

# GLASS MONTAGUE

WORRYING  
WON'T WIN

Montague Glass

**Worrying Won't Win**

«Public Domain»

**Glass M.**

Worrying Won't Win / M. Glass — «Public Domain»,

# Содержание

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| I                                 | 5  |
| II                                | 9  |
| III                               | 13 |
| IV                                | 17 |
| V                                 | 21 |
| VI                                | 25 |
| Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. | 28 |

# Montague Glass

## Worrying Won't Win

### I

#### POTASH AND PERLMUTTER DISCUSS THE CZAR BUSINESS

Like the human-hair business and the green-goods business it is not what it used to be.

"Yes, Abe," Morris Perlmutter said to his partner, Abe Potash, as they sat in their office one morning in September, "the English language is practically a brand-new article since the time when I used to went to night school. In them days when a feller says he is feeling like a king, it meant that he was feeling like a king, *aber* to-day yet, if a feller says he feels like a king it means that he's got stomach and domestic trouble and that he don't know where the money is coming from to pay his next week's laundry bill. Czars is the same way, too. Former times when you called a feller a regular czar you meant he was a regular czar, *aber* nowadays if you say somebody is a regular czar it means that the poor feller couldn't call his soul his own and that he must got to do what everybody from the shipping-clerk up tells him to do with no back talk."

"Well, it only goes to show, Mawruss," Abe commented. "There was a czar, y'understand, which for years was not only making out pretty good as a czar, y'understand, but had really as you might say been doing something phenomenal yet. In fact, Mawruss, if three years ago R.G. Dun or Bradstreet would give it a rating to czars and people in similar lines, y'understand, compared with the czar already, an old-established house like Hapsburg's in Vienna would be rated N. to Q., Credit Four, see foot-note. And to-day, Mawruss, where *is* he?"

"Say," Morris protested, "any one could have reverses, Abe, because it don't make no difference if it would be a czar *oder* a pants manufacturer, and they both had ratings like John B. Rockafellar even, along comes two or three bad seasons like the czar had it, y'understand, and the most you could hope for would be thirty cents on the dollar – ten cents cash and the balance in notes at three, six, and nine months, indorsed by a grand duke who has got everything he owns in his wife's name and 'ain't spent an evening at home with her since way before the Crimean War already."

"What happened to the Czar, Mawruss," Abe said, "bad seasons didn't done it. Not reckoning quick assets, like crowns actually in stock, fixtures, etc., the feller must of owned a couple million *versts* high-grade real property, to say nothing of his life insurance, Mawruss."

"Czars and life insurance ain't in the same dictionary at all, Abe," Morris interrupted. "In the insurance business, Abe, czars comes under the same head as aviators with heart trouble, y'understand. I bet yer over half a czar's morning mail already is circulars from casket concerns alone, Abe, so that only goes to show how much you know from czars."

"Well, I know this much, anyhow," Abe continued. "What put the Czar out of business, didn't happen this season or last season neither, Mawruss. It dates back already twenty years ago, which you can take it from me, Mawruss, it don't make no difference what line a feller would be in – czars wholesale, czars retail, or czars' supplies and sundries, including bombproof underwear and the Little Wonder Poison Detector, y'understand, the moment such a feller marries into the family of his nearest competitor, Mawruss, he might just as well go down to a lawyer's office and hand him the names he wants inserted in Schedule A Three of his petition in bankruptcy."

"Did the Czar marry into such a family?" Morris asked.

"A question!" Abe exclaimed. "Didn't you know that the Czar's wife is the Kaiser's mother's sister's daughter?"

"Say!" Morris retorted. "I didn't even know that the Kaiser *had* a mother. From the heart that feller's got it, you might suppose he was raised in an incubator and that the only parents he ever knew was a couple of packages absorbent cotton and an alcohol-lamp."

"Well, that's what I am telling you, Mawruss," Abe said. "With all the millionaires in Russland which would be tickled to pieces to get a czar for a son-in-law, y'understand, the feller goes to work and ties up to a family with somebody like the Kaiser in it, and you know as well as I do, Mawruss, one crook in your wife's family can stick you worser than all your poor relations put together."

"Even when your wife's relations are honest, what *is* it?" Morris asked.

"*Gewiss!*" Abe agreed. "And can you imagine when such a crook *in-law* is also your biggest competitor? I bet yer, Mawruss, the poor *nebich* wasn't home from his honeymoon yet before the Kaiser starts in cutting prices on him."

"Cutting prices was the least," Morris said. "Take Bulgaria, for instance, and up to a few years ago that was one of the Czar's best selling territories. In fact, Abe, whenever the Czar stops off at Sophia, him and the King of Bulgaria takes coffee together, such good friends they was."

"Who is Sophia?" Abe asked. "*Also* a relative of the Kaiser?"

"Sophia is the name of one big town in Bulgaria," Morris replied.

"That's a name for a big town – Sophia," Abe remarked. "Why don't they call it Lillian Russell and be done with it?"

"They could call it Williamsburg for all the business the Czar done there after the Kaiser got in his fine work," Morris said.

"And after all, what good did it done him?" Abe added. "Because you know as well as I do, Mawruss, the Kaiser ain't two jumps ahead of the sheriff himself. In fact, Mawruss, the king business is to-day like the human-hair business and the green-goods business. It's practically a thing of the past."

"Did I say it wasn't?" Morris asked.

"Being a king ain't a business no more, Mawruss. It's just a job," Abe continued, "and it's a metter of a few months now when the only kings left will be, so to speak, journeymen kings like the King of England and the King of Belgium and not boss kings like the King of Austria and the Kaiser. Why, right now, that Germany is his store, and that the poor Germans *nebich* is just salespeople; and he figures that if he wants to close out his stock and fixtures at a sacrifice and at the same time work his salespeople to death, what is that *their* business, y'understand."

"Well, that's the way the Czar figured," Morris commented. "For, Abe, the Kaiser has got an idee years already he was running Russland on the open-shop principle, and before he woke up to the fact that the people he had been treating right straight along as non-union labor was really the majority stockholders, y'understand, they had changed the combination of the safe on him and notified the bank that on and after said date all checks would be signed by Jacob M. Kerensky as receiver."

"You would think a feller like the Czar would learn something by what happened to this here Mellen of the New Haven Railroad," Abe said.

"*Yow* learn!" Morris replied. "Is the Kaiser learning something from what they done to the Czar?"

"That's a different matter entirely," Abe retorted. "With a relation by marriage, you naturally figure if he makes a big success that he fell in soft and that a lucky stiff like him if he gets shot with a gun, y'understand, the bullet is from gold and it hits him in the pocket yet; whereas, if he goes broke and 'ain't got a cent left in the world, y'understand, it's a case of what could you expect from a *Schlemiel* like that. So instead of learning anything from what happens to the Czar, I bet yer the Kaiser feels awful sore at him yet. Why, I don't suppose a day passes without the Kaiser's wife comes

to him and says, 'Listen, Popper, Esther (or whatever the Czar's wife's name is) called me up again this morning; she says Nicholas 'ain't got no work nor nothing and she was crying something terrible.'

"Well, if she's going to keep on crying till I find that loafer a job,' the Kaiser says, 'she's got a long wet spell ahead of her.'

"She don't want you to find him no job,' the Kaiser's wife tells him. 'All she asks is you should send 'em transportation.'

"Transportation *nothing*!' the Kaiser says. 'I already sent transportation to the King of Greece, Ambassador Bernstorff, Doctor Dernburg, this here boy Ed *und Gott weissst wer nach*. What am I? The Pennsylvania Railroad or something?'

"Well, what is he going to do 'way out there in Tobolsk?' she says.

"If he would only of acted reasonable and killed off a couple million of them suckers, the way any other king would do, he never would of had to go to Tobolsk at all,' the Kaiser says.

