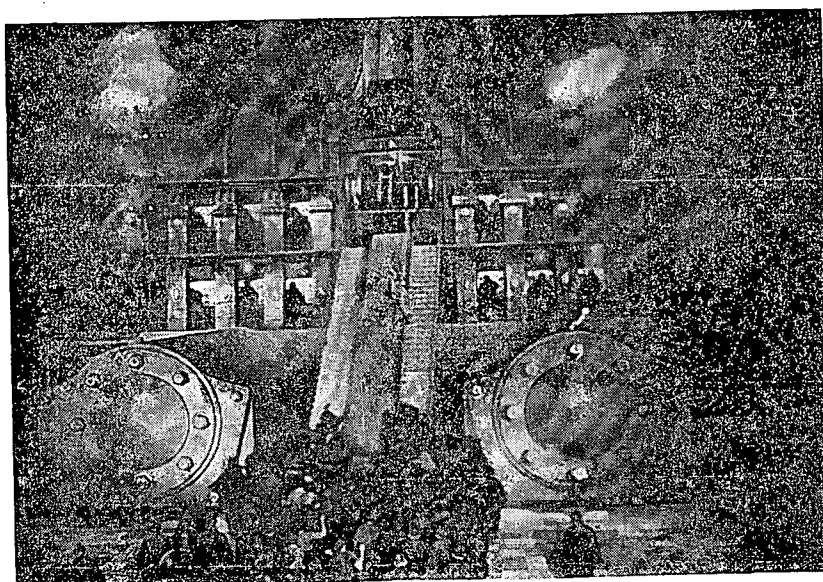


## The Future of Labor—a German Film Forecast

These scenes of a monstrous machine and the subterranean homes of the workers, in a city of the future, are from the motion picture *Metropolis*, adapted from the Ufa film by Famous Players-Lasky. "In dear old 1898," says H. G. Wells of its philosophy, "it may have been excusable to symbolize social relations in this way, but that was thirty years ago, and a lot of thinking and some experience intervene." Today labor has its own program for preserving the integrity of its family life, according to Mr. Muste's article.



# The Tug of Industry

By A. J. MUSTE

**I**F anything has been putting bombs under the home and the family during the past century, it is our vaunted industrialism. Industrialism has taken the mother out of the home and put her to work in the factory for long hours, often at night, often under positively unsafe and unsanitary conditions, almost invariably under conditions of severe nervous strain. That there has been a serious adverse effect on the bearing of children has now been amply demonstrated by statistics of infant mortality and sickness. From figures of school attendance, juvenile delinquency, and from other sources, we know that forcing women into industry under these conditions has likewise had a most harmful effect upon the rearing of children. Working in the factory at night and seeking to do the housework during the day between snatches of sleep has meant for the mother that she has not known her children, that she has been unfit as a companion for them, frequently has failed in ordinary care for their health, has been careless about school attendance, has turned over the care of babies and young children to older children, often with the most unfortunate effects upon the physical, emotional and intellectual development of both the younger and the older children. Factory work for women has meant conflict between woman's economic and her biologic and social functions for which there is no solution under the conditions that have very generally prevailed in the past and that still prevail, for example, in typical textile towns.

The factory system has brought with it the shameful evil of child labor, the blight of which has by no means been removed from this, the wealthiest nation in all history.

Industrialism has brought the herding of immense populations into close and inadequate quarters, often under conditions shockingly unsanitary, making privacy and the moral habits and attitudes that go with it impossible and nearly always under conditions of crowding, noise, lack of sunlight and fresh air, removal from contact with nature, to which human beings in the mass have never before been subjected on such a scale and which are certainly in part responsible for the emotional instability and the restlessness of modern populations which have an important influence on family life.

Making all due allowance for advances made under industrialism, it has nevertheless been responsible for exploitation and underpayment of labor, for an unnecessarily low economic standard for the mass of workers, which has had serious effects on family life. It has brought into existence on a large scale, for the first time, the evil of unemployment rendering the modern worker insecure, though he might be ever so industrious, thrifty and anxious to work. Modern industry requires an exceedingly mobile labor supply. In five years a village expands into a city with the coming of the steel or the automobile industry, and workers by the thousand must be found. Elsewhere a flourishing industry may move away or practically disappear because of new inventions. Even where no great fundamental shifts occur,

there are the greatest variations in employment from time to time among the various factories in the same industry or among industries in various sections of the country, necessitating a constant shift of the labor supply. The most casual reflection on the importance of a certain minimum of permanence and stability for successful family life suggests the effects of these factors of unemployment and mobility of labor supply on the development of the modern family.

Modern industry has separated men by the millions from the soil and from ownership of the land; it has deprived them of the ownership of their homes; it has separated them from their tools, from the satisfaction that human beings have obtained for generations from making things and from the exercise of their skill in making them; it has separated the worker from direct contact with the product of his work or direct control over its disposal; it has introduced him into a regime where his destinies seem to be controlled not by himself and not by the forces of sun, rain, wind and the seasons, with which man has done battle and held communion for thousands of years, but by other human beings or by vast impersonal, relentless, erratic forces in the presence of which man seems utterly puny and futile and about which he has not been able to throw the kindly mitigation of fairy tale, or religious ritual, or philosophic synthesis. Under this regime, moreover, rewards seem to go quite as often to luck, cleverness, and the speculator's nerve and recklessness, as to the sobriety and industry so highly lauded in the copy-books.

Now one need not be a sentimental medievalist, and one may gladly admit all the necessary qualifications to this indictment, all the compensations that the development of industry has brought to mankind, and it will still remain true that its development has introduced new factors into human life which have had serious repercussions in many directions and not least in the realm of family life. Certainly the landless, houseless, tool-less, skill-less, religion-less, root-less, get-rich-quick-if-possible, urban worker of today is a different specimen from the peasant and the artisan who have made up the bulk of the population in civilized lands since the dawn of history.

**I**F now we turn to inquire what the family and its friends may rightfully ask of industry, the answer falls naturally into two parts. In the first place, industry, broadly speaking, is the organization of human work by which we seek to obtain the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter, to provide that physical basis of life on which all cultural and spiritual development must be built. We may demand that industry be so organized that the masses of men may obtain such a reward from their toil as will enable them to maintain a standard of living which will support the cultural values associated with family life. We may demand this of industry provided, of course, that the natural resources at our disposal and our command over natural forces is such that such a goal is attainable. For our present pur-