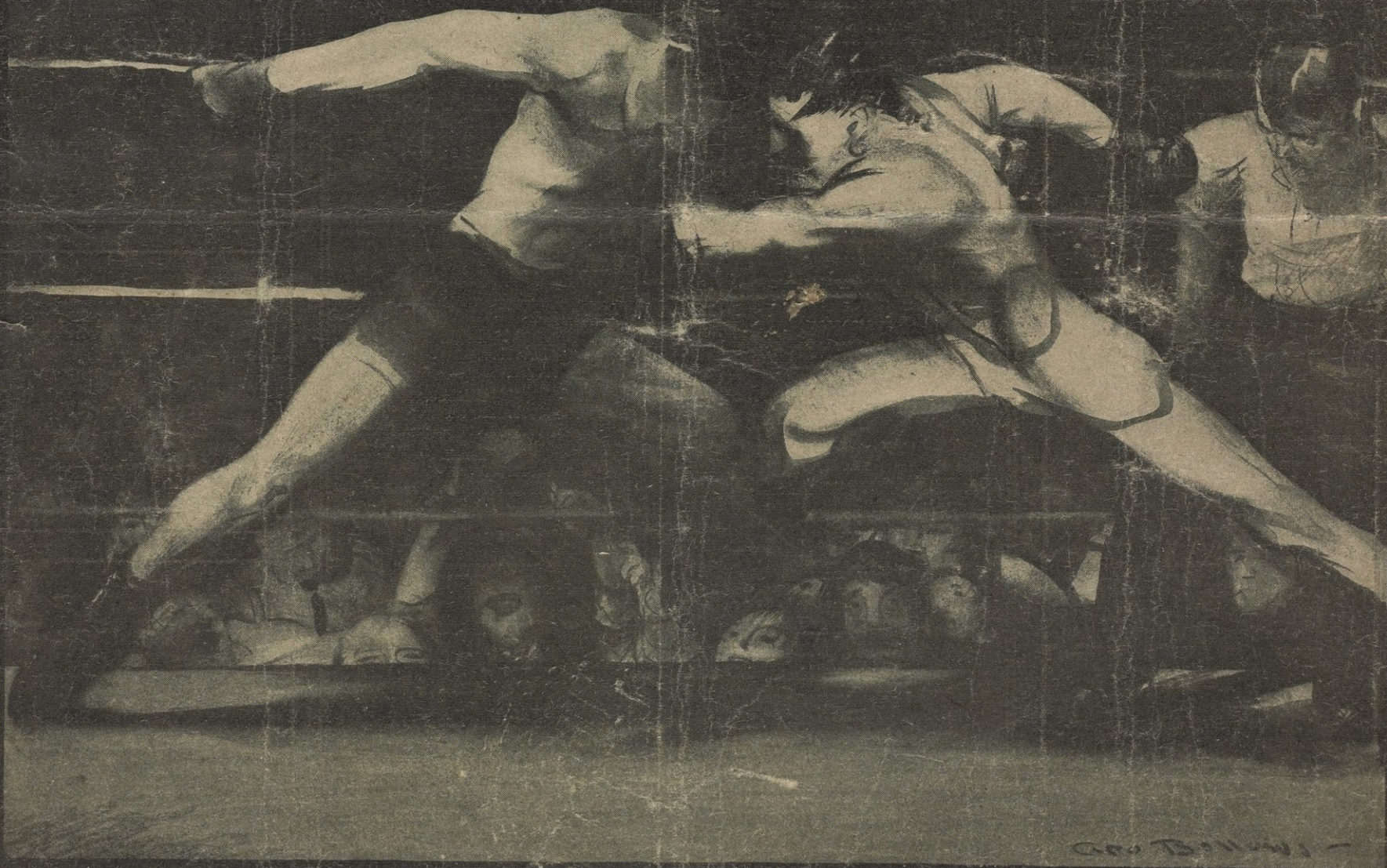


THE

MARCH 1915

10 CENTS

MASSES



DRAWN BY GEO. BELLOWS

PLAYMATES

THE WORST THING IN EUROPE JOHN REED IS TRUTH OBSCENE? MAX EASTMAN

AT THE INDUSTRIAL HEARING INEZ HAYNES GILLMORE

THE WORST THING IN EUROPE

John Reed

IN a city of Northern France occupied by the Germans, we were met at the train by several officers and the Royal automobiles. The officers, genial, pleasant, rather formal young fellows in the smart Prussian uniform, were to be our guides and hosts in that part of the German front. They spoke English well, as so many of them do; and we were charmed by their friendliness and affability. As we left the station and got into the machines, a group of private soldiers off duty loitered about, looking at us with lazy curiosity. Suddenly one of the officers sprang at them, striking at their throats with his little "swagger stick."

