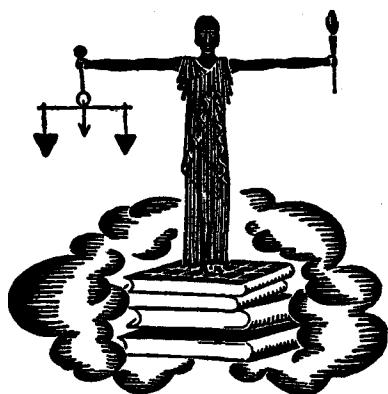


THIRTY YEARS AGO the United States was stirred by a sensational murder case in Atlanta, Georgia. The victim was a young girl named Mary Feagan; the accused man was Leo Frank, secretary of the pencil company where she had been employed. The evidence was purely circumstantial, and flimsy at best. But Frank was a Jew, and he came from Brooklyn. Racial and sectional prejudices were rampant. Frank was sentenced to death; the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment by Governor John M. Slaton on his last day in office—June 30, 1915. An infuriated mob thereupon broke into the prison farm at Milledgeville, dragged Frank to an oak grove near Marietta, where the murdered girl had lived, and hanged him. "Justice" had triumphed.

Now, in December, 1943, the University of North Carolina Press has published a book by Arthur Gray Powell, former Judge of the Georgia Court of Appeals, and former Vice-President of the American Bar Association, called "I Can Go Home Again," in which the seventy-year-old jurist claims to have conclusive proof that Frank was innocent. Powell says, "I know who killed Mary Feagan, but I know it in such a way that I can never honorably make the information public as long as certain persons are still living." He continues that just before the trial judge, the late L. S. Roan, charged the jury, he declared to Powell, "This man's innocence is proved to mathematical certainty." Governor Slaton, also convinced of Frank's Innocence, told friends that he would have given Frank a full pardon if he had not believed that the case was going to be broken wide open in short order, and the real murderer revealed. "But for the outside interference of various writers, speakers, and civil rights societies," adds Powell, "Frank would probably have been acquitted."



All of these facts make for an enthralling chapter in Arthur Powell's memoirs, if they do not erase the ugly memory of the body of an innocent man dangling from a tree, with a frenzied lynch mob howling below him. The shocking facts of the case were used at least once before in book form. Ward Greene, now one of the top men in the King Features Syndicate, fashioned them into a memorable novel in 1936, called "Death in the Deep South." Georgia didn't like it. It liked even less the picture, "They Won't Forget," that was based on the book....

STIRRING UP of the Frank lynching inevitably calls to mind that other classic miscarriage of justice—the Sacco-Vanzetti case—an indelible blot on the integrity of the law in the State of Massachusetts. On April 15, 1920, a shoe company's pay-roll was stolen, and the paymaster and his guard shot to death by the assailants. Nicola Sacco, a shoemaker, and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, a fish-peddler, were charged with the crime. As in the Frank case, the state's evidence was sketchy and inconclusive; it rapidly became apparent that the defendants were on trial for their lives because of their past records: they had been draft dodgers, anarchists, labor agitators. The trial was a travesty, but an advisory committee of three eminent citizens, acting on the grounds that judicial procedure had been strictly observed, upheld the death sentences, and Sacco and Vanzetti were electrocuted on August 22, 1927.

I have often been told that, like Leo Frank, these condemned men would have had a better chance for exoneration if "a pack of wild-eyed liberals from New York hadn't shot their mouths off about the case and told Massachusetts how to run its affairs." A prominent Boston merchant said it in so many words on the porch of his comfortable summer home in Beverley and seemed unimpressed when I commented that that was a hell of a reason for putting innocent men to death. Several years later, when I spent a few hours at the Black Sea port of Novorossisk, I noted that the waterfront street was named after Sacco and Vanzetti. The names of these two obscure men had swept around the world!

The Sacco-Vanzetti case produced stirring literature, too. Heywood Broun's pieces on the trial made him famous. Maxwell Anderson wrote two plays on the subject: "Gods of the



Lightning" and "Winterset." Edna Millay dedicated two sonnets to the men's memory; Upton Sinclair wrote a novel about them ("Boston"). What is remembered best about the case, however, is the last speech to the court of Bartolomeo Vanzetti himself, so moving and so eloquent that it brings a tear to a reader's eye to this very day. Jim Thurber and Elliott Nugent used it as the *cause célèbre* of their resounding play hit, "The Male Animal." Selden Rodman, compiling his "New Anthology of Modern Poetry" (now a Modern Library Giant), found that the speech fell naturally and easily into poetic form. It is in that form that I take the liberty of reprinting it here.

I have talk a great deal of myself
but I even forgot to name Sacco.
Sacco too is a worker,
from his boyhood a skilled worker,
lover of work,
with a good job and pay,
a bank account, a good and lovely
wife,
two beautiful children and a neat
little home
at the verge of a wood, near a brook.