"*Aber* what shall I say to her if she rings up again?' she asks.

"Say what you please,' the Kaiser answers her, 'but tell Central I wouldn't pay no reverse charges under no circumstances whatsoever from nowheres.'"

"And who told *you* all this, Abe?" Morris asked.

"Nobody," Abe replied. "I figured it out for myself."

"Well, you figured wrong, then," Morris said. "The Kaiser don't act that way. He ain't human enough, and, furthermore, Abe, the Kaiser don't talk over the telephone, neither, because if he did, y'understand, it's a cinch that sooner or later the court physician would be giving out the cause of death as shock from being connected up with the electric-light plant by party or parties unknown and Long Live Kaiser Schmooel the Second – or whatever the Crown Prince's rotten name is."

"Any one who done such a thing in the hopes of making a change for the better, Mawruss," Abe commented, "would certainly be jumping from the frying-pan into the soup, because if the Germans got rid of the Kaiser in favor of the Crown Prince it would be a case of discarding a king and drawing a deuce."

"Sure I know," Morris said, "but what the Germans need is a new deal all around. As the game stands now in Germany, Abe, only a limited few sits in, while the rest of the country hustles the refreshments and pays for the lights and the cigars, and they're such a poor-spirited bunch, y'understand, that they 'ain't got nerve enough to suggest a kitty, even."

"Well, it's too late for them to start a kitty now, Mawruss," Abe said. "Which you could take it from me, Mawruss, the house is going to be pulled 'most any day. Several million husky cops is going up the front stoop right this minute, Mawruss, and while they may have a little trouble with them – now – ice-box style of doors, it's only a question of time when they would back up the patrol-wagon, y'understand, because if the Germans wouldn't close up the game of their own accord, Mawruss, the Allies must got to do it *for* them."

"But the Germans don't want us to help 'em," Morris said. "They're perfectly satisfied as they are."

"I know it," Abe said. "They're a nation of shipping-clerks, Mawruss. They're in a rut, y'understand. They've all got rotten jobs and they're scared to death that they're going to lose them. Also the boss works them like dawgs and makes their lives miserable, y'understand, and yet they're trembling in their pants for fear he is going to bust up on them."

"Then I guess it's up to us Allies to show them poor *Chamorrin* how they could be bosses for themselves," Morris suggested.

"Sure it is," Abe concluded, "and next year in Tobolsk when the Kaiser joins his relations by marriage, Mawruss, he's going to pick up the *Tobolsker Freie Presse* some morning and see where there has been incorporated at last the *Deutsche Allgemeine Wohlfahrtfabrik*, with a capital of a hundred billion marks, to take over the business of the K.K. Manufacturing Company, and he's going

to say the same as everybody else: 'Well, what do you know about them Heinies? I never thought they had it in them.'"

## II

### POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON SOAP-BOXERS AND PEACE FELLERS

There is some of them peace fellers which ain't so much scared as they are contrary.

"People 'ain't begun to realize yet what this war really and truly means, Mawruss," Abe Potash said as he finished reading an interview with ex-Ambassador Gerard, in which the ex-ambassador said that people had not yet begun to realize what the war really meant.

"Maybe they don't," Morris Perlmutter agreed, "but for every feller which 'ain't begun to realize what this war really and truly means, Abe, there is a hundred other fellers which 'ain't begun to realize what a number of people there is which goes round saying that people 'ain't begun to realize what this war really and truly means, y'understand. Also, Abe, the same people is going round begging people which is just as patriotic as they are that they should brace up and be patriotic, y'understand, and they are pulling pledges to hold up the hands of the President on other people who has got similar pledges in their breast pockets and pretty near beats 'em to it, understand me, and that's the way it goes."

"Well, if one time out of a hundred they strike somebody who really and truly don't realize what the war means, like you, Mawruss," Abe began, "why, then, their time ain't entirely wasted, neither."

"I realize just so much as you do what this war means, Abe," Morris retorted.

"Maybe you do," Abe admitted, "but you don't talk like you did, Mawruss, otherwise you would know that if out of a hundred Americans only ninety-nine of 'em pledges themselves to hold up the hands of the President, y'understand, and the balance of one claims that we are in this war just to save our investments in Franco-American bonds and that Mr. Wilson is every bit as bad as the Kaiser except that he's clean-shaved, y'understand, then them ninety-nine fellers with the pledges in their breast pockets should ought to convert the balance of one. Because, Mawruss, a nation which is ninety-nine per cent. patriotic is like a fish which is ninety-nine per cent. fresh – all you can notice is the one per cent. which smells bad."

"I am just so much in favor of the country being one hundred per cent. American as you are, Abe," Morris said, "but what I claim is that we should go about it *right*."

"If you mean we shouldn't argue with them one-per-centers, but send them right back to that part of the old country which they come from originally, Mawruss," Abe continued, "why, I am agreeable that they should be shipped right away, F.O.B., N.Y., all deliveries subject to delay and liability being limited to fifty dollars personal baggage in case they should, please Gawd, fail to arrive in Europe."

"Sure I know," Morris agreed. "But pretty near all them one-per-centers was born and raised in the United States or in Saint Louis, Wisconsin, and Cincinnati. You take this here *Burgermeister* of Chicago, for instance, and the chances is that all he knows about the old country is what he learned on a couple of visits to Milwaukee, y'understand. So how could you export a feller like that?"

"I don't want to export him, Mawruss. All I would like to see is that they should put an embargo on him," Abe said, "and on his friends, them peace fellers, too."

"Well, I'll tell you," Morris commented, "about them peace fellers, you couldn't blame 'em exactly, because you know how it is with some people: they 'ain't got no control over their feelings, and if they're scared to death, y'understand, they couldn't help showing it, which my poor grandmother, *olav hasholom*, wouldn't allow me to keep so much as a pea-shooter in the house, on account, she says, if the good Lord wills it, even a broomstick could give fire."

"And yet, Mawruss, if burglars would of broke into her home, I bet you she would grabbed the nearest flat-iron and went for 'em with it," Abe said, "so don't insult your grandmother *selig* by comparing her with them peace fellers which they *oser* care how many burglars is johnnying the front door just so long as they could hide under the bed."

"At the same time, Abe, there is some of them peace fellers which ain't so much scared as they are contrary, y'understand," Morris said. "Take this here LaFollette, Abe, and that feller's motto is, 'My country – I think she's always wrong – but right or wrong – that's my opinion and I stick to it.' All a United States Senator has got to do is to look like he is preparing to say something, y'understand, and before he can get out so much as 'Brother President and fellow-members of this organization,' LaFollette jumps up and says, 'I'm sorry, but I disagree with you.'"

"That must make him pretty popular in the Senate," Abe remarked.

"Popular's no name for it," Morris continued. "There ain't a United States Senator which wouldn't stand willing to dig down and pay for a set of engrossed resolutions out of his own pocket, just so long as Senator LaFollette would resign or something."

"But Senator LaFollette ain't one of them peace fellers, Mawruss," Abe said.

"Sure, I know," Morris replied. "All he wants is to run the war according to Cushing's *Manual*. If he had his way we wouldn't be able to give an order for so much as one-twelfth dozen guns, y'understand, without it come up in the form of a motion that it is regularly moved and seconded that the Secretary of War be and he is hereby authorized to order the same and all those in favor will signify the same by saying aye, y'understand, and even then, Abe, him and Senator Vardaman would call for a show of hands under Section Twelve, Subsection D, of the by-laws."

"Then I suppose if a few thousand American soldiers gets killed on account they 'ain't got the right kind of guns, Mawruss, we could lay it to Section Twelve, Subsection D, of the by-laws," Abe suggested.

"And you could give some of them Senators credit for an assist, Abe, because you take a Senator like that, Abe, and when he holds up the ammunition supply with a two-hour speech, y'understand, he *oser* worries his head how many American soldiers is going to be killed by the Germans in France six months later, just so long as his own name is spelled right by the newspapers in New York City next morning."

