc.; we want concrete practical ideas for work. This is a big thing; Germany has a workers' theatre society with a membership of a half-million. Something less gigantic but as useful is possible here. But everyone must write us at once. Let us see first where we stand.

MICHAEL GOLD.

### Love Song

*A right romantic picture for slobs,  
pasty pulp for vulgarians  
who revel in their exhibition dreams  
the luxuries of money.  
give them this day their daily  
nightdream of bodylusters and wonders.  
a lady for each mannikin  
who pays his tribute  
to the money gods and all their  
modern minions.*

### A Premise for Patriots

*it is legal to rob the aborigines  
and build bridges for tourists,  
it is legal as hell  
to kill sacco and vanzettis  
with high powered electricities  
or the shades of newton,  
and even if the forces of law  
are shot to the four corners of the universe,  
in a debauch of nations,  
the ethics of cash concerned  
is paramount still.*

NORMAN MACLEOD



# NEW MASSES



LOUIS LOZOWICK '29

*Drawn by Louis Lozowick*

# BOOKS

Vern Smith  
Joseph Kalar

REVIEWED BY:  
Walt Carmon  
Will Herberg  
Nicholas Moskowitz

Helen Black  
Edward Newhouse

*John Mitchell, Miner, Labor's Bargain With The Gilded Age, by Elsie Gluck. The John Day Co. \$3.00.*

Once I knew a shift boss in a metal mine whose life was beset by a problem. He had some "ground" with a little silver in it, he could float a wild cat company the way other men did, and if the government didn't get him, he'd be all right. On the other hand, he could become a labor leader. He asked all his friends for advice, and arguing now one way and now the other, pointed on the one hand to the Guggenheims and on the other to John Mitchell, who had a quarter of a million dollars after only 14 years in office.

I don't know how this individual finally decided, but undoubtedly in the present stage of corruption in A. F. of L. unions, some men deliberately embark on a career as labor faker, as others go into rum running. Mitchell was not one of these but he helped call them into being.

Elsie Gluck is one of John R. Commons' bright young ladies, she has had access to a considerable number of sources, and she writes a readable biography of Mitchell. In spite of her best efforts to substantiate the theses laid down by Commons in his introduction: ". . . he (Mitchell) left an enduring organization because he built on economic power to make collective agreements and on fidelity to them when disadvantageous", her volume is really a study of the way in which the last generation of labor leaders, starting honestly enough themselves, built such organization and such theories. To take the same example, the U.M.W.A., Commons' "enduring organization", was left only for destruction through John Lewis' enormous treasons in 1922 and 1928, for Frank Farrington's \$25,000 a year sell-out.

Mitchell, the narrow seam miner of the northern Illinois fields, helped to create the U.M.W.A. with the ardor of a crusader and the faith of Lincoln, as Gluck says. Unfortunately, with the faith of Lincoln in established institutions.

Mitchell the young vice-president of the newly organized U.M.W. A. was in Pana and Virden in 1898, when the life of the union was won, and the first national agreement was upheld, by rifle fire. At that time he personally saved the lives of mine owners, but he upheld the miners in their victory. These were the two contradictory tendencies in his philosophy which finally ruined him and the union he built.

Mitchell and those with him never could get the idea of class war, though they engaged in class war. Mitchell led and won, not only the terrific 1898 struggle in southern Illinois, but later, as president, the 1900 strike that organized the anthracite, the 1902 strike that maintained that organization. In these he was tireless, ruined his health by incessant labor, and earned his reputation as a strike general.

But at exactly this time he knew so little the forces involved that he blocked a general strike that would have organized the southern fields, betrayed the steel workers and practically smashed their great union and paved the way thus for certain ultimate destruction of the U.M.W.A. unless a change of leadership could have been brought about. And he knew so little the sort of leadership needed that he allowed, even helped, Tom Lewis of Ohio to build the national and district machines, very soon inherited by another Lewis, who sold the U.M.W.A. once and for all into slavery.

