

# Political Drawings

Frans Masereel

1920

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## 2020 Preface

The Masereel Group is devoted to spreading the public domain works of this great artist. The text was first acquired and then scanned. Then it was cropped, rotated, balanced, contrasted, saturated, despeckled, noise-reduced, and some manually touched up. This was followed by OCR scanning, manual proofreading, and translating into English.

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UprisingEngineer, Masereel Group,  
August 30, 2020

# Frans Masereel

By Kasimir Edschmid

The Belgian Masereel, who is a good European, has the fate of having to draw how someone else screams or dies. He was a good soldier, and his military service on the idea began earlier and more violently than any of the satirists of violence, and every day he gave the Geneva Feuille a leaf that threw itself at the madness of the world. The draftsman had a platform from which he preached like any of the great monks.

Like them he has only one flag called Faith, a weapon, humanity and his generals come from other districts than the "iron" commanders, because his world is staggered from terraces where the warriors are at last and the laden ones at the top.

It is a coincidence that his sky is designed in drawings, because he could blow its intensity on horns, weld it into poetry, call it down from the stage. Because only that he suffers from the horror of war and revolt makes him accuse and draw. His graphics come from biblical furor, not from the enthusiasm for lines. In ecstatic anger he makes his manifestos, not out of the grotesque or love of art. The newspaper becomes for him the European drum skin on which his proclamations of the pen drum.

Finally, through Daumier, graphics have re-entered the circle of the more knowledgeable Middle Ages, which lived with conviction and expressed ideas with mouth and action and art, and where the time of the fine arts was also that of poignant seekers and deep insights, for which to quarrel was an internal crusade and a legendary war.

The little Belgian stands at the end of this chain and creates with a great deal of courage and a dogged desperation flame. The formal artistic is not as captivating and taut as his faith muscle, only the tension of his idea makes him important. There is no weariness over him when fencing begins again day after day. In the torrential topicality of the days, its shape is given the firm basic form of the timeless woodcut proclamations of the spirit of all centuries, which seek the sweet violence of true life between death and life and, in their furious flagellation of temporality in the line and the line, flagellantly demand better faith.

When "connoisseurs" and monkeys think his artistic value is doubtful, he does not understand it. Because he does not work like shepherds and lambs in idyllic horizons, but fanaticalizes himself through time with every heartbeat to the magnetic core of his socialist feeling for the future. He bursts into the foyer of the assembled contemporary society and chases the decollated dummy to shreds to the edge of his graphic manifesto, in the center of which his ethical postulate somehow trembles. An ingenious and uniquely new journalism of the mind now emerges in the drawing, which is not illustrated and never told or amused and deepened, but incites and howls and writhes and bleeds and lets every vice and every barbarism of war and revolution break open on its own body.

A breeding of the temporal lie begins in a way that no one has seen for decades, because it has nothing to do with the irony and grotesque assertion of Gulbrandsen, but the red anger of the holy will to work is evident in every work. The buzzwords are blown into the air, and a great

unmasking begins. The baring human monster emerges from the banners, where the gloriolos of the national anthems rang out and old men spoiled the youngsters by preaching to them that it was good to die instead of calling mankind to faster victories and more violent liberations in a more loving race of work.

Between the bandwagon of those in power, the skyscrapers in their arms, "Taylor ... Business" signs above them, the faces placarded with iron corned beef larvae, storming and the archer, stigmatized in the barbed wire, between angel and landscape, shell hole and the skeleton train of the mobilized his stylus moves restlessly ... this is the world through which his appeal runs hot. Day after day his imagination goes out to new forms of creation, conquers new bastions and, almost dying from so much effort, raises the humanitarian standard before each death between filthy and hideous expulsion. An ingenious contact gives him the alternating image of the Wolff report, Tittionirede, Stefanim message, Reuter wiring, discourse of Senator Reed, claim of the Bishop of Canterbury, the opposite. Says Clemenceau in the chamber, slept well, in his graphic a soldier dies on the torture stake.