"Schweinkunde!" he shouted with sudden ferocity. "Be off about your business and don't stare at us!"

They fell back silently, docilely, before the blows and the curses, and dispersed.

Another time a photographer of our party was interrupted, while taking moving pictures, by a sentry with a rifle.

"My orders are that no photographs shall be taken here!" said the soldier.

The photographer appealed to the Staff Lieutenant who accompanied us.

"It's all right," said the officer. "I am Lieutenant Herrmann of the General Staff in Berlin. He has my permission to photograph."

The sentry saluted, looked at Herrmann's papers, and withdrew. And I asked the Lieutenant by what right he could countermand a soldier's orders from his own superior.

"Because I am that soldier's commanding officer. The fact that I have a Lieutenant's shoulder-straps makes me the superior of every soldier in the army. A German soldier must obey every officer's orders, no matter what they may be."

"So that if a soldier were doing sentry duty on an important fort in time of war, and you came along and told him to go and get you a drink, he would have to obey?"

He nodded. "He would have to obey me unquestioningly, no matter what I ordered, no matter how it conflicted with his previous orders, no matter whether I even belonged to his regiment. But of course I should be held responsible."

That is an Army. That is what it means to be a soldier. Plenty of people have pointed to the indisputable fact that the German army is the most perfect military machine in the world. But there are also other armies in the present war.

Consider the French army, rent with politics, badly clothed, badly provisioned, and with an inadequate ambulance service; opposed always to militarism, and long since sickened with fighting. The French army has not been fighting well. But it has been fighting, and the slaughter is appalling. There remains no effective reserve in France; and the available youth of the nation down to seventeen years of age is under arms. For my part, all other considerations aside, I should not care to live half-frozen in a trench, up to my middle in water, for three or four months, because someone in authority said I ought to shoot Germans. But if I were a Frenchman, I should do it, because I would have been accustomed to the idea by my compulsory military service.

The Russian army, inexhaustible hordes of simple peasants torn from their farms, blessed by a priest, and knouted into battle for a cause they never heard of, appeals to me even less. Of all the armies in this war,

I might make a secondary choice between the Belgians, doing England's dirty work, and the Servians, doing Russia's; but I hesitate at the sight of two hundred thousand Belgians who made a fierce, short resistance at Liege, Namur and Brussels, practically wiped off the face of the earth. "The Belgian army does not exist!" All that remains of that drilled and disciplined flower of Belgium are a few regiments restoring their shattered nerves in barracks, and quarreling with their Allies. The Servian army is still making heroic last stands, but that is no fun.

And crossing over to the Austrian side, I call to mind that hideous persistent story about the first days

of the war, when Austria sent her unequipped regiments against the Russians. Only the first ranks had rifles and ammunition; the ranks behind were instructed to pick up the guns when the first ranks were killed—and so on.

But I could fill pages with the super-Mexican horrors that civilized Europe is inflicting upon itself. I could describe to you the quiet, dark, saddened streets of Paris, where every ten feet you are confronted with some miserable wreck of a human being, or a madman who lost his reason in the trenches, being led around by his wife. I could tell you of the big hospital in Berlin full of German soldiers who went crazy from



Drawn by Maurice Becker

Going Sane!

"One feature of the hard fighting of the last week is that some of the soldiers, going insane, have stopped fighting and rushed from the trenches.—Daily Newspapers.

merely hearing the cries of the thirty thousand Russians drowning in the swamps of East Prussia after the battle of Tannenburg. Or of Galician peasants dropping out of their regiments to die along the roads of cholera. Or of the numbness and incalculable demoralization among men in the trenches. Or of holes torn in bodies with jagged pieces of melanite shells, of sounds that make deaf, of gases that destroy eye-sight, of wounded men dying day by day and hour by hour within forty yards of twenty thousand human beings, who won't stop killing each other long enough to gather them up.