Mitchell and his associates took the road that led down to corruption not because they were corrupt in the beginning; they became corrupt from the circumstances around them that they had

helped to establish. They started in a class war, leading the armies of labor, with a fundamentally false theory, namely that they were climbing a ladder instead of fighting a battle. For the workers they visioned a perpetual capitalism, in which the worker became more and more like a business man, selling his product through his agents, his union officials. Mitchell over and over again, in public, compared himself to "the head of a great banking institution". John Lewis did the same, the other day in a court in southern Illinois. The difference between the two men is probably that between Morgan and Ferrari, between the "honest" exploiter and the swindler, but experience shows that if you make a labor union into a bank, you'll get more Ferrari's than Morgans, because the process is that of trading with the enemy, fundamentally suicidal, organically disintegrating, personally corrupting.

Gluck's book is full of Mitchell's feasting with operators while his miners were starving, of his extraordinary readiness to compromise when battle was needed, of his swift forgiveness and his shaking hands with the blood-thirsty Baer who was planning to wipe out the anthracite districts, of his continual propaganda against militant measures, of his worship of the contract, no matter what harm it did the workers. She excuses all this as correct capitalist ethics, and that is just the trouble with Mitchell, and with the labor movement the Mitchells and Gomperses led. She defends his swift accumulation on the stock market and in a New York state office of the \$347,151 estate he left when he died, forgetting that it is an old trick of bribe givers to pay the money due for real treason while holding office, in the form of reward for apparent services rendered after the office has been vacated. We do not even have to presume that Mitchell understood he was bribed. He did see enough of what was happening to die most miserably and unhappy at only 49 years of age. But he did not see or know enough to even try to tear up the poisonous growth of conscious labor misleadership and outright treason that flourished in the soil he had helped prepare for it. He was not the worst of labor misleaders, very far from it. But he was among the first, and worse ones found it easy to follow the trail he marked out.

Gluck writes cleverly, sympathetically, excusing without trying too hard to conceal Mitchell's misdeeds, and judging gently. History, when it is written after the revolution, will have a harsher verdict.

VERN SMITH.

## BOHUNKS

*Hunky, by Thames Williamson, Coward-McCann. \$2.50.*

A big, slow, torpid mountain of a proletarian, is Jencic. Stupidly naive, primitive, incapable of thought, he moves heavily and apathetically in a misty strange world. Jencic happens to be a bohunk, but he could just as easily have been a frog, a dago, a mick, a nigger, a herringchoker, one of the strange, naive, sentimental people sneered at by sturdy, clean-cut, wholesome Nordics. Jencic is not representative of a type, his stupidity is so enormous as to be beyond belief, and it is because of this, that Jencic does not quite come to life. If Thames Williamson tried to draw the portrait of a bewildered immigrant caught in the shrieking cacophony of machine America, he failed because of exaggeration and over-emphasis. If he desired only to tell a story, with the usual tricks of the trade, suspense, a mounting interest, and a gripping

climax, he succeeded, because they are all here. The portraits of Krusack, the radical masterbaker, and Teena, the passionate pastryworker, and Louie Bedin, the perfumed, seducing ironworker, are successful, and do come to life. Thames Williamson knows his proletarians, their vices and virtues, their hopes and despairs, their prejudices and foolish prides. He gives us a primitive, burlesque, comicstrip strike. I do not mean to imply that Williamson sneers at his workers, at their strike, at bohunks and wops. On the contrary, for he is obviously sympathetic. There is no sardonic laughter in him, very little of humor, and very little of passion. A quiet pity and sympathetic understanding are made manifest in a style simple and soft, yet shot through with a mellow glow that is almost radiant.

JOSEPH KALAR.

## Literary Gymnastics

*Evangelical Cockroach*, by Jack Woodford. Louis Carrier & Co. \$2.50

Read these stories in *Evangelical Cockroach* and wonder at the man. One story after another, bad, good, sparkling, are all made of phrases as neatly turned as a card-trick. It's all done with the uncanny skill of a literary Thurston.

Now you see it, now you don't. And his patter as he does his bag of tricks is original. All of which makes *Evangelical Cockroach* first rate entertainment if no more substantial literary fare.