Sacco is a heart, a faith, a character,
a man;
a man, lover of nature, and mankind;
a man who gave all, who sacrifice all
to the cause of liberty and to his love
for mankind:
his own wife, his children, himself
and his own life.

Sacco has never dreamt to steal, never
to assassinate.
He and I have never brought a morsel
of bread to our mouths, from our
childhood to today
which has not been gained by the
sweat of our brows.
Never...

Oh, yes, I may be more witty, as some
have put it;
I am a better blabber than he is, but
many, many times
in hearing his heartfelt voice ringing
a faith sublime,
in considering his supreme sacrifice,
remembering his heroism,
I felt small at the presence of his
greatness
and found myself compelled to fight
back
from my eyes the tears,
and quench my heart
troubling to my throat to not weep be-
fore him:
this man called thief and assassin and
doomed.



Take one-half cup dried skim milk, one cup dehydrated eggs, two cups soybean meal, one teaspoonful synthetic vanilla, one-half cup homogenized oleomargarine.

But Sacco's name will live in the hearts of the people and in their gratitude when Katzmann's bones and yours will be dispersed by time; when your name, his name, your laws, institutions, and your false god are but a dim remembering of a cursed past in which man was wolf to the man . . .

If it had not been for these things I might have lived out my life talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have died, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life could we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man, as now we do by accident.

Our words, our lives, our pains—nothing! The taking of our lives—lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish-peddler—all! That last moment belongs to us—that agony is our triumph.

* * *

FOLLOWING are a few anecdotes from the new Woolcott book, "Long, Long Ago," published by Viking.

One day President Lincoln journeyed to the front to inspect the Union defenses; the task of piloting him fell to young Oliver Wendell Holmes. Holmes pointed out their enemy; the President stood up to look. Wearing his high plug hat, he made a magnificent target. A snarl of musketry fire came from the enemy trenches. The young officer dragged him under cover. Later Holmes remembered to his horror that he had muttered "Get down, you fool!" He was relieved, however, when Lincoln came to him before returning to the capital. "Good-bye, Colonel Holmes," he said. "I'm glad to see you know how to talk to a civilian!" . . .

Bernard Shaw became a vegetarian in 1881. When his friends predicted that abstinence from meat-eating would be the death of him, he retorted that at least his coffin could be followed by a procession of all the animals he had never eaten. Mrs. Pat Campbell, in the heat of a particularly exasperating rehearsal of "Pygmalion," once cried, "Shaw, some day you'll eat a pork-chop, and then God help all the women!" . . .

When Woolcott was an undergraduate at Hamilton College ("shortly after the French and Indian Wars"), he introduced to a snow-bound group in his dormitory the game of choosing for each person on the campus the one adjective which fitted him more perfectly than any other. He pointed out that, if the proper selections were made, everybody could be identified from the list of adjectives. For himself he selected "noble," "but," he adds, "this was voted down in favor of another which reduced the whole episode in my memoirs to the proportions of a disagreeable incident." . . .

When John Mulholland, one of the great prestidigitators of our time, was a youngster, he was added as an afterthought to a program at the National Arts Club, and forthwith gave a very creditable performance. When it was over, however, an old killjoy with a perverted sense of humor asked if the young magician could do the same tricks with any old pack of cards. Mulholland brazened it out, and found an unopened pack of cards, with the National Arts device on their orange backs, thrust into his hands. To the astonishment of the members, he performed some tricks with the new cards that eclipsed any he had done with his own prepared deck—more mystifying, indeed, than any he has been able to do since. It appears that when Mulholland unwrapped the deck he noticed (although he did not see fit to call it to the attention of the members) that a singular error had occurred at the factory in the assembling of that pack. It was made up of fifty-two Aces of Spades. . . .

Well, that's enough of the free show. If you like it, step up to the counter, ladees and gentlemen, with your two-seventy-five, and buy a copy of "Long, Long Ago." . . .

SEVERAL WEEKS AGO an order was issued to every Hearst newspaper to roast the daylights out of "The North Star." This dubious journalistic maneuver prompted Irving Hoffman to suggest that henceforth a note be affixed to every review in a Hearst paper. The copy: "The views expressed in this column do not necessarily reflect those of the critic."

BENNETT CERF.

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W. W. Chaplin Reports on the War

SEVENTY THOUSAND MILES OF WAR. *Being One Man's Odyssey on Many Fronts.* By W. W. Chaplin. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co. 1943. 287 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by PERCIVAL R. KNAUTH

W W. CHAPLIN, late of Hearst's International News Service and presently of the National Broadcasting Company, is a newspaperman of the old school, a gatherer and transmitter of facts where these facts seems to warrant the particular attention of more or less large headlines. In this capacity he has traveled some 70,000 miles through our war-torn world. His journey spans the globe and most of its important countries, each of which he visited at a time of special crisis. He says he is "interested in causes," in "trying to give you the background behind the things you've read about." If he had not prefaced his book with this statement, it might have been easier to look on it with favor. As it is, one can only take Mr. Chaplin by his word and say that he has shot very wide of his mark.