"It would help a whole lot, Mawruss," Abe said, "if Senators and Congressmen was numbered the same like automobiles, y'understand, because who is going to waste his breath arguing that the Senate should pass a law which it's a pipe the Senate ain't going to pass, on account that nobody is in favor of it except himself and a couple of other Senators temporarily absent on the road, making Fargo, Minneapolis, Chicago, and points east as traveling peace conventioners, y'understand, when he knows that next morning the only notice the New York newspapers will take of his *Geschrei* will be, Among those who spoke in the Senate yesterday was:



"Well, there's plenty of people which thinks when Governor Lauben wouldn't let them peace fellers run off their convention, y'understand, that it was unconstitutional," Morris said.

"Sure, I know," Abe said. "They're the same people which thinks that anything what helps us and hinders Germany is unconstitutional, including the Constitution. You take them socialist orators, which the only use they've got for soap is the boxes the soap comes in, y'understand, and to hear them talk you would think that the Kaiser sunk the *Lusitania* pursuant to Article Sixty-one, Section Two, of the Constitution of the United States, Mawruss, whereas when President Wilson sends a message to Congress asking them when they are going to get busy on the war taxes and what do they think this is, anyway – a *Kaffeklatsch*, y'understand – it is all kinds of violations of Articles Sixteen, Thirty-two, O.K. and C.O.D. of the Constitution and that the American people is a lot of weak-livered curs to stand for it, outside of being weak-livered curs, anyway."

"You mean to say we allow these here fellers to get up on soap-boxes and say such things like that?" Morris exclaimed.

"We've *got* to allow them," Abe replied. "The Constitution protects them."

"What do you mean – the Constitution protects them?" Morris said. "Here a couple of weeks ago a judge in North Carolina gives out a decision that the Constitution don't protect little children eleven years old from being made to work in factories, y'understand, and now you are trying to tell me that the same Constitution does protect these here loafers! What kind of a Constitution have we got, anyway?"

"I don't know, Mawruss, but there's this much about it, anyhow – a lawyer could get more money out of just one board of directors which wants to go ahead and put through the deal if under the Constitution of the United States nobody could do 'em nothing, y'understand, than he could out of all the children which gets injured working in all the cotton-mills south of Mason and Hamlin's line, understand me. So you see, Mawruss, the Constitution not only protects these here soap-box orators, but it also gives 'em something to talk about because when they want to knock the United States and boost Germany, all they need to say is that you've got to hand it to the Germans; if they kill little children, they're, anyhow, foreign children and not German children."

"I suppose a lot of them soap-box orators gets paid by the German government for boosting the Germans the way you just done it, Abe," Morris commented, "which I see that this here Ridder of the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* gives it out that any one what accuses him that he is getting paid by the German government for boosting the Kaiser in his paper would got to stand a suit for liable, because he is too patriotic an American sitson to print articles boosting the Kaiser except as a matter

of friendship and free of charge – outside of what he can make by syndicating them to other German newspapers."

"But do them other German newspapers get paid by the German government for reprinting Mr. Ridder's articles?" Abe asked.

"That Mr. Ridder don't say," Morris replied.

"Well," Abe continued, "*somebody* should ought to appreciate the way them German newspapers love the Kaiser, even if it's only a United States District Attorney, Mawruss, because you take it if the shoe pinched on the other foot, and a feller by the name Jefferson W. Rider was running an American newspaper in Berlin, Germany, by the name, we would say, for example, the *Berlin, Germany, Star-Gazette*, which is heart and soul for Germany and at the same time prints articles by American military experts showing how Germany couldn't win the war, not in a million years, and the sooner the German soldiers realize it the quicker they wouldn't get killed for such a hopeless *Geschafft*, y'understand. Also, nobody has a greater admiration for the Kaiser than the *Berlin, Germany, Star-Gazette*, understand me, but that if the Kaiser thinks President Wilson is a tyrant, y'understand, then all the *Star-Gazette* has got to say is, some day when the Kaiser is fixing the ends of his mustache in front of the glass mit candlegrease or whatever such *Chamorrin* uses on their mustaches to make themselves look like kaisers, y'understand, that the Kaiser should take another look in the mirror and he would see there such a cutthroat tyrant which President Wilson never dreamed of being in Princeton University to the shipping-clerk, even. Also this here *Berlin, Germany, Star-Gazette* says that Germany is the land of bluff and that – "

"One moment," Morris Perlmutter interrupted. "What are you trying to tell me – that such a newspaper would be allowed to exist in Berlin, Germany?"

"I am only giving you a hypo-critical case, Mawruss," Abe continued, "where I am trying to explain to you that if this was Germany it wouldn't be necessary for Mr. Ridder to sue anybody for liable. All he would have to do when they ask him if he's got anything to say why sentence should not be passed, y'understand, is to tell the judge what was his trade before he became an editor, understand me, and they would put him to work at it for the remainder of the war."

"He wouldn't get off so easy as that, even," Morris commented. "Why, what do you suppose they would do to the editor of this here, for example, *Star-Gazette* if he was to just so much as hint that the Crown Prince couldn't be such a terrible good judge of French château furniture, y'understand, on account he had slipped over on the Berlin antique dealers a lot of reproductions which they had every right to believe was genuine old stuff, as it had been rescued from the flames, packed, and shipped under the Crown Prince's personal supervision? I bet you, Abe, if the paper was on the streets at three-thirty and the sun rose at three-thirty-five, y'understand, the authorities wouldn't wait that long. They'd shoot him at three-thirty-two."

"I know it," Abe agreed. "You see, Mawruss, an editor, a soap-boxer, a cotton-mill owner, or a stock-waterer might get away with it in this country under the Constitution, but over on the other side they wouldn't know what he was talking about at all, because in Germany, Mawruss, a constitution means only one thing. It's something that can be ruined by drinking too much beer, and you don't have to hire no lawyer for *that*."

### III

## POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON FINANCING THE WAR

On everything which a feller buys, from pinochle decks to headache medicine, he will have to put a stamp.

"I see where this here Chump Clark says that incomes from over ten thousand dollars should ought to be confiscated," Abe Potash observed to his partner, Morris Perlmutter, one morning in September.

"Sure, I know," Morris replied, "and if this here Chump Clark has a good year next year and cleans up for a net profit of ten thousand two hundred and twenty-six dollars and thirty-five cents, then he'll claim that all incomes over ten thousand two hundred and twenty-six dollars and thirty-five cents should ought to be confiscated, Abe, and that's the way it goes. I am the same way, Abe. Any one what makes more money as I do, Abe, I 'ain't got no sympathy for at all."

"I bet yer Vincent Astor thinks that John B. Rockafellar should ought to be satisfied mit the reasonable income which a feller could make it by working hard at the real-estate business the way Vincent Astor does," Abe commented.

"John B. Rockafellar *oser* worries his head over the ravings of a protelariat," Morris said. "But, anyhow, Abe, there's a whole lot to what this here Chump Clark says at that. If we compel men to give up their lives for their country, why shouldn't we compel them fellers which has got incomes of over ten thousand dollars to give up their property for their country also?"

"Well, I'll tell you, Mawruss," Abe replied. "This here Chump Clark is a Congressman, and the way I feel about it is, that when a Congressman wants to say something in Congress, y'understand, he should ought to be compelled to first submit it in writing to a certified public accountant or, anyhow, a bookkeeper, y'understand, because the average Congressman 'ain't got no head for figures. Take Mr. Clark, for example, and when he reckons that everybody which gets drafted is going to give up his life for his country, y'understand, you don't got to be the head actuary of the Equitable exactly in order to figure it out that he's made a tremendous overestimate. So when the same feller talks about confiscating incomes over ten thousand, it ain't necessary to ask how he come to fix on ten thousand instead of five thousand or fifteen thousand, because whether he tossed for it or dealt himself three cold hands, and the hand representing ten thousand dollars won out with treys full of deuces, y'understand, the information ain't going to help us finance the war to any extent."