I read this book of short stories thru at one sitting. I enjoyed it. But some of them made me danged impatient with the author. Here is damnable and damning cleverness. It is flipping a stone across a pond; you follow it breathlessly as it touches surface here and there, rapidly—and then it suddenly disappears. Why in blazes must a fellow with a keen satirical sense, a sharp wit and an uncanny insight be content to do this?

In his own words in a recent issue of the *New Masses*, Jack Woodford is "a writer of some experience, most of it sad," who knows that "anything flowing from the Castalian fountain must be pretty liberally treated with chlorine before being served upon McCall Street."

And yet, he tells us in the introduction to his first book, "Perhaps I had better say that American periodicals have not treated me badly. Some sixty of them have published over a thousand of my short stories . . ."

Hold that gasp. I can easily believe it. This fellow is a literary guinea-pig. He's so criminally prolific I can imagine him dictating chlorine treated stuff to a steno while he scans the sport pages to see what the Cubs did in yesterday's doubleheader. I say criminally, because a literary machine like this can never get depth.

And yet Jack Woodford can write. He knows the human species and all its blemishes. He's quite aware of our social imperfections. But he applies such a thin dose of satirical acid on the fake social guilt that it barely discolors the surface. It isn't sharp enough to bite thru to the brass underneath. And I'm afraid it never will.

It's criminal. For many of the people in his stories are real. I've heard them and worked with them. The kind of people that you meet in the subway, at the ball park and in the street. But Jack Woodford simply won't let them be. He lets us see them for a moment, lets us hear them, and then he puts on his sleight of hand performance. Instead of letting them act for themselves, he juggles them around like in a puppet show. Even when it's enjoyable we realize he has only been fooling.

Woodford was a newspaper man. He has written for everything from a theatre program to a book. He knows the literary racket from the producer to the consumer. His criticism of the writing game is often keen and real. But not always. Too often it is only child's play of putting pins in the chairs of complacency. No doubt this is a dang nuisance to those who sit on them but it doesn't need to pass for social criticism. You can often put a trick like that over successfully at a Rotary Club dinner. Mencken has been doing this for years. He even graduated from pins to tacks. And now the bad boy who once was only a nuisance has become the Babe Ruth of Highbrowed Babitry. Some of this kind of success could easily come to Woodford.

Despite all this, frankly, I enjoyed the book. *Evangelical Cockroach* is not the usual run of reading by any means. It is keen satire, sharp wit, and the agility of a literary gymnast. Take a look at his show. It's worth the price of admission.

WALT CARMON.

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**Four Poets**

*Angel Arms*, by Kenneth Fearing. *Bands and Rebels*, by Keene Wallis. *Compass Rose*, by Elizabeth Coatsworth. *Nearer The Bone*, by Charles Wagner. Coward-McCann, Publishers. \$1.00 each.

With a fine flourish and blare of heraldry, The house of Coward-McCann have announced the issuance of a new series of modern poetry under the title, *Songs of Today*. With the exception of the work of Kenneth Fearing, and in lesser measure, Keene Wallis, we have been unable to discover in this collection a significant expression of the unrest of the contemporary scene; we have found little or nothing of the roar of machines, the cry of enchained, agonized humanity, or even a hopeful song of tomorrow, the prophecy of new dawns.

Foremost among these four poets is Kenneth Fearing, whose verse possesses a brutal frankness, an intellectual hardness and cleanliness rare since Walt Whitman. He records the minute details of commonplace experience with a reporter's painstaking pen; allowing the poetic imagination proper, the organ of the metaphysical, but little scope. He experiments; he is in fact attempting an articulation of the disjointed chaotic sounds of our everyday lives. In this respect Fearing is "modern". His book is filled with powerful images. It is realistic. It strikes the only major note in this otherwise inadequate Series.

Keene Wallis may be compared to Kenneth Fearing as a propagandist and a poet who is intensely interested in "thematic" material, in things social and picturesque. Though he possesses many fine qualities including clarity of expression, his work falls short of the mark because of a rather luke-warm attitude . . . Whatever his emotions be, he employs tools different from Fearing's, more "literary" ones.