But that is not my purpose in this brief article. I want to try and indicate the effect of military obedience and discipline upon human beings. Disease, death, wounds on the battle-field, Philosophical Anarchism, and International Socialism, seem to be futile as incentives to Peace. Why? As for the bloody side of war, that shocks people less than they think; we're so accustomed to half a million a year maimed and killed in mines and factories. As for Socialism, Anarchism, any democratic or individualist faith—I don't speak of Christianity, which is completely bankrupt—the Socialists, Anarchists, et al. *were all trained soldiers!*

I seem to hear shouts of "England! Look at England! England has no conscript army!" Well, if England has no conscript army now, England is going soon to have one. The Englishman has been prepared for this war by adroit press alarms for years. Hardly one ordinary Briton—of the class that fills the ranks of her far-flung regiments—who did not admit that war with Germany was coming, and that he would have to fight. I could digress here for pages to tell you the terrible means by which England filled her "volunteer" army; how workmen of enlistable age were fired from their jobs, and relief refused their wives and children until the men joined; how others were intimidated, bullied, shamed into fighting for a cause they had no interest in, nor affection for; how Harrods' great department-store loaded a truck with young clerks and sent them to the recruiting-office, with a big sign on the side, "Harrods' Gift to the Empire."

You have perhaps said to yourself, "In the English army an officer is not allowed to strike an enlisted man." That is perfectly true. When an English soldier gets impudent to his superior, the latter orders the nearest non-commissioned officer to "Hit him." But the English soldier is seldom insubordinate. *He knows his place.* The officer caste is a caste above him, to which he can never attain. There are *rankers* in the British army—men who rise from the ranks—but they are not accepted by the army aristocracy, nor respected by the men. They float, like Mohammed's coffin, between heaven and earth. I bring to your notice the advertisement which appeared lately in the *London Times*: "Wanted—Two thousand young *Gentlemen* for Officers in Kitchener's Army." I have seen the English army in the field in France; I have noticed the apparent democracy of intercourse between men and officers—it is the kind of thing that takes place between a gentleman and his butler. Yes, the English soldier knows his place, and there's no Revolution in him. In Germany there is a little hope from the people—they do not think for themselves, but they are corrupted and coerced; in England, the people do not have to be coerced—they obey of their own free will.

And if you want to see those whom the Germans themselves call "an army of non-commissioned officers"—the best soldiers in the world—look at the first British Expeditionary Force, two hundred and fifty thousand men who have served seven years or more from India to Bermuda, and around the world again. These are the real Tommy Atkinses that Kipling sung. They are usually undersized, debauched, diseased little

men, with a moral sense fertilized by years of slaughtering yellow, brown and black men with dum-dum bullets. Their reward consists of bronze medals and colored strips of ribbon—and their ruined lives, after they are mustered out, if they are not maimed and useless, are spent opening and shutting carriage-doors in front of theatres and hotels.

No, I'm afraid we must leave England out of this discussion. England breeds men that know their place, that become obedient soldiers whenever their social superiors order them to. The harm does not lie in joining Kitchener's army; it lies in being an Englishman. In no other self-governing nation in the world would the people acquiesce in the complete suppression of representative government at the order of a military dictator like Kitchener.

At the beginning of this article I gave two instances of what a German must become to be a good soldier. But since Germany has for more than forty years armed and trained her entire manhood, the consequences of the system must appear in her national life. They do. The Germans are politically cowed. They do what they are told. They learn by rote, and their "Kultur" has become a mechanical incubator for sterile Doctors of Philosophy, whose pedantry is the despair of all Youth except German youth. Nietzsche is the last German genius, and 1848 the last date in their vain struggle for political self-expression. Then comes Bismarck, and the German spirit is chained with comfortable chains, fed with uniforms, decorations, and the outworn claptrap of military glory, so that today small business men and fat peasants think like Joachim Murat and talk like General Bernhardt. Allow me to point out that the party of "Revolution," the German Social-Democrats, is as autocratic as the Kaiser's government; and that the crime for which a member is expelled from the Party is "insubordination to the Party leaders." I was informed proudly by a Social-Democratic Deputy in the Reichstag that the Party was now *collecting Party dues in the trenches*; and that, when requested, the *Government deducts the dues from the men's pay and hands it over to the Party organization!*