"Why not?" Morris asked.

"Because you take yourself, for instance, and we would say for the sake of argument that in nineteen seventeen you turned over a new leaf and worked so hard that you made fifteen thousand five hundred dollars."

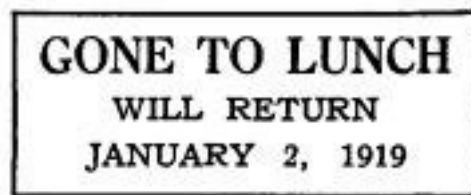
"Listen, Abe," Morris interrupted, "if there is a new leaf coming to any one around here, Abe, I wouldn't mention no names for the sake of an argument or otherwise."

"All right," Abe said, "then we'll say you didn't work no harder, but just the same, Mawruss, if you was to make fifteen thousand five hundred dollars in nineteen seventeen, and this here Chump Clark gets the government to confiscate fifty-five hundred dollars on you, how much would they confiscate on you in nineteen eighteen?"

Morris shrugged his shoulders. "What is the use of talking pipe dreams?" he said.

"I ain't talking pipe dreams," Abe retorted. "This is something which not only Chump Clark suggested it, but Senator LaFollette also as a good scheme for financing the war."

"Evidently they don't expect the war to last long," Morris commented, "which the most the government could hope to collect is the excess income for nineteen seventeen, because if the government confiscates five thousand five hundred dollars on me in nineteen seventeen, am I going to go around in the summer of nineteen eighteen beefing about business being rotten because here it is the first of July, nineteen eighteen, and so far all the government could confiscate on me is two thousand two hundred and sixty-seven dollars and thirty-eight cents, whereas on July first, nineteen seventeen, I had already got confiscated on me two thousand four hundred and thirty-one dollars and fifty cents? *Oser a Stück!* If I have made ten thousand dollars as early as April first, nineteen eighteen, and I know that all further profits for nineteen eighteen is going to be confiscated by the government, y'understand, right then and there I am going to shut up shop and paste a notice on the door:



and anybody else would do the same, Abe, I don't care if he would be as patriotic as Senator LaFollette himself even."

"But that ain't the only ideas for financing the war which Congress has got it, Mawruss," Abe said. "On everything which a feller buys, from pinochle decks to headache medicine, he will have to put a stamp. There will be extra stamps on all kinds of checks from bank checks and poker checks to bar checks and hat checks. There will be red stamps, blue stamps, and stamps in all pastel shades, and when they run out of colors they'll print 'em in black and white and issue them to the public in flavors like wintergreen, peppermint, spearmint, and clove for bar-check stamps and strawberry, vanilla, and chocolate nut Sunday for theayter-ticket stamps."

"For my part they could flavor 'em with *gefullte Miltz mit Knockerl*, because I got through buying orchestra seats when they begun to tax you two dollars and fifty cents for them, Abe, which if the government really and truly wants to raise money by taxing the public, why do they fool away their time asking suggestions from such new beginners like LaFollette and Chump Clark, when right here in New York there is fellers in the restaurant business, the theayter business, and running hat-check stands which has made taxing the public a life study already. For instance, if I would be the government and I wanted to tax theayter tickets, instead of monkeying around with stamps for twenty or thirty cents, y'understand, I would put a head waiter by the box-office window, and when the public is through paying for their tickets he gives them one look, y'understand, and they just naturally hand him a dollar."

"What I couldn't understand is why should the government pick on people which goes to theayter for amusement," Abe said. "Ain't it enough that in order to hold my trade I've got to sit for three hours listening to a lot of nonsense when I could hardly keep my eyes open, but I must also get writer's cramp in my tongue from licking stamps yet just to oblige the United States government and a customer from the Middle West, which it's a gamble whether he wouldn't return the goods on me even if he does give me the order."

"That's what it is to have fellers working as Congressmen which 'ain't had no other business experience," Morris declared. "If LaFollette and this here Clark knew what they was about, Abe, they would make it a law that the *customer* should buy the stamps, and not alone for theayters, but for meals also. You take some of these out-of-town buyers which you've practically got to ruin their digestions before they would so much as look at your line, y'understand, and if they would got to

paste a fifty-cent stamp on every broiled lobster they order up on you it would go a long way toward taking care of the uniform bills for the first draft."

"And they should also got to stand for the tax on gasolene also," Abe added. "If you treat one of them grafters to so much as a two-quart automobile ride, you've already sacrificed half your profit on a couple of garments, even if he does pay for the stamps."

"Cigars is another thing the government could of got a lot of money out of," Morris said.

"What do you mean —*could* of got?" Abe exclaimed. "They *do* get a lot of money out of cigars. You take the average cigar to-day which costs sixty dollars a thousand to put on the market, Mawruss, and each cigar stands the manufacturer in as follows:

|                            |         |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Advertising                | \$ .01  |
| Printing and lithographing | .0015   |
| Manufacturing and boxing   | .01     |
| Swiss chard                | .005    |
| War tax                    | .02     |
| <hr/>                      |         |
| Total                      | \$ .06" |

"Sure I know," Morris agreed, "but the art about taxing cigars ain't so much to sting the feller that manufactures them and the feller that buys them as the fellers which accepts them free for nothing. There is a whole lot of women's-wear retailers in the Middle West which has got quite a reputation for hospitality, because whenever they have a poker game up to the house they hand out cigars which cost you and me and other garment manufacturers here in New York as much as ninety dollars a thousand wholesale. So what I say is that the government should tax anybody which accepts a cigar to smoke on the spot ten cents, and for every one of them put-it-in-your-pocket-and-smoke-it-after-a-while cigars, such a feller should be taxed ten dollars or ten days."

"Well, they'll get a whole lot of money raising postage from two to three cents," Abe suggested.

"But not so much as they could get if they was to go about it right," Morris said. "For sending letters which says, 'Inclosed please find check in payment of your last month's bill and oblige,' three cents is enough for any business man to pay, Abe, and in fact the feller which received such a letter shouldn't ought to kick if the Post Office Department makes him pay also three cents postage, but there is some letters which it should ought to be the law that when a merchant received one of them he should right away report the sender to the Post Office Department for a special war-tax stamp of from one to a hundred dollars. For instance, two dollars extra wouldn't be too much postage for a letter where it says, 'Your favor received and contents noted, and in reply would say you should be so kind and wait a couple days and I would see what I could do toward sending you a check for your March bill, as my wife has been sick ever since May fifteenth, and oblige, yours truly, The Reliance Store, M. Doober, proprietor.'"

"If all them overdue retailers which is all the time pulling a sick wife on their creditors was to be taxed two dollars apiece, Mawruss," Abe said, "how much postage do you figure a storekeeper should pay when he writes to claim a shortage in delivery before he starts to unpack the goods, even. Then there is the feller which, when it don't get below zero promptly on the first of November, writes to tell you that he must say he is surprised, as the winter-weight garments which you shipped him ain't nowheres up to sample and is holding same at your disposal and remain, which if the government would come down on him for a hundred dollars, he is practically getting off with a warning. And I could think of a lot of other excess-postage cases, too, but, as I understand it, we are only trying to raise forty billion dollars, Mawruss."

"Don't let that stop you, Abe," Morris said, "because there's going to be plenty of extras over and above the original estimate, which I see that a lot of South American countries is coming into the war and it's only a question of a month or so when we would have calling on us a commission from

Peru, a commission from Chile, a commission from Bolivia, a commission from Paraguay, and all of them with the same hard-luck story, that if they only had a couple of billion dollars they could put an army of five hundred thousand soldiers into the field, if they only had five hundred thousand soldiers."