Elizabeth Coatsworth is one of the great host of minor poets; there is no excuse for including her in a series of such an ambitious nature. *Compass Rose* boasts of certain superficial, technical perfections, but presents nothing in the way of viewpoint: it consists of a monotonous mouthing of oft-heard phrases at poetical teas. Miss Coatsworth's is a stereotyped repertoire, familiar to the readers of our numerous well-mannered poetry periodicals of the north, the south, the east, and the west—of Greenwich Village.

The last of this conglomerate series is Charles Wagner. We should not forget that his verse has been highly praised by Mr. John Erskine, himself a poet and philosopher . . . Wagner's book is a complete blank, spoiled by many many printed words. It is the most unimportant of the lot. It is infantile, trite, and syrupy.

NICHOLAS MOSKOWITZ.

**Insect Behavior**

*Instinct and Intelligence*, by Major R. W. G. Hingston. MacMillan Co. \$2.50.

Major Hingston believes that "everyone understands what is meant when one speaks of "instinctive action." He is equally positive that "we must examine the lower animals in the same way as we examine ourselves" . . . by observing a certain kind of behavior and inferring a mental state behind it. We should not be surprised, therefore, that he reaches the final conclusion that insect behavior shows "glimmerings of intelligence", that insects "reason," "reflect on a course of action," "act with judgment," "act with forethought," etc. Major Hingston creates not only his God but even his insects in his own image!

The chief lesson of this book is how necessary it is to define one's concepts with precision, how essential it is to sweep away with determination the whole rubbish of anthropomorphism and base our investigations upon a strictly objective foundation—in order to achieve results worthy of scientific consideration. Mr. Hingston's careful observations and really profound knowledge are largely wasted because of his antiquated and discredited methodology.

Yet, in spite of its serious scientific shortcomings, the book is worth reading because of its admirable lucidity and simplicity and its unbelievable wealth of illustrative material on insect behavior. It is as fascinating as Fabre at his best.

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## A Novel of Russia

*Cement*, by Feodor Vasilievich Gladkov. International Publishers.  
\$1.50.

After the ten days that shook the world, what happened in Russia?

Feodor Vasilievich Gladkov gives us the answer in *Cement*. He tells us the story of Gleb Chumalov, Red Army soldier, former factory worker and agitator, now demobilized and returned to his home town.

What a changed world greets him! Houses once neat and clean, are dirty, dilapidated, neglected. His wife Dasha seems like a stranger; glad to see him yes, and for a moment overcome with emotion; then suddenly strong and self-reliant, silent about what happened to her during the momentous three years since he left; full of duties for the Party and the Children's home—where their baby Nurka now lives.

Gleb no longer has a home as in the old days. He is left to make his own adjustment to a strange new life; and he is puzzled, dazed by what he finds around him. Everywhere there is decay and degeneration which seems to radiate from the silent cement factory where he used to work. This enterprise once the core of the town's life, is now dead—deserted by its bourgeois owners, covered with dust, useless.

Gleb decides the factory must be started at once. Only when the wheels are turning, when the workers are again busy at their jobs, will the town come back to life. "Cement is a mighty binding material", Gleb tells his fellow-workers. "With cement we're going to have a great building-up of the Republic. We are cement, Comrades: the working-class. Let us keep that in mind." What good to have captured industry from the bourgeoisie if they cannot run it.

But what a job confronted the energetic Gleb! The same job that confronted all Russia's workers when they laid aside guns to begin the work of building the Workers Republic. The idle workmen were sitting around talking, arguing, complaining, robbing the factory, raising goats and pigs instead of tending machines. And in the Economic Council, in the Bureau of Industry, in the Forestry Department, there was more talk, more argument, sabotage, hidden enemies, and red tape, bureaucracy.

Children were dying for lack of food; there was not enough clothing or fuel. Cossacks and bandits attacked the town and destroyed Gleb's reconstruction work just as it was well started. Yet in spite of all opposition, all handicaps, Gleb and the workers, pushing shoulder to shoulder, started the factory; and the hum of the Diesel engines breathed new life into the community—and into all Russia.