The German people — *Cannonen-futter* ("Cannon-food") they are jocularly called—went to war almost without a protest. And today, from top to bottom of Germany, the investigator must seek hard before he finds a single dissenting voice. Germany is practically solid; when the Government has an official opinion, the street-cleaners have that same opinion in three days. That is the logical result of universal military service in a country where the classes are not inalterably fixed, as they are in England. And that, let me insist, is what is absolutely required for an efficient army. There is no choice. Thorough efficiency can only be attained at this time by an Autocracy, and so only can an army be attained; in a Democracy, neither efficiency in government, nor an efficient army is possible.

I hate soldiers. I hate to see a man with a bayonet fixed on his rifle, who can order me off the street. I hate to belong to an organization that is proud of obeying a caste of superior beings, that is proud of killing free ideas, so that it may the more efficiently kill human beings in cold blood. They will tell you that a conscript army is Democratic, because everybody has to serve; but they won't tell you that military service plants in your blood the germ of blind obedience, of blind irresponsibility, that it produces one class of Commanders in your state and your industries, and accustoms you to do what they tell you even in time of peace.

Here in America we have our chance to construct someday a Democracy, unhampered by the stupid docility of a people who run to salute when the band plays. They are talking now about building up an immense standing army, to combat the Japs, or the Ger-

mans, or the Mexicans. I, for one, refuse to join. You ask me how I am going to combat a whole world thirsting for our blood? And I reply, not by creating a counter-thirst for the blood of the Japs, Germans, or Mexicans. There is no such thing as a "moderate army" or an "army of defense." Once we begin that, Japan, Germany, or Mexico, whichever it is, will begin to build up a defense against us. We will raise them one, and so on. And the logical end of all that is Germany; and the logical end of Germany is, and always will be, War. And you, gentle reader, you will be the first to get shot.

In Brief

THE full testimony of invested capital before the Industrial Commission in New York is contained in this summary of the remarks of Daniel Guggenheim:

"I believe in industrial democracy. No employer is justified in refusing to deal with unions. . . . No, I do not think that we have ever dealt with any union, but that is a detail I would not be acquainted with."

THE make-up man of the *New York Tribune* must have a nasty spirit or he would not have put these headlines in adjacent columns:

"Wilson Sees Prosperity at its Flood Tide."

"Breadline at Hotel Gives Shock to Care-Free Upper Broadway."

CONSTABULARY

From Rupert Hughes

"I DID not expect, of course, that you would immediately eat all your words and principles, recall back numbers of *THE MASSES*, and announce yourself a convert to the 'constabulary.' But I had expected a less restrained castigation. The lash fell, but I felt in the blows something of that generosity with which you reproach me, something of that mercifulness from which even you cannot quite perfect yourself.

"Your reporter, I. R., is also guilty of self-restraint, though I cannot quite see his use of the word 'baby' in his lines. 'Please, Mr. Hughes, don't play the baby defender of the game that calls for a constabulary.' To my thinking, it is much more 'playing the baby' to shriek with terror and horror at everything that is not quite understood; to go into convulsions over a passing stranger, or a pile of clothes on a chair, or even at papa when he says 'Woof!'

"What I said was, and what I say is, that Mr. Seth Low's interest in a constabulary is simply a desire for a mounted police service in a lonely rural region.

"To sum it all up: Mr. Seth Low as a villager and farmer wrote to a village weekly that it would be a good plan to make permanent the force of mounted policemen who were protecting the new waterworks and the water workmen, so that they might protect the farmers and villagers and their families from the footpads and thieves, or be ready to pursue criminals with reasonable promptness after they had shot down farm hands or ticket agents or Italian laborers, or had robbed lonely farmhouses or chased little children or set a barn on fire.

"This project pleased all of us. It startled me to see *THE MASSES* publish a full-page cartoon showing the 'constables on horseback' as trampers of women and children, and later an article attacking Seth Low as a terrible bogie-man. I wrote to set you right as to our motives, and now Mr. I. R. says I am playing 'the baby defender of the game.' But the