"Just the same, Mawruss," Abe said, "them countries is going to be a lot of help."

"And when we get through paying the help, y'understand, we've still got to raise money for the family to live on," Morris said, "so go ahead with your suggestion, Abe. Maybe there's some taxes which Congress 'ain't thought of yet."

"Well, there's this here free speech, which, instead of being free, Mawruss, if it was subject to a tax of one dollar per soap-box hour, payable strictly in advance, y'understand, so far as the pacifists is concerned, you would be able to hear a pin drop. Even Congressmen would soon get tired of paying from twenty to twenty-four dollars a day, especially if the government made it a stamp tax."

"LaFollette would be covered mit stamps from head to foot," Morris remarked.

"That would suit me all right," Abe said, "particularly if the collector of internal revenue was to run him with stamps affixed through a cancellation-machine and cancel him good and proper."

## IV

### POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON BERNSTORFF'S EXPENSE ACCOUNT

Here he is coming back from his trip after losing his whole territory to his firm's competitors, and naturally he tries to make a good showing with his expense account.

"I see where the government puts a limit on the price which coal-dealers could charge for coal," Abe Potash said to his partner, Morris Perlmutter.

"Sure, I know," Morris said, "but did the coal-dealers see it, because I met Felix Geigermann on the Subway this morning, and from the way he talked about what the coal-dealers was asking for coal up in Sand Plains, where he lives, Abe, I gathered it was somewheres around twenty dollars a caret unset."

"*Gott sei dank* I am living in an apartment mit steam heat and my lease has still got two years to run at the same rent," Abe said.

"Well, I hope it's written on good thick paper, and then it'll come in handy to wear under your overcoat when you sit home evenings next winter, Abe, because by the first of next February janitors will be giving coal to the furnace like it would be asperin – from five to ten grains every three hours," Morris predicted, "which I will admit that I ain't a good enough judge of anthracite coal to tell whether it's fireproof, of slow-burning construction, or just the ordinary sprinkled risk, y'understand, but I do know coal-dealers, Abe, and if the government says they must got to sell coal at seven dollars a ton, y'understand, it'll be like buying one of them high-grade automobiles where the list price includes only the engine and the two front wheels, F.O.B. Detroit. In other words, Abe, if you would buy coal to-day at seven dollars a ton you would get a bill something like this:

|                     |        |
|---------------------|--------|
| To coal             | \$7.00 |
| To loading coal     | 1.00   |
| To unloading coal   | 1.00   |
| To weighing coal    | 1.00   |
| To delivering coal  | 1.00   |
| To dusting off coal | 1.00   |

and you would be playing in luck if you didn't get charged a dollar each for tasting coal, smelling coal, feeling coal, and doing anything else to coal that a coal-dealer would have the nerve to charge one dollar for."

"Well, if I would be the United States government," Abe commented, "and had got a practical coal-man like this here Garfield to set a limit of seven dollars I wouldn't let them robbers pull no last rounds of rang-doodles on me, Mawruss. I'd take away their chips from 'em and put 'em right out of the game."

"Sure I know, Abe," Morris said, "*aber* this here Garfield ain't a practical coal-man, Abe, and maybe that's the trouble. Mr. Garfield is president of Williams College, so you couldn't blame these here coal-dealers, because you know as well as I do, Abe, the garment trade will certainly put up an awful holler if when it comes to appoint a cloak-and-suit administrator Mr. Wilson is going to wish on us some such expert as Nicholas Murray Butler *oder* the president of the Union Theological Cemetery."

"At that," Abe said, "I think they'd know more about the price of garments than Bernstorff did about the price of Congressmen. I always give that feller credit for more sense than that he should try to explain an item in his expense account by claiming that

April 3, 1917, To sundries \$50,000

was what he paid for bribing the United States Congress."

"Well, say!" Morris exclaimed. "The poor feller had to tell 'em something, didn't he? Here he is coming back from his trip after losing his whole territory to his firm's competitors, and naturally he tries to make a good showing with his expense account, which, believe me, Abe, if I was a rotten salesman like that, before I would face my employer – and *such* an employer, because that *Rosher* 'ain't got them spike-end mustaches for nothing, Abe – I would first jump in the river, even if my expense account showed that I had been staying in a-dollar-and-a-half-a-day American-plan hotels and had sat up nights in the smoker for big jumps like from Terre Haute to Paducah."

"Can you imagine the way the Kaiser feels?" Abe said. "I suppose at the start he was keeping so calm that he bit the end off his fountain pen and started to light the cap, and probably took one or two puffs before he noticed anything strange about the flavor, because you could easy make a mistake like that with a German cigar.

"*Nu*, Bernstorff," he says, at last, as he looks at the expense account, 'before we take up the matter of this here eight-foot shelf of the world's greatest fiction I would like to hear what you got to say for yourself, so go ahead mit your lies and make it short.'

"I suppose you got my letters,' Bernstorff begins, 'the ones I sent you through the Swede.'

"What Swede?' the Kaiser says.

"Yon Yonson, the second assistant ambassador,' Bernstorff answers. 'I told him if he got them letters through for me that you would give him an order on the Chancellor for a first-class red eagle, but I guess he'd be satisfied with one of them old-rose eagles, Class Four B, that we used to have piled up there in the corner of the shipping-room.'

"I wouldn't even give him an order on Mike, the Popular Berlin Hatter, for a two-dollar derby, even,' the Kaiser says. '*Chutzpah!* Writes me letter after letter with nothing but weather reports in 'em, and he wants me I should give this here Yonson a red eagle yet which costs me thirty-two fifty a dozen wholesale. Seemingly to you, Bernstorff, money is nothing.'

"Here the old man grabs ahold of the expense account again.

"Honestly, Bernstorff,' he says, 'I don't see how you had the heart to spend all that money when you know how things are here in Berlin. If me and my Gussie sits down once a week to such a piece of meat as *gedampfte Brustdeckel mit Kartoffelpfannkuchen*, y'understand, that's already a feast for us, and as for chicken, I assure you we 'ain't had so much as a soup fowl in the house since my birthday a year ago, and you got the nerve to send me in an expense account like this. Aint it a shame and a disgrace?

|              |      |        |
|--------------|------|--------|
| 1916, May 1. | Bolo | \$4.00 |
| 5.           | Bolo | 6.00   |
| 9.           | Bolo | 3.25   |

and every other day for week after week you spent on Bolo anywheres from one to fifteen dollars. Tell me, Bernstorff, how could a man make such a god out of his stomach?

"Why, what do you think Bolo is?' Bernstorff asks.

"I don't *think* what Bolo is; I *know* what Bolo is,' the Kaiser tells him, and a dreamy look comes into his eyes. 'Many a time I seen my poor *Grossmutter olav hasholom* make it. She used to chop up ten onions, five cents' worth parsley, and a big piece *Knoblauch*, add six eggs and a half a pound melted butter, and let simmer slowly. Now take your chicken and –'

"All right, Boss, I wouldn't argue with you,' Bernstorff says, 'because them amounts represent only the preliminary lunches which I give this here Bolo. Further down you would see where he gets the real big money, and then I'll explain.'

"Well, explain this,' the old man says. 'Here under date July second, nineteen sixteen, it stand an item:

To blowing up munitions plant \$10,000

Who did you get to do it? Caruso?

"You couldn't blow up a munitions plant and make a first-class job of it under ten thousand dollars, Boss,' Bernstorff says.

"Is *that* so?' the Kaiser tells him. 'Well, let me tell you something, Bernstorff. I've got a pretty good line on what them munitions explosions ought to cost. My eldest boy has been blowing up buildings in France for over three years now, and for what it costs to blow up a factory he could blow up two cathedrals and a château.'