The objective tension becomes tremendous in the excitement, encouraging in the repetition from day to day, in the concentration of the hourly still blood and nerve warm event. Every morning he drags the lie by the hair through his righteous anger. The make-up slips down under the heat of his violence. In search of the new world, his heart runs accusingly and screaming through the forests of civilization and the hated cities. If he has reached a stage, fighting for it for four years, hurling his little breast at mad Europe for four years, has he achieved peace, that is a cold alp between him and his efforts. Oh, he had wanted him differently. The dead died in vain, and the stone slabs in the drawings and posters already stand up, and the fallen begin their evocative journey into humanity, which has learned nothing and understands little. His restlessness is now getting angrier. He struck the poster of sentiment on the pillar of Europe defiled by many inscriptions of slander; as none of the most gifted, but the bravest, certainly martyr, the expression of the soul graphically led to the expression of the time, serving in the daily work, renouncing a lot in this excitement to help, to complain, to demand and many. People inflamed. Every drawing a command, every curve a reminder. His poster knows no nation, no border. The manifesto always says: on comrade. Every drawing has a heart: Colleagues and friends.

Someone picked up the political drawing and walked among the people with it, and because his hand was pure and his heart was painfully and passionately moved by beautiful dreams of justice, the drum skin of the secret Europe gave the individual action the size and depth of the sound.