What causes is he interested in? I doubt if the reader can find out from this book. There are facts here, aplenty, and a careful diary of events that made headlines. But of causes, of background, of understanding, there is next to nothing. Mr. Chaplin beyond doubt operated faithfully and well on the time-honored principle that news is when a man bites a dog, and he apparently did not give over-much thought to finding out the reason for any such unusual assault.

Take France, for instance. Mr. Chaplin went to France just after the war began, as an accredited war correspondent to watch the Allies beat the Germans before Christmas, 1939. He found, instead of battles, a phony war. He sat around in dingy, miserable, wet French towns. He made desultory trips to see the Maginot Line and a few other things. He took leaves in Paris where he spent many happy hours sitting in a garret inhabited by Ray Brock, now correspondent of *The New York Times* in Turkey, then penniless but interesting because his garret was a gathering place for newspaper colleagues who had no war to cover and hence lots of time to spend in discussing the world's problems. Mr. Chaplin watched France in her last hours as a free nation, in her last hours as a center of the world's culture and the world's pleasure. But of the terrible process of decay which he was watching and which surely must have been worthy of a newspaper-

man's attention he appears to have been totally unaware.

Take another cause—fascism. Mr. Chaplin had been in Rome, back in the days when fascism was a respected doctrine and one to be appeased. He was in Rome when Mussolini started out to gather himself an empire. He watched the first step of this aggressive march to conquest, the campaign in Ethiopia. He was with the Italian



U. S. soldiers stand guard to the ancient Temple of Neptune in Paestum, Italy.

armies when they beat down the Abyssinians while the world turned its back. He wrote of this in another book, "Blood and Ink." It is perhaps unfair to hark back to that book today, but it is justified. Mr. Chaplin saw nothing wrong at that time with the Fascists (he thought the Italian colonizers who were to "stamp out racketeering in Abyssinia perhaps . . . could be induced . . . to pay a visit to America.")

Now he was in New York, and it was 1940, and Italy had just joined World War II. What does he say? "There was another sort of nonsense early in that summer that did upset me badly. That was the ill-advised entry of Italy into the war by stabbing falling France in the back."

In justice to Mr. Chaplin it must be said that he states immediately that he "disapproved thoroughly of the Italian government (and) of the Ethiopian invasion." Likewise, in justice, it must be said that this smacks of hindsight. And surely "ill-advised" is an ill-chosen term for one of the blackest acts of conscienceless opportunism that modern history knows!

Mr. Chaplin should not be accused of fascist tendencies. It is perfectly clear from this and his previous book that he is an American and democratic as they come. He just does not seem to look below the surface of headline events. If he had, he would not have been upset by Italy's stab in the back. He would have known long since that it was coming. It was perfectly clear in 1939 that Italy would wait out her chances, and it was inevitable after the Germans broke through at Sedan.

In pursuit of news Mr. Chaplin was also sent to India, in the summer of 1942. There was trouble aplenty brewing in India at that time. Unfortunately, Mr. Chaplin just missed the Cripps negotiations, so when he got there things were, in a surface way, kind of dull. So he went down to Assam, where refugees were coming in from Burma, in search of more exciting things.

Now there can certainly be no criticism of going down to get the important news of the evacuation in Burma at a time when there were no riots popping in India. But Mr. Chaplin appears in his book to have decided that there were not only no riots but little else worthy of note. His study of India's terrible problem is sketchy in the extreme. He did the routine things—had lunch with the Viceroy, interviewed Ghandi, Nehru, and Jinnah, all of which is duly recorded here. But of causes he found out next to nothing. When the riots came he covered them, and covered them well, at the risk of life and limb. But as to why they came, he apparently formed no definite opinion. When they were over, he went on to Russia; the Indian Chapter was closed.

The report on Russia is certainly one of the most interesting parts of the book. Mr. Chaplin was impressed by the Russians and what they did, and he was also aware of a common tendency in America to regard them as cold-blooded supermen. He went out of his way to correct that impression by garnering human interest stories. He made several trips to the front, where he interviewed Russian soldiers. In particular, he was interested in the work of Russian guerillas and what kind of people they are. Of these heroes he has some notable and highly interesting tales.

His whole book, in fact, makes interesting reading. It is like a travelogue of an honest, hard-working American who saw his job defined by old and well-tried rules of journalism which he observed meticulously and well. It is hard to believe that Mr. Chaplin really tried to go beyond these limits and write a book about causes. If you can forget his preface you will not be cheated by this record of war.