"Have it your own way, Boss,' Bernstorff says, 'but them château buildings is so old that they're pretty near falling down, anyway.'

"Don't give me no arguments,' the Kaiser says. 'I suppose you're going to tell me these here

8 5-12 doz asstd bombs \$3,200

was some Saturday specials you picked up in a bargain basement. What was they filled with, rubies?'

"Bombs is awful high, Boss,' Bernstorff says. 'Ask Dernburg what he used to pay for bombs; ask Von Papen; ask this here judge of the New York Supreme Court – I forget his name; ask anybody; they would tell you the same.'

"Should I also ask 'em if spies gets paid in America the same like stomach specialists in Germany? Look at this:

To one week's salary 12,235 spies \$1,223,500

What have you been doing, Bernstorff? Keeping a steam-yacht on me and charging it up as spies?'

"Listen, Boss,' Bernstorff says. 'If you would know what an awful strong organization spies has got in the United States, instead you would be talking to me this way you would be thanking your lucky stars that I didn't let 'em run the wage scale up on me no higher than they did. Why, before I left Washington a deputation from Local Number One Amalgamated Spies of North America comes to see me and –'

"What the devil you are talking nonsense?' the Kaiser shouts. '*Moost* you got to employ union spies? Couldn't you find thousands and thousands of non-union spies to work for you?'

"That only goes to show what you know about America,' Bernstorff says. 'There's a whole lot of people in America which would stand for blowing up factories, sinking passenger-steamers, shooting up hospitals, and dropping bombs on kindergartens, y'understand, but when it comes to people employing scab labor, they draw the line. And then again, Boss, spies is very highly thought of in America. Respectable people, like lawyers and doctors, gets arrested every day over there, and even once in a while a minister, y'understand, but a spy —*never!*'

"At this point when it looks like plain sailing for Bernstorff, the Kaiser picks out that fifty-thousand-dollar item, and right there Bernstorff makes his big mistake, for as soon as he starts that Congressmen story the old man begins to figure that if Congressmen are so cheap and spies so dear, y'understand, the only thing to do is to call up the *Polizeiprasidium* and tell 'em to send around a plain-clothes man right away to number Twenty-six A Schloss Platz, ring Hohenzollern's bell."

"Then you really think that Bernstorff and Von Papen and all them crooks didn't spend the money over here that they claimed they spent," Morris said.

"They probably spent it, all right," Abe replied, "but whether or not they spent it for what they claimed they spent it *for*, Mawruss, *that* I don't know, because if them fellers didn't stop at arson, dynamiting, and murder, why should they hesitate at petty larceny?"

"But what them boys did in the way of blowing up munitions plants and sinking passenger-steamers was because they loved the Kaiser so much, and instead of arresting Bernstorff for the money he spent, Abe, I bet yer the Kaiser made him a thirty-second degree passed assistant *Geheimrat* or something," Morris declared.

"Well, there's no accounting for tastes, Mawruss," Abe said, "and if these here Germans is willing to slaughter, rob, and burn because they are in love with a feller which to me has a personality as attractive as the framed insides of the entrance to a safe deposit vault, y'understand, all I can say is that I don't give them no more credit for it than I would to a bookkeeper who committed forgery because he was in love with the third lady from the end in the second row of the original Bowery Burlesquers."

"The wonder to me is that the Kaiser don't see it that way, too," Morris commented.

"That's because when it comes right down *to* it, Mawruss, the third lady from the end ain't no more stuck on herself than the Kaiser is on *himself*," Abe said. "Them third ladies from the end figure that the poor suckers always *did* like 'em, and that therefore they are always *going* to like 'em, so they go ahead and treat their admirers like dawgs and take everything they give 'em, y'understand, and the end of it is that either a third lady becomes so careless that from a perfect thirty-six she comes to be an imperfect fifty-four and has to work for a living, or else she gets pinched for receiving the property which them poor buffaloes admirers of hers handed over to her, and that'll be the end of the Kaiser, too."

"And how soon do you think *that* will happen?" Morris asked.

"That depends on how soon the Kaiser's admirers gets through with him," Abe said.

"Maybe the Kaiser will quit first," Morris concluded, "because you take them third ladies from the end, Abe, and sooner or later they grow terrible tired of this here – now – fast life."

## V

### POTASH AND PERLMUTTER DISCUSS ON THE FRONT PAGE AND OFF

What war done ain't a marker on what peace is going to do to a great many of these here front-page propositions which is nowadays accustomed to being continued on page two, column five, y'understand.

"Yes, Mawruss," Abe said, as he thrust aside the sporting section one Sunday in October, "a people at war is like a man with a sick wife. Nothing else interests him, which here it stands an account from how them loafers out in Chicago plays baseball for the world's record yet, and for all the effect it has on me, Mawruss, it might just so well be something which catches my eye for the first time in the old newspaper padding which my wife pulls out from under the carpet when she is house-cleaning in the spring of nineteen twenty."

"Well," Morris said, "I must got to confess that when I seen it yesterday how this here Fleisch shoots a home run there in the fifth innings, I –"

"What are you talking nonsense – a home run in the fifth innings!" Abe exclaimed. "The home run was made in the fourth innings. The White Sox didn't make no score in the fifth innings. It was the Giants which made their only run in the fifth. McCarty knocked a three-bagger and Sallee singled and brought him home. *You tell me* what innings Fleisch shot a home run in!"

"All right, Abe," Morris said, "I wouldn't argue with you, but all I got to say is you're lucky that on account of the war you ain't interested in auction pinochle the way you ain't interested in baseball, otherwise you might get quite a reputation as a gambler."

"I am just so much worried about this war as you are, Mawruss," Abe protested, "but if I couldn't take my mind off of it long enough to find out which ball team is winning the world series I would be a whole lot more worried about myself as I would be about the war, which it don't make no difference how much a man loves his wife, y'understand, if she's only sick on him long enough, Mawruss, he's going to get sufficiently used to it to take in now and then a good show occasionally. In fact, Mawruss, it's a relief to read once in a while in the newspapers something which ain't about the war, like a murder, y'understand, the only drawback being that along about the third day after the discovery of the body, and just when you are getting interested in the thing, General Haig advances another mile on a couple of thousand kilowatt front, y'understand, and for all you can find anything in the newspaper about your murder, y'understand me, the feller needn't have troubled himself to commit it at all."

"Murderers ain't the only people which got swamped by the war," Morris said. "Take William J. Bryan, for example, and up to within a year or so, Abe, the newspaper publicity which William J. Bryan got free, y'understand, William J. Douglas would of paid a quarter of a million dollars for. Take also this here Hobson which sunk the *Merrimac* and Lindsey M. Garrison, who by resigning from the War Department come within an ace and a couple of pinochle decks thrown in of ruining Mr. Wilson's future prospects, Abe, and there was two fellers which used to get into the newspapers as regularly as Harry K. Thaw and Peruna, and yet, Abe, if any time during the past six months William J. Bryan, Lindsey M. Garrison, and this here Hobson would of been out riding together, and the automobile was to run over a cliff a hundred feet high onto a railroad track and be struck by the cannon-ball express, understand me, the most they could expect to see about it in the papers would be:

## NEWS IN BRIEF

An automobile rolled over an embankment at Van Benschoten Avenue and 456th Street, the Bronx, landing in a railroad cut. Its four occupants are in Lincoln Hospital. One of them, George K. Smith, a chauffeur, suffered a fracture of the skull.

More than fifty pawn tickets were found on Peter Krasnick, who was caught in Brooklyn after a chase over a rear fire-escape. He is charged with burglary.

## World Wants Work Wonders

And if at the last moment before the reporters goes home for the night word comes that the Germans made another strong attack on Hill Six-sixty-six B, y'understand, they strike out everything except 'World Wants Work Wonders' and let it go at that."