## *If the war goes, anything goes*

Wilson's message was received in government, commercial and political circles as conclusive evidence of a long war. All boast the firmness of the thoughts laid down therein. (Message from Havas from Chile.)





## *Conscience 1917*

We are all under the command of the conscience of mankind in battle. (Clemenceau's speech at the end of the Allied Conference.)



## ***But the hunt for war is forbidden***

The fight against the cabbage white butterfly with the help of school children is made a duty of the communities and landowners. (Ordinance of the Council of State in the Canton of Bern.)



## *The light, the people and their shadow*

In the course of the tragic events that are now taking place in this war, a glaring, merciless light falls on every act and every person. (Wilson.)



## *Moloch is hungry*

This morning the enemy attack began on a very broad front. (French army report.)





## *You can't worry about it*

Paris, 6, Havas. — The newspapers have reported from Washington that the operation of the German submarines against the United States has not caused any excitement in official circles.



## *And Belgium?*

Since the beginning of the war we have pursued a gentle policy towards neutrality. (Stresemann in the Reichstag.)



## *Inexplicable conclusions*

... The peoples of America and France ... face with unshakable firmness and with a clear awareness of their duty the task of liberation which they have sworn to carry out to the end. (Poincaré.)  
And now forward with God, towards new deeds and new victories! (Wilhelm II. R.)



## *Modern plastic*

London. — The British aviators did admirable work on the Aisne front.

Berlin. — True to its traditions, the season has added new achievements to the old ones.

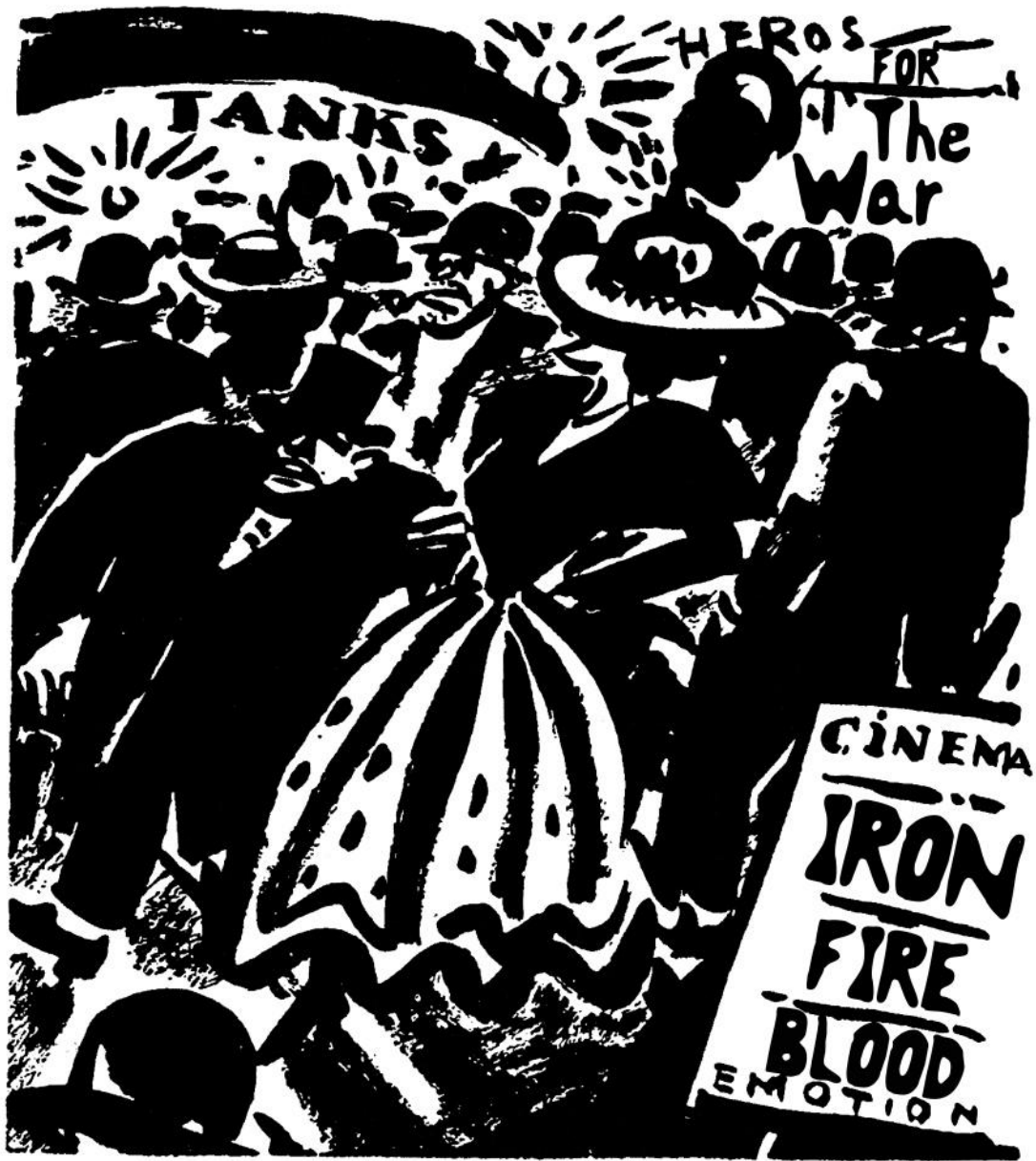
Paris. — Eight tons of explosive devices were used in this way and gave the best results.