And as Gleb with his factory, Dasha with her Women's Committees and Children's Nursery, devoted themselves to the economic problems of their town, they strove to work out their personal relationship which had also been shattered by the Revolution. Dasha is the new woman, forged during the years of horror, suffering, heroism. Gleb in spite of his devotion to the Revolution, is still an old-fashioned male where his emotions are concerned. Dasha is now a comrade, not just a wife. They still love each other; but other comrades have also loved Dasha during the past three years, and Gleb finds it all hard to accept. Their personal problem at moments complicates their work, influences other comrades. It is a problem still unsolved when the story closes.

Vivid scenes, striking portraits, bring before us in a flash the struggle of those early reconstruction days. The scenes of expropriation from the bourgeoisie, the surrender of the starving English sailors and their officers, the factory committee meetings, the Party cleansing—these are like snapshots from life.

*Cement* is uneven in its writing, and does not read smoothly. I am told that the Russian original presents almost insurmountable difficulties for the translator, especially in its conversations which are full of colloquialisms and new words. But form and style are of minor interest to the reader of *Cement*. Gladkov has given an unforgettable glimpse of a great historic period, and he has done it with a power and truthfulness that overshadow all petty flaws.

HELEN BLACK.

## THE WHEEL AGE

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By STANLEY BURNSHAW

Reviewed in the July issue of New Masses.

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**Just as a Sample**

*Chemical Warfare—Its Possibilities and Probabilities, by E. K. Fradkin. Carnegie Endowment For International Peace. \$.05. 1929.*

The statement that the next war will be fought in the air with chemicals has now become trite but still very few persons are aware of its implications. This book-sized pamphlet, although it is typically liberal in that it offers no practical solution to the problem, presents a fairly complete picture of the accomplishments and potentialities of chemical warfare.

Already during the first Hague conference the problem had come up and twenty-five nations signed a declaration "outlawing" the use of asphyxiating gases. It is interesting to note that Great Britain and the United States were the only ones who did not sign. Naturally this declaration meant nothing and the author is surprised to arrive at the conclusion that "At no time has the effective operation of vital weapons been limited by international regulations."

It was during the World War that poison gas became an important factor. The first gas attack is described: "Try to imagine the feelings and the condition of the troops as they saw the vast cloud of greenish-yellow gas spring out of the ground and slowly move down wind towards them, the vapor clinging to the earth, seeking out every hole and hollow and filling the trenches and shellholes as it came. First wonder, then fear; then, as the first fringes of the cloud enveloped them and left them choking and agonized in the fight for breath—panic. Those who could move broke and ran, trying, generally in vain, to outstrip the cloud which followed inexorably after them."

After this first attack followed an enormous development of lachrimatory, irritant and lethal gases. "According to the latest military ideas all shells fired by the artillery will contain gas." War will never be decided by shot and shell again. The new "cacodyl isocyanide" will "destroy armies as a man might snuff out a candle. It may be manufactured at the rate of thousands of tons a day and it costs much less than powder and cannon, yet it will destroy armies more thoroughly, more effectively, more quickly."

The new metal, called "plass" or "aldur" gives airplanes invisibility in the air; the new Maxim silencers enable them to operate in perfect silence; radio control makes it possible to send them off pilotless. Silent, invisible, pilotless—these airplanes will spray with gas-filled bombs, germ-filled glass globes and deadly smoke screens, armies, villages and cities indiscriminately. Gas masks are ineffective after a concentrated lethal gas attack. Try to picture then, New York drenched in a surprise night attack with some mustard gas and Lewisite.

It will at least be admitted that the picture of a heap of six million dead does not appeal to one's æsthetic sensibilities. However, we must not be bitter about things like this. Our review would then be called "windy" by Mr. Broun or "in bad taste" by Mr. Mencken.

EDWARD NEWHOUSE.