"Referendum and Recall is something else which you used to see a whole lot about in the papers," Abe said, "and while I always ducked 'em myself, at the same time there must be a whole lot of people which is wondering what ever become of 'em since the war started."

"The chances is," Morris declared, "if they was to come across the names Referendum and Recall in the papers to-day, Abe, they would say it's a miracle they escaped as long as they did, because they've got a hazy impression they read it somewheres that the Recollection, the Resurrection, and the Reproduction of the same line was sunk by U-boats about the time they torpedoed the Minnieboska, the Minnetoba, and all them other Minnies."

"Prize-fighting is also got a black eye in the way of newspaper publicity since we went into the war, Mawruss," Abe continued, "and it ain't remarkable, neither, when you look back and think of the pages and pages the newspapers used to print about a couple of loafers trying to hurt each other with gloves on their hands, which, believe me, Mawruss, a green shipping-clerk could give himself worse *Makkas* nailing up one case of goods than them boys could do to each other in a whole season already."

"I bet yer," Morris said, "and for such a picnic Jeff Willard used to get over a hundred thousand dollars yet."

"Can you imagine how much money one of them aviators over in the old country ought to draw under such a wage scale?" Abe asked. "I read an account of what an aviator has got to do when he goes up in an airyoplane, Mawruss, and at one and the same time while he is balancing himself five thousand feet in the air he takes photographs, shoots off guns, drops bombs, sends wireless telegraphs, and also runs and steers an engine which is so powerful, y'understand, that if you would be running it on dry land, Mawruss, you wouldn't be able to take your mind off of it long enough to think about the high cost of camera supplies, let alone taking pictures yet."

"I wonder if such a young feller has got also a knowledge of bookkeeping and stenography," Morris speculated.

"What difference does that make?" Abe asked.

"Because, Abe, if after the war we could get him to come to work in our place it would pay us to give him a hundred dollars a week even," Morris replied, "on account it would be a cinch, after what he's been used to in his last position, for such a young feller to operate an electric rotary cutting-machine with his left hand and press garments with his right, and he has still got both legs and his head left to keep the books, answer the telephone, run a typewriter and an adding-machine, and fix up a new card index for our credit system."

"At that he would probably throw up the job on account he didn't have enough to do to keep him busy, Mawruss," Abe commented, "and also it's going to be pretty hard for them fellers to settle

down after the war gets through, considering all the excitement they've had with their names in the papers and everything."

"Say!" Morris exclaimed. "The fact that a feller like Hindenberg is now getting his name in the paper the way it used to was a few years ago with Hannah Elias and Cassie Chadwick ain't no criterion to judge by, Abe, because what war done to make the newspapers forget their old friends Bryan and Evelyn Nesbut ain't a marker on what peace is going to do to a great many of these here front-page propositions which is nowadays accustomed to being continued on page two, column five, y'understand. Why, I wouldn't be a bit surprised if in about five or six years from now, Abe, you are going to take up the paper some morning and read an item like this:

### OBITUARY NOTES

Max K. Hindenberg, 83 years old, a clothing merchant, member of the firm of Hindenberg & Levy, and recording secretary of Sigmund Meyer Post No. 97 Veterans of the War of 1914-1918, died early yesterday at his home, 2076 East 8th Street, Potsdam, Germany, yesterday. Deceased was a native of East Prussia.

And the chances is that ninety-nine out of a hundred people ain't even going to say to themselves, 'Where did I hear that name before?'"

"That's where you make a big mistake, Mawruss," Abe said. "Hindenberg is a very popular feller in Germany, and I bet yer that on every map filed in the county clerks' offices of Prussian real-estate developments during the past three years there's a Hindenberg Street or a Hindenberg Avenue, to say nothing of the babies which has been born over there and named Max Hindenberg Goldsticker or Max Hindenberg Schwartz."

"Sure I know," Morris said, "and you can take my word for it, Abe, along about nineteen hundred and thirty-five there's going to be a whole lot of lawyers over in Deutschland making from twenty-five to fifty marks a throw for putting through motions in the Court of Common Pleas for the City and County of Berlin that the name of the said applicant, Max H. Goldsticker or Max H. Schwartz, as the case may or may not be, be and the same hereby is changed to Frank Pershing Goldsticker or Woodrow W. Schwartz. Also, Abe, if ever they open up Charlottenberg Heights overlooking beautiful Lake Hundekehlen as per plat filed in the office of the register of Brandenburg County, y'understand, there'll be a Helfferich Place, a Liebknecht Avenue, and even a Bebel Terrace maybe, but in twenty years from now a German real-estater wouldn't be able even to give away lots free for nothing on any Hindenberg Street or Hindenberg Avenue, not if he was to throw in a two-family house with portable garage complete."

"Well, you could say the same thing about this country, too," Abe declared, "which twenty years from now, people wouldn't know whether the word *viereck* was a fish or a cheese; and as for all them college professors which got fired recently because they made the mistake of thinking that a college professor gets paid to fool away his time making speeches against the government the same like a United States Senator, y'understand, I couldn't even remember their names to-day yet, so you can imagine how they're going to go down in history, Mawruss: compared to them fellers, there are a few thousand notary publics whose names will be household words already."

"Any man who thinks he is going to make a name for himself by talking or writing against his country is due to get badly fooled, I don't care if he would be a college professor, a United States Senator, or an editor, Abe," Morris said, "because the most he could hope for is the thing what usually happens him. He gets fired, Abe, and the only reputation a feller gets by getting fired is the reputation for getting fired, and that ain't much of a recommendation when he comes to look for another job."

"The people I am sorry for is the wives of these here professors," Abe said, "which even when a college professor has got steady work his wife 'ain't got no bed of roses to make both ends meet,

neither, and I bet yer more than one of them ladies will got to do a little plain sewing for a living on account her husband became so hot-headed over this here pacifism."

"That's the trouble with them pacifists," Morris concluded. "If they would only take some of the heat out of their heads and put it into their feet, Abe, they could hold onto their jobs and their wives wouldn't got to go to work at all. Am I right or wrong?"

## VI

# POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON HOOVERIZING THE OVERHEAD

When a feller reckons the overhead on the goods he manufactures he figures in one-twelfth of his telephone number, one-twelfth of the year he was born, and one-twelfth of every other number he can remember from his automobile to his street number.

"Of course, Mawruss, I don't claim that Mr. Hoover don't know his business nor nothing like that," Abe Potash said as he finished reading a circular mailed to him by the Food Conservation Director, "but at the same time if I would be permitted to make a suggestion, Mawruss, I would suggest that in addition to following out all the DON'TS in this here food-conservation circular – and also in the interests of being strictly economical, y'understand – the women of the country should learn it genwine Southern cooking, the kind they've got it in two-dollars-a-day American-plan Southern hotels, Mawruss, and not only would people eat much less than they eat at present, but the chances is it would fix some people so they wouldn't eat at all."

"Why *Southern* cooking?" Morris Perlmutter asked. "For that matter, two-dollar-a-day American-plan Eastern cooking wouldn't make you eat yourself red in the face, neither, which the last time I was in New Bedford they gave me for lunch some fried schrod, and I give you my word, Abe, I'd as lieve eat a pair of feet-proof socks, including the guarantee and the price ticket. But that ain't neither here or there, Abe. Nobody could pin medals on himself for being a small eater in a hotel, Abe, *aber* the test comes when you arrive home from the store at half past seven and your wife sets before you a plate of *gedampfte Kalbfleisch* which if a chef in Delmonico's would cook such a thing like that, Abe, the Ritz-Carlton would pay John G. Stanchfield a retainer of one hundred thousand dollars to advise them how the fellow's contract could be broken with Delmonico's so they could get him to come to work for them. And that's why I am telling you, Abe, when you get such a plate of *gedampfte Kalbfleisch* in front of you, which the steam comes up from it like roses, y'understand, and when you put a piece of it in your mouth it's like –"

"Say, listen," Abe protested, "let me alone, will you? It's only eleven o'clock, and I couldn't go out to lunch for another hour yet."