## *Anniversaries: some die ...*

Others take advantage and pleasure of it.



## *Champion of Pacifism*

I am a warm friend of peace and I am deeply convinced that peace cannot be achieved without victory and without Germany's understanding that it is defeated. (Declaration by Cecil.)



## *Is it permissible to doubt?*

Maurice Barrès writes in the Echo de Paris: It is with overflowing joy in our hearts that we can see that events are turning more favorable to France and the freedom of the peoples.



***But the true God answers: Peace on earth and  
a pleasure for people***

Washington, 9 (S.A.). — The Senate has passed a resolution requesting the President to make an appeal to the American people to pray for one minute each day at 12 noon for a victorious end to the war.





***The catholic sermon ...  
... which has nothing in common with the  
Sermon on the Mount***

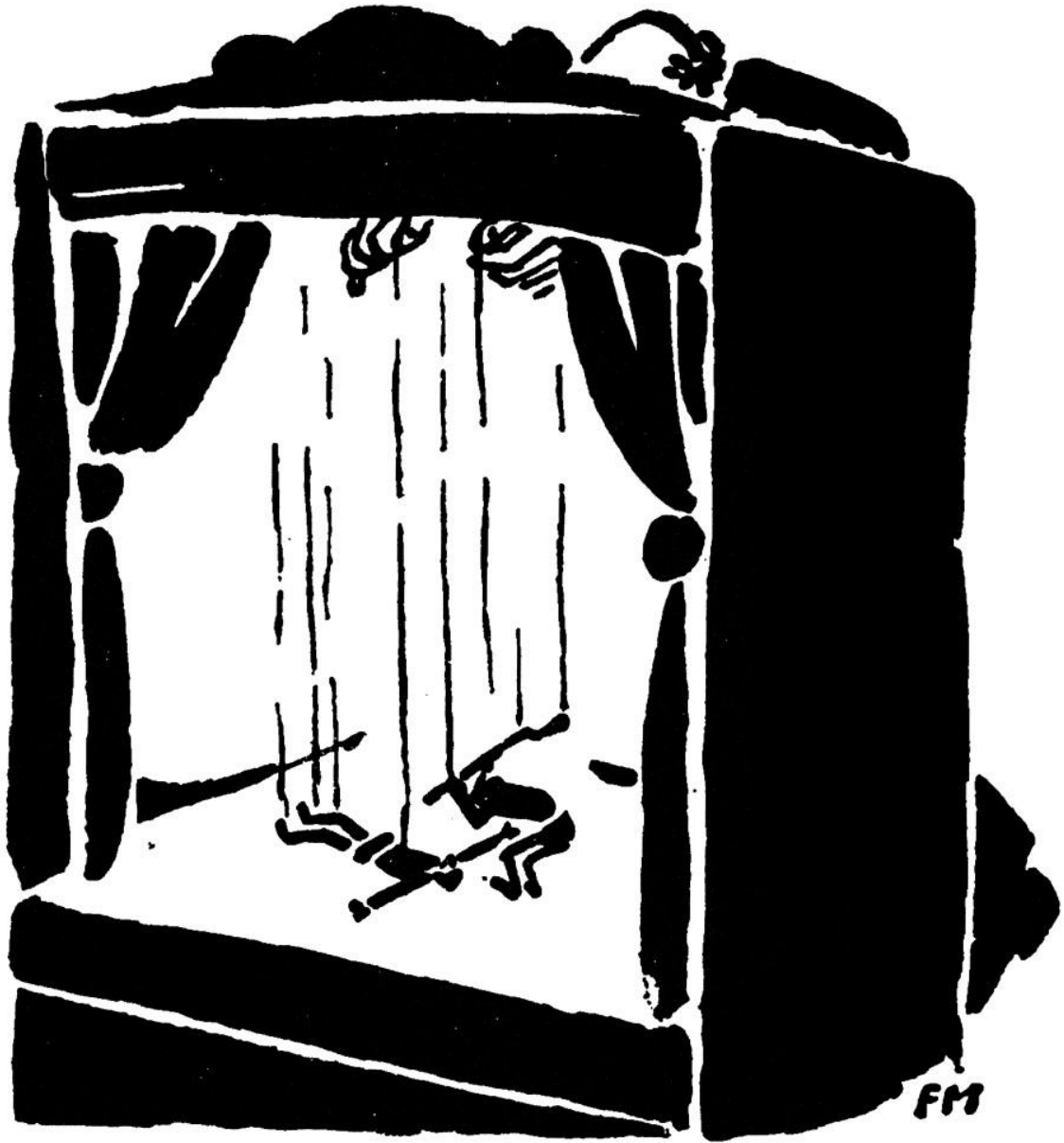
Havas.) — On Sunday, a one-day prayer for the success of the armies took place in all dioceses of France by ordinance of the French bishops.

Prayers for the same purpose were held in churches and temples in England on Sunday at the request of the government. Inscription above the crucifix: You shall not kill.



## *The originator*

I do politics. (Hertling's speech.)



## *How he'll look*

He wants peace, but only through war.

(The Chairman of the Social Democratic Union of America.)