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# LETTERS FROM READERS

## He Wants to Know

Dear Eds:

It seems to me that the *New Masses* hasn't yet come to the point where it knows just what it is after, who it is trying to represent, and who it is trying to reach. At times it seems to be a handbook for literary aspirants—a snottynosed *Dial*, with lumberjack manners, but nonetheless, *Dial* manners. At other times—to my great joy—it is what I would like to see it be, a magazine for the proletariat who reads and thinks. I said before that the *New Masses* is publishing far too many manifestoes on the desirability and significance of proletarian art—thus dissipating energies and space which probably could have been more profitably used in actually creating proletarian art, or, to put it more humbly, a proletarian mirroring of life. We have been so busy deftly wiggling fingers at the *Dial*, the *American Mercury* and the polite madame of American liberals, the *Nation*, that we have forgotten that the important thing is to go out and show our stuff. I don't know who we are trying to convert by making these faces—surely we don't expect to get *Mercury* and 10 *Story Book* authors to renounce their complacent prostitution.

What I would like to see is a *New Masses* that would be read by lumberjacks, hoboese, miners, clerks, sectionhands, machinists, harvesthands, waiters—the people who should count more to us than paid scribblers. It would be interesting to know what percentage of proletarians comprise the subscribers to *New Masses*—if the percentage is low then there is something wrong. Something wrong in the approach. I have found that workers like to read a good snappy article on their line of work—it is like an experience lived over again for them to come upon slang terms peculiar to their occupation. Workers don't write often, they write because if they didn't they would explode. It might be crude stuff—but we're just about done primping before a mirror and powdering our shiny noses. Who are we afraid of? Of the critics? Afraid that they will say the *New Masses* prints terribly ungrammatical stuff? Hell, brother, the newstands abound with neat packages of grammatical offal.

It is time that we knew who we wanted to read this magazine—embryo artists, or the people who sweat. Is this to be a workers magazine or a potential writers magazine. That's what I would like to know.

JOSEPH KALAR.

International Falls, Minn.

## O. K.

Dear Mr. Gold:

Your July and August numbers were great stuff. Particularly did I like Charles Yale Harrison's work, the hard note of realism and the fighting quality of his stuff. His criticism of Remarque's *All Quiet On the Western Front* was a capital piece of

writing, fearless and just criticism of high order. What I liked especially was his stressing the futility rather than the cruelty of war, to me the correct realistic and radical viewpoint, also his brushing aside of defeatist metaphysics. I trust his war novel announced in your July number will concern itself with things Remarque could or would not see.

Ella Ford's "We Are Mill People" and your own East Side sketches are human documents that together with Harrison's writings justify the existence of the *New Masses*—little as I do agree with its politics.

Yours Sincerely,

ERNEST K. BERGER.

New York, N. Y.

## For Thirty Simoleons

And a feather to stick in her cap, I suppose. For doubtless it is a feather to get into Mr. Mencken's green journal. I fancy Ruth Epperson Kennell got slightly in excess of the traditional thirty simoleons for her article in the May *Mercury* "The New Innocents Abroad".

Kuzbas was an inspiring experiment. Those who went were, for the most part surely, sincere people, sick of the cheapness, cruelty, and insanity of our up-side-down civilization. They were an unsorted lot of dreamers, and the success that has in the long run crowned their courageous leap in the dark (a success due, apparently, to first aid applied in the nick of time by the more experienced and realistic Russians) is one of the heartening things of the past decade. But for Miss Kennell Kuzbas was a failure, and her article gives a probably authentic picture of this failure. Like many women she cannot remove herself from the picture but sees everything from her personal standpoint. She cannot generalize; she is never detached. Evidently she went, in the first place from personal reasons, and was disappointed to find that, personally, she was of little importance in the scheme of things. Hence she has come back to America and seems likely to achieve her wish at last and obtain some notice by holding up to ridicule Kuzbas, Soviet Russia, Haywood, I.W.W.'s, "Professional Sovietists", active workers such as Trotsky's sister Kameneva; by insinuating that the present government is largely occupied with "frequent processions"; by not omitting a single bedbug nor a faulty water closet flush; and last but by no means least by adroitly insinuating the sex touch in her allusion to bathing habits at her hotel.