"That only goes to show what for a stomach patriot you are, Abe," Morris commented. "Even when we are only *talking* about food you couldn't restrain yourself, so what must it be like when you've got the food actually on the table? I bet yer you don't remember that such a feller as Hoover ever existed at all, let alone what he says about eating reasonable."

"That's all right, Mawruss," Abe said. "Mr. Hoover could talk that way, because maybe his wife ain't such a crank about her cooking like my Rosie is, y'understand, *aber* if Mr. Hoover would be me, Mawruss, and there comes on the table some *gestoffte Miltz* which Mrs. Hoover has been breaking her back standing over the stove all the afternoon seeing that it don't stick to the bottom of the kettle, y'understand, and Mr. Hoover takes only a couple slices of it on account of the war, y'understand, what is going to happen then?"

"'So,' Mrs. Hoover says, 'you had one of them sixty-cent table-d'hôte lunches to-day again, and now of course you 'ain't got no appetite. How many times did I tell you you shouldn't eat that poison?'"

"'So sure as I am sitting here, mommer,' Hoover says, 'all I had for my lunch was a Swiss-cheese rye-bread sandwich and a cup coffee.'"

"'Then what's the matter you ain't eating?' Mrs. Hoover says. 'Ain't it cooked right?'"

"'Certainly it's cooked right,' Hoover says. 'But two pieces is a plenty on account of the war.'"

"On account of the war! I could work my fingers to the bone fixing good food for that man, and he wouldn't eat it on account of the war, *sagt er*," says Mrs. Hoover.

"But, listen, mommer – ' Hoover tries to tell her.

"Never mind, any excuse is better than none," Mrs. Hoover says. "Turns up his nose at my cooking yet! *Gestoffte Miltz* ain't good *enough* for him. I suppose you would like me to give you every day roast duck on twenty dollars a week housekeeping money. Did you ever hear the like? Couldn't eat *gestoffte Miltz* no more, so tony he gets all of a sudden!"

"*Aber* mommer, listen to me for a moment," Hoover says, but it ain't a bit of use because Mrs. Hoover goes into the bedroom and locks the door on him, and by the time he has got her to be on speaking terms again he has violated the don't-eat-no-sugar DON'T to the extent of four dollars and fifty cents for a five-pound box of mixed chocolates and bum-bums, understand me. Also just to show that she forgives him they take in a show mit afterward a supper in which Mr. Hoover violates not only all the other DON'Ts in the food-conservation circulars, but also makes himself liable to go to jail for giving a couple of dollars to a German head waiter under the Trading with the Enemy law."

"At that, the way some of our best hotels conservates food nowadays is setting a good example to the women of the country," Morris declared.

"What do you mean – nowadays?" Abe retorted. "They always conservated food, the only difference being, Mawruss, that in former times, when them crooks used to get ten portions of chicken *à la King* out of a two-pound cold-storage chicken and charged you a dollar and a quarter a portion for it, y'understand, they was a bunch of crooks – ain't it? – whereas nowadays when them crooks get eleven portions out of the same chicken and charge you a dollar and a half a portion for it, y'understand, they're a bunch of patriots, understand me, which if the coal-dealer and the retail grocer and butcher would short-weight you and overcharge you the way some of them patriotic New York hotel proprietors does, it would be hard to find many patriots in New York City outside of Blackwells Island *oder* the Tombs prison."

"And yet, Abe, if you would go to work and figure out the overhead on a chicken which is used for eleven portions of chicken *à la King*," Morris said, "you would find that the hotel-keeper gets his profit only from the neck which he uses for chicken consommé."

"Well, say!" Abe exclaimed. "A profit of six cups of chicken consommé at forty cents a cup ain't to be sneezed at, neither, and even then you are taking the hotel-keeper's word for the overhead, which I don't care if a feller would be ordinarily a regular George Washington, y'understand, and wouldn't even lie to his wife about how he come out in his weekly Saturday-night pinochle game, understand me, but when such a feller reckons the overhead on the goods he manufactures it don't make no difference if it would be locomotive engines or pants, in addition to the legitimate cost of every one-twelfth dozen articles, he figures in as overhead one-twelfth of his telephone number, one-twelfth of the year he was born, one-twelfth of how old his grandfather *olav hasholom* was when he married for the fourth time, and one-twelfth of every other number he can remember, from his automobile number to his street number, and usually such a crook lives in the last house from the city limits."

"I tell yer, Abe," Morris said, "the feller which invented poison gas was some *Rosher*, and the feller which invented T.M.T. also, but the feller which invented the overhead is in a class by himself just behind the Kaiser. I don't know what his name is, but he is the feller what fixed things so that a ten-cent loaf of bread has not only got into it the air-holes which is caused by the yeast, but also the air-holes which is caused by the lawyer's bill that the baking company paid at the time they issued their five-million-dollar consolidated and refunding four-per-cent. first-mortgage bonds, y'understand, and there's just as much nourishment in that kind of air-hole for a truck-driver's family of growing children as there is in any other kind of air-hole."

"Well, the bakers 'ain't got nothing on the farmers when it comes to cost bookkeeping, Mawruss," Abe said. "I was reading where the milk-raisers' *Verein* claims the price of feed is so

high that they've got to sell milk at ten cents a quart wholesale, but for all them farmers figure that the same feed goes to fatten the cow for the market, Mawruss, you might suppose that there was a big institution somewheres up state called the Ezra B. Cornell Home for Aged and Indignant Cows, y'understand, and that so soon as a cow gets through giving milk, y'understand, instead of slaughtering it the farmer takes it to the home in his automobile and contributes five dollars a week toward its support until it dies of hardening of the arteries at the age of eighty-two."

"Take it from me, Abe," Morris said, "them farmers ain't such farmers as people think they are. It's going to be so, pretty soon, that people will be paying two dollars and a half for an orchestra seat and pretty near break their hearts while the poor old second-mortgage shark is being turned out of his little home by the farmer."

"And on the opening night, Mawruss, the front rows will be filled with milk agents," Abe said, "and after the show you will see them sitting around Rector's and Churchill's and getting terrible noisy over a magnum of Sheffield Farms nineteen sixteen."

"Of course nobody is going to be the worser for making a joke about such things, Abe," Morris interrupted, "but last winter when these fellers which gets off mommerlogs in vaudeville shows was talking about somebody being immensely wealthy on account his breath smelt from onions, y'understand, there wasn't many people raising a family on less than twenty-five dollars a week whose breath smelt from onions at that."

"Did I say they did?" Abe asked.

"And it is the same way with potatoes and fruit, not to say fish and poultry and all the other foods which Mr. Hoover says we should eat in order to save beef, sugar, and flour for the soldiers," Morris continued. "When a woman buys nowadays flounder at twenty-five cents a pound, she is paying ten cents for fish and fifteen cents toward the fish-dealer's wife's diamonds or his six-cylinder automobile, so if I would be Mr. Hoover, before I issued bread and meat cards to the consumer I would hand out automobile and diamond cards to the fish-dealer and the vegetable-dealer and maybe it would help to stop them fellers from loading their prices with what it costs 'em to keep up their expensive habits."

"A fish-dealer is entitled to expensive habits the same like anybody else," Abe said, "which if Mr. Hoover stops him from buying his wife once in a while diamonds, sooner or later Mr. Hoover will stop him from buying his wife furs and it will work down right along the line till Mr. Hoover hits the garment business, Mawruss, which, while I ain't got no particular sympathy for a fish-dealer, y'understand, his money is just so good as the next one's, so I ask you, as a garment-manufacturer, what are you going to do about it?"

## **Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.**

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.