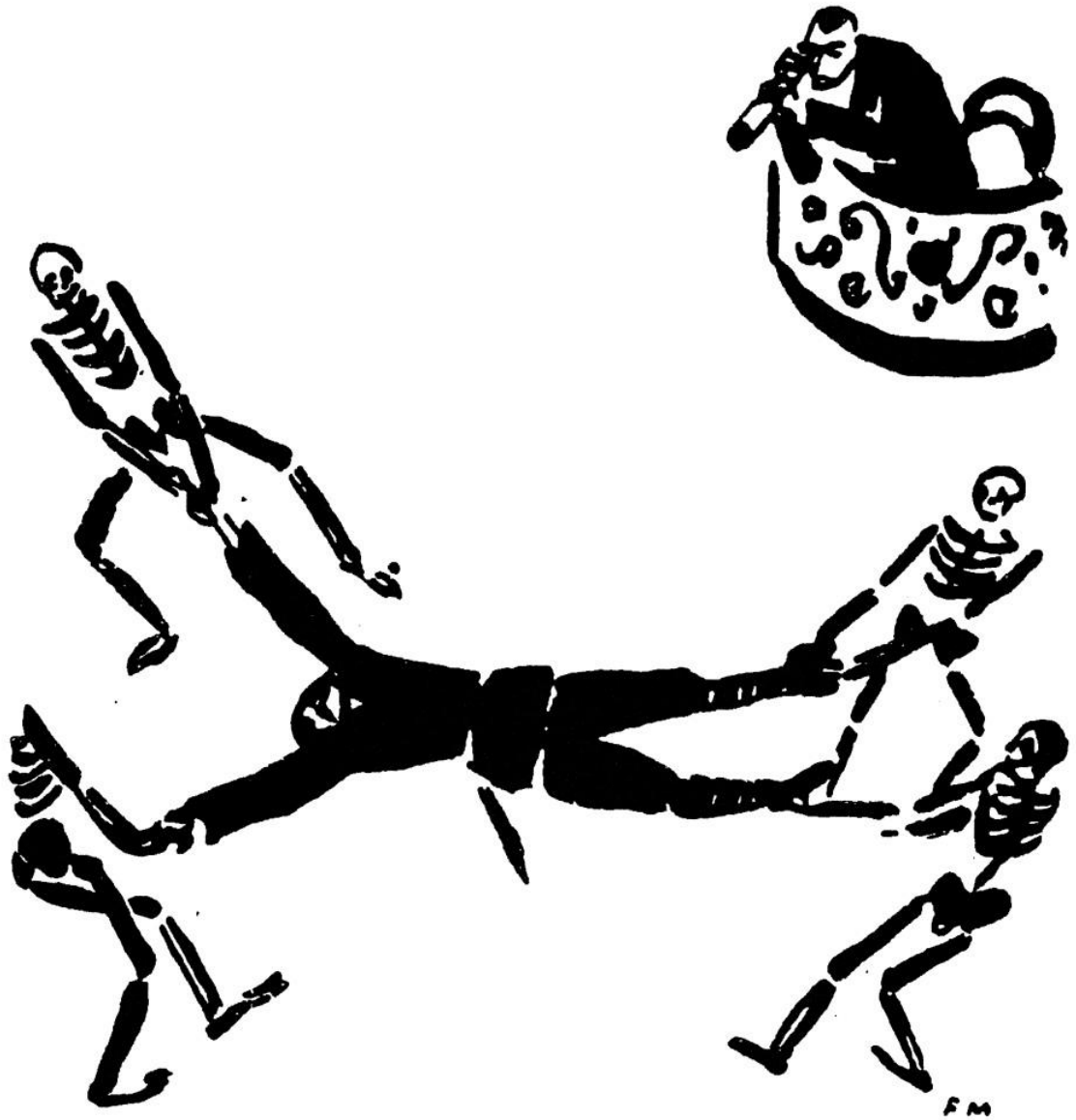
*Mrs. Sorgue at the Congress of the Socialist League of Italy: Long live the war! Echo from the front: Mother!*