Everyone has a right to his opinion and if Miss Kennell were not posing as a friend and sympathizer of Soviet Russia one would never reproach her for her article. It is perfectly good ammunition for the enemy. It is the old story. One has nothing against Pilate but the name of Judas Iscariot has become a symbol.

BEATRICE KINKEAD.

San Jose, Calif.



Charles Yale Harrison—is an American who lived six years in Canada before the war. He is 31 years old and now lives in New York with his wife and six year old son. On leaving the Canadian Expeditionary Forces he has worked as a movie theatre manager, newspaperman, free lance journalist and publicity representative. Several of his war stories which have appeared in the *New Masses* have been reprinted in publications in England and Germany. He is now completing a war novel, *Generals Die in Bed* which will be ready for Spring publication.

## IN THIS ISSUE

Hugo Gellert—has been a frequent contributor to the *Masses* and the *New Masses*. His work appears in the *New Yorker*, *New York World* and leading publications. His murals in the Co-Op Cafeteria on Union Square have attracted a great deal of attention.

Carlo Tresca—is editor of *Il Martello*. His long and varied career in the Anarcho-Syndicalist movement and his participation in many famous American labor struggles is told in his autobiography *I'll Never Forget* to be published this fall by the Vanguard Press. The story in this issue is part of an interesting chapter in the book.

A. Z. Kruse—is a New York artist who appears in the *New Masses* for the first time. More of his work will be seen in future issues.

Fredéric Cover—of Pennsylvania, writes of himself "... I am a newcomer; I am 28 years old, married, spend my days working for a power company, and my nights trying to write verse." Quite successfully, too. His poem "Carolina" in the July issue was widely reprinted and appeared in the defense bulletin of the Gastonia strikers.

Juan de Torres—is the pen name of a well known American journalist who has just returned from Mexico.

Vern Smith—former editor of *Solidarity* and *Labor Unity* is now labor editor of the *Daily Worker*.



## NEW MASSES



*Charles Yale Harrison*—is an American who lived six years in Canada before the war. He is 31 years old and now lives in New York with his wife and six year old son. On leaving the Canadian Expeditionary Forces he has worked as a movie theatre manager, newspaperman, free lance journalist and publicity representative. Several of his war stories which have appeared in the *New Masses* have been reprinted in publications in England and Germany. He is now completing a war novel, *Generals Die in Bed* which will be ready for Spring publication.

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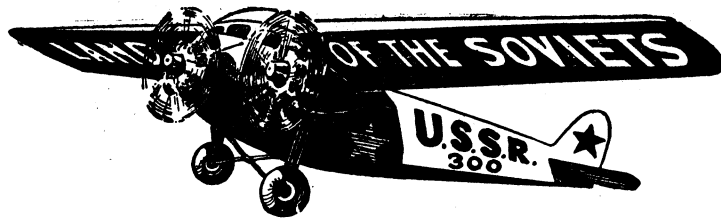
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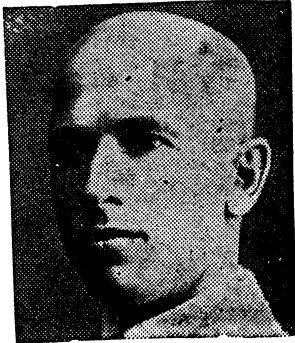
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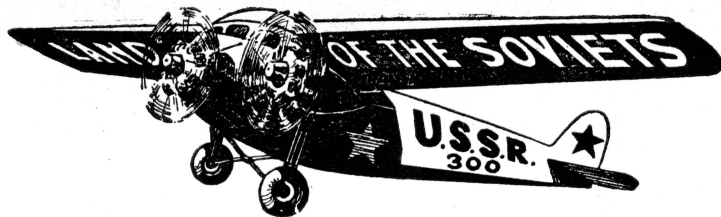
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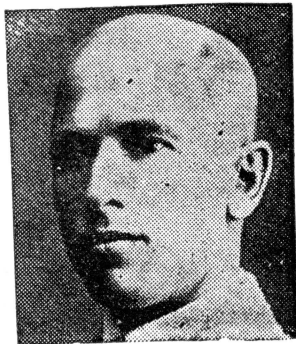
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