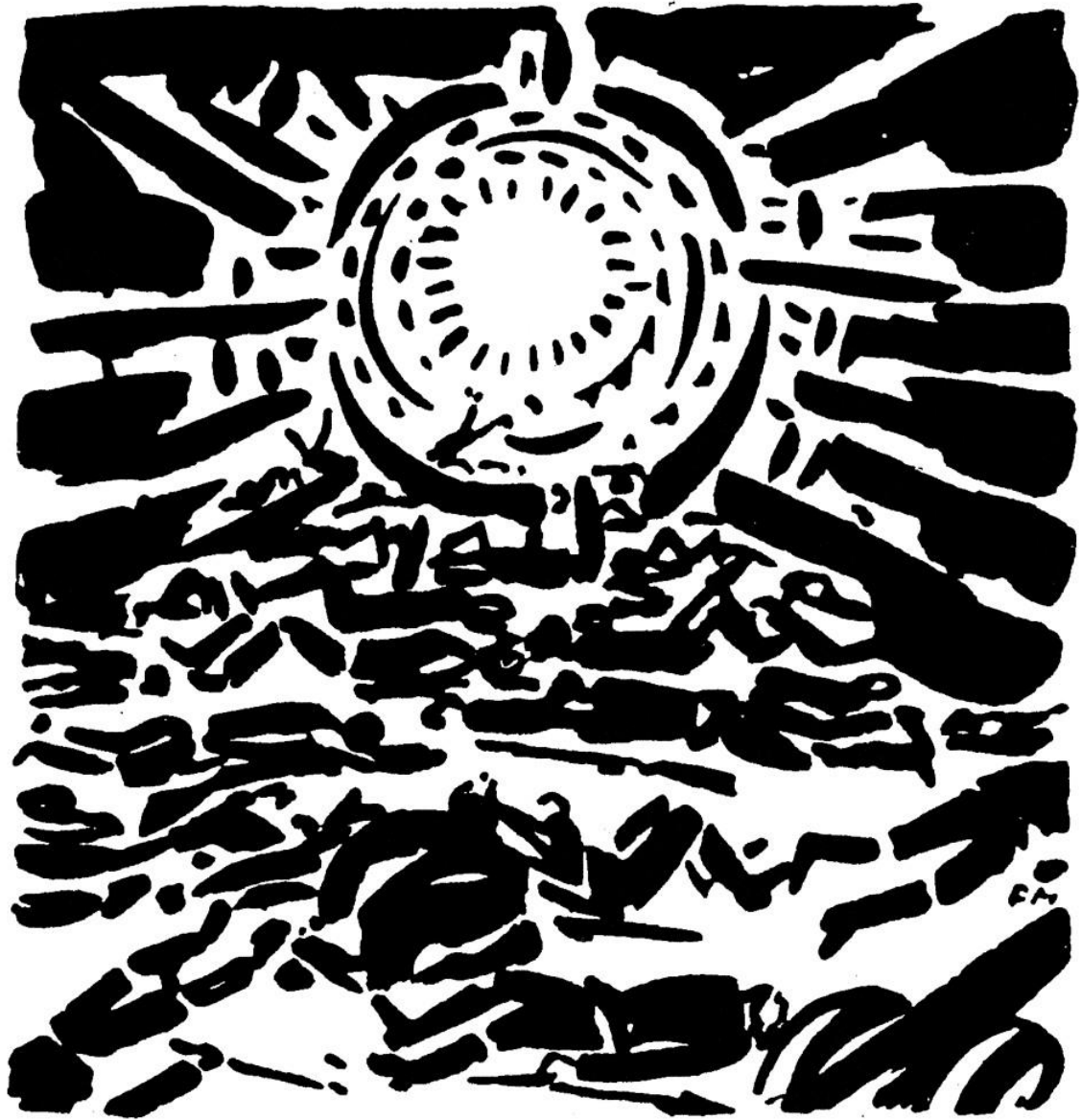
## ***Tension and tension***

We at home endure the tension just as our soldiers endured it, with confidence, courage and hope. (Long applause.) (Speech by Bonar Laws.)



## *The great dawn*

The American people feel in their hearts a great affection for those of all countries who are suffering and oppressed. It does not save its blood nor its money so that it, and with it the people of all countries, can see the dawn of that day when law, justice and peace will triumph. (Wilson's speech.)



## *If construction goes, anything goes*

In my deepest conscience I am convinced that the centuries of peace could not have cemented the unity of this nation as firmly as this one year of war did; yes, even better, if this is possible: that this year of war has cemented the unity of the world. (Address by Wilson.)



FM

## *The people and the war*





## *The people and the war*

# THE PRESS



## *The people and the war*



## *The people and the war*



**THE CHURCH**

## *The people and the war*





## *The people and the war*



**THE DEALS**

## *The people and the war*



**THE CURIOSITY**

## *The people and the war*

# FATHER'S PRIDE



## *The people and the war*



# THE GLORY



## *The people and the war*

# THE WINNER



## *Witches' Sabbath*

They call themselves delighted by their visit to the American front, where they find an unparalleled confidence, cheerfulness and zeal. (Le Matin.)



***Nobody expects him ...  
... only the whole world bent on the knees***

Nobody expects peace this year. (MP Borlaud in the American Chamber.)



## ***Blasphemous invocation***

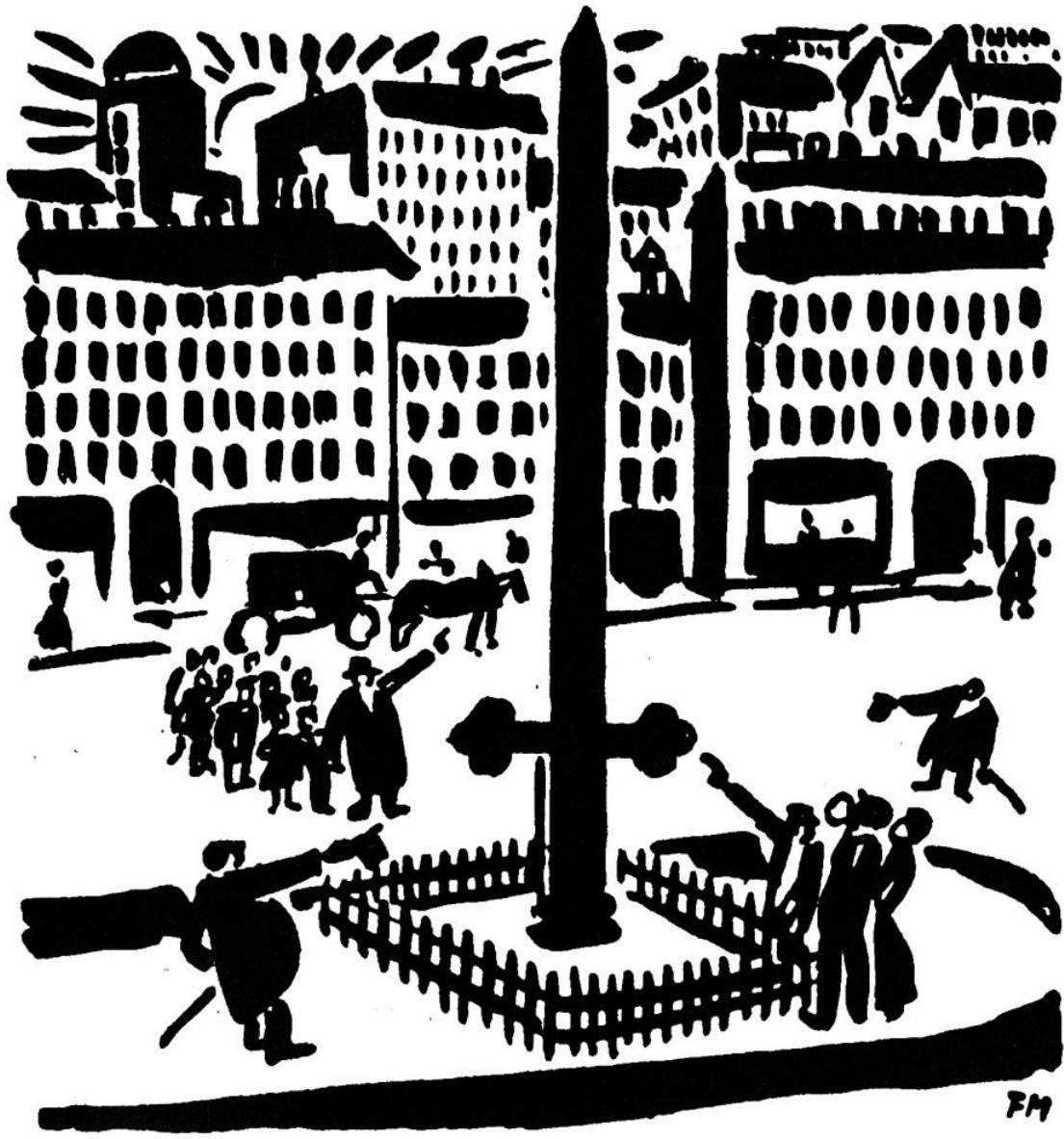
Woe to the people who believed they could extinguish the light of Christian feeling during the war. (Address by Prince Max von Baden to the Grand Duke.)





***To the melt  
Shouldn't you start with that?***

Regarding the imminent meltdown of historical monuments in Germany, the Norddeutsche Allg. Newspaper that one can easily comfort oneself in the loss of numerous monuments that are of no value and poorly placed.



# *Civilisation*

P. T. S. — New York. — The white races represent civilization and education. (Speech by Senator Read.)



## *The morality of tomorrow*

Washington (Reuter). — The United States cannot evade its role as a guide to morality without causing a deep disappointment to humanity.



## *In the land of 14 points*

P. T. S. New York. — At the end of June, a public subscription will be issued for a major victory memorial in Washington.





## *This is not a dream*

The fallen have fallen so that a despicable war does not begin again. We are not peace dreamers, but peace makers. (Speech by the bourgeois at the banquet of the peoples' delegations.)



## *The innocent victims*

Paris 16. — In the event that Germany should refuse to sign the treaty, the four have decided to completely blockade.



## *All's well that ends well*

Rome. — MEP Monti Guarniero tabled a bill in the Chamber requiring the Podgora, Mount San Michele and Sabotino, sites of war, to be declared national monuments.



## *And the dance begins all over again ...*

Ljubljana, 10. — The Czech-Slovak press office announces: The mobilization of five annual classes began today with great success. The soldiers presented themselves in large numbers and in a very cheerful mood.





## *To complete the dance ...*

Petersburg (Wolff) — Cholera has broken out in Petersburg. About 500 cases were reported yesterday.



## *Let's remember ...*

We must think of the great lessons of this war. (Clemenceau's speech in London.)



## *They follow one another...*

London (Reuter). — It is reported that the Hungarian government has declared the Bolshevik war on a number of neighboring countries.



## *The exhibition?*

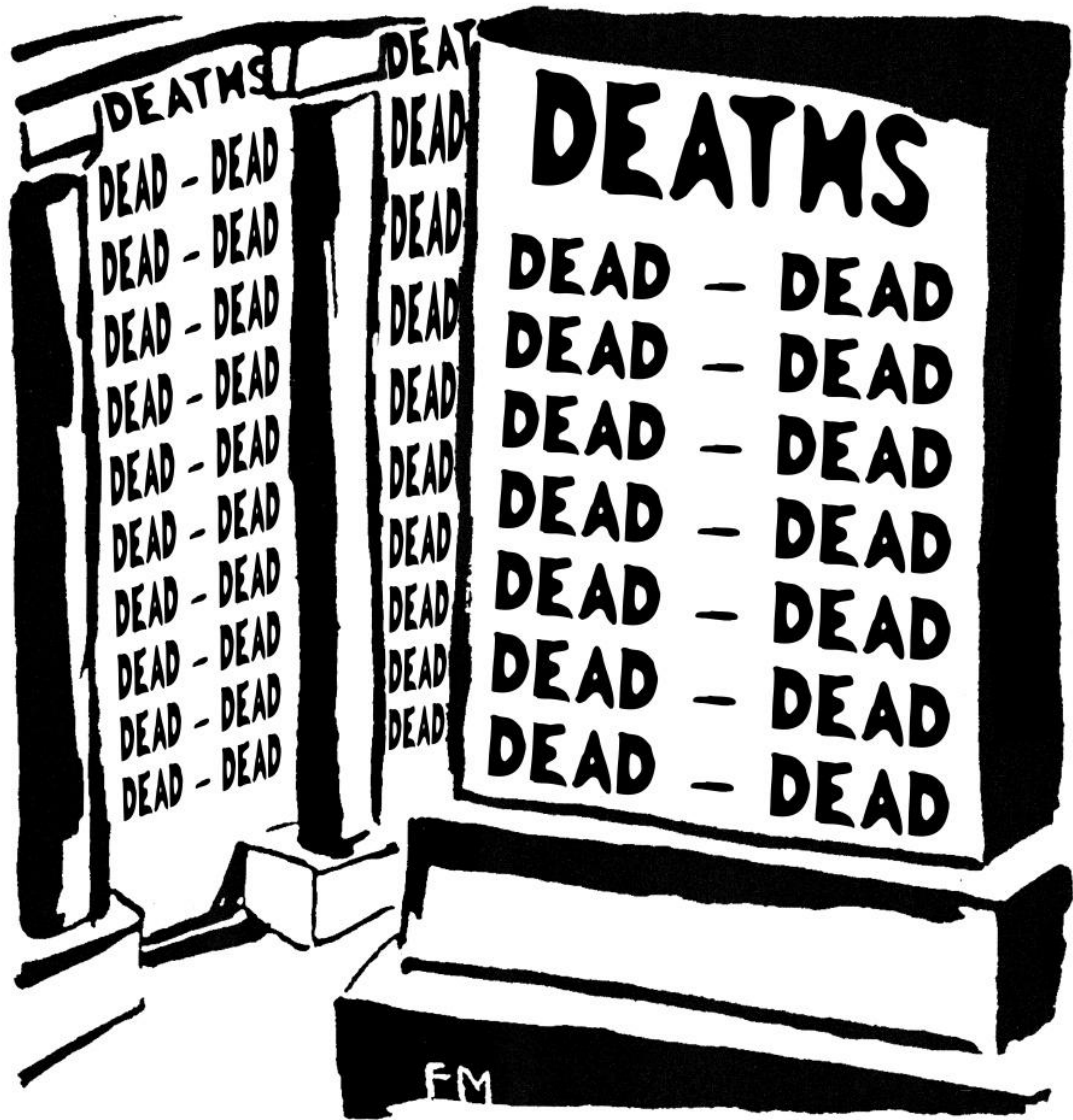
Rome (Stefani). — The second inter-allied conference for the disabled will take place in Rome from October 12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>. The conference will be complemented by an exhibition.





## *An excellent national monument*

Rome (P. T. S.). — There is talk of having the names of all 500,000 Italian soldiers and officers who died in the war carved into the giant monument of Emanuel II in Rome. The monument would thus become an excellent national monument.



## *It wasn't worth the effort*

Washington (Havas). — The League of Nations provides for military action to protect its members.

*Yesterday it was a crime ...  
Today...*

Everyone should have only one thought: kill as many of them as needed until there's enough dead. (General Gouraud.)



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1920

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