

February 1934

Price 10 cents

New Theatre

D R A M A • F I L M • D A N C E

Meet The Theatre Union

Emery Northrup

Community House Drama

Leon Bloch

The Dance . . . Oakley Johnson

The Revolutionary Film

Samuel Brody

Prospects For The American Theatre

Paul & Claire Sifton

Worthington Minor

Joseph Freeman

John Dos Passos

NEW THEATRE

VOL. III

NO. 3

CENSORSHIP IN CANADA

1934

AS we go to press word comes that Canadian government authorities have in effect banned a scheduled second production of the play, *Eight Men Speak*, written and produced by the Workers Theatre of the Toronto Progressive Arts Club.

The play, based on the case of eight leaders of the Canadian working class who were imprisoned as Communists two years ago, was cheered by an audience of more than 1,500 people at its first performance. There was a large advance sale for the second show. The ban took the form of a threat to revoke the license of the Standard Theatre if its owner permitted the performance. At the same time certain people, notably one Dickson-Kenwin, announced the opening of what is undoubtedly a fascist drive against all workers' cultural organizations in Canada.

CONTENTS of this Issue

1934—Comment	2
Community House Drama	5
National Theatre Festival	7
Meet The Theatre Union	8
Prospects for the American Theatre	10
The Artef Theatre	14
Stage In Review	15
Movies	
March of the Movies	20
The Revolutionary Film	21
News and Notes	23
Dance	
Mass Dance In Soviet Union	4
The Dance	17

NEW THEATRE
5 East 19 Street
New York City
Telephone GR 7-9345

The League of Workers Theatres of the U.S.A. is immediately launching a campaign to arouse every enemy of this political censorship directed against a vital and growing workers culture. In the meantime, every group and individual and particularly every organization of workers and farmers, and of those who sympathize with the working class, are urged to send protests, together with demands for the right to perform *Eight Men Speak*, to Attorney-General W. H. Price, Queen's Park, Toronto, Canada, at once.

A PLEA FOR ECSTASY

BROOKS ATKINSON, who was so loud in his denunciation of *Peace On Earth*, has taken Eugene O'Neill to task for *Days Without End*. Let us examine the bone that Mr. Atkinson, the dramatic critic of the *New York Times*, has to pick with Mr. O'Neill. Aside from a few very minor protestations, his dissatisfaction grows from O'Neill's failure to rise to the religious ecstasies potential in his theme. The play had no "words fit for song, buoyancy and spiritual exaltation." It was not "impregnated with the joy of the shriven believer." His review was charged with plaints bemoaning the need of "exaltation and rhapsody" . . . That O'Neill is turning more and more from the living scene, further negating himself as a positive cultural force in contemporary chaos, bothers Mr. Atkinson not a whit. On this ground, he has only to say, that "the play smells of the lamp." Nothing more. Millions may tramp the byways of the world without sustenance, and the rattle

of approaching wars raise a deafening clamor, but Mr. Atkinson asks, not for a play that breathes of the living world, but for a good stiff breeze that will blow us onto the seas of mysticism. He pleads for a fellow reveller to partake of his rhapsodies and exaltations. Anything to forget reality and plays like *Peace on Earth*, which are part of it.

PAN-PACIFIC WEEK

CHINA'S Kuomintang government practises public executions with an eye to more than morbid tourist curiosities. The execution of "bandits," at which, sometimes, dozens of heads go rolling into China's gutters are a constant threat of terror to the native population.

The International Union of the Revolutionary Theatre, in an attempt to bring the attention of the world to conditions in China and the rest of the Far East, has designated this year's International Theatre Week, February 15 to 25, as Pan-Pacific Week. The attendant publicity should arouse the American people to a realization of the imperialistic motives of the war-lords of the Pacific.

A series of plays, recitations and agit-prop pieces are being prepared by various groups in the League of Workers Theatres for the Week. In this connection it is interesting to learn that a play on the foreign imperialist exploitation of China, called *Nanking Road*, has been written and is ready for distribution by the L.O.W.T.

In each country plays are especially prepared and presented each year dealing with the lives and struggles of the masses in other lands. This year the week takes on added significance because of the danger of attack on the Soviet Union.

WHAT ABOUT THEATRE WORKERS?

THERE has been much ballyhooing on the part of certain elements about the blessings of the NRA theatre code. And now a host of plans for theatre projects under the CWA have blossomed forth—none of them capable of solving the great problem of unemployment in the theatre. Indeed, one of the plans secretly concocted by an “unselfish” Broadway manager was so obviously a racket for a handful of big producers that it was reluctantly abandoned after serious consideration by CWA heads because it would have stirred up a furious storm among theatre workers. **NEW THEATRE** in future issues will analyze the more important of the proposed plans.

Furthermore, first-hand information and accounts of experiences during or while seeking employment are always earnestly desired by **NEW THEATRE** from theatre workers, film

workers, dancers, musicians, artists, and others.

NEWS

TWO new departments will be inaugurated by **NEW THEATRE** beginning with the March issue: One is a service department, consisting of articles on technical and artistic phases of the theatre arts,—directing playwriting, acting, costuming, make-up, and so on. Questions from groups and individuals will be answered here. Readers are invited to send in short articles for this department, including articles on experiments and experiences in production. The second department, the Voice of the Audience, will be devoted to letters from readers on any phase of the theatre arts. Particularly desired are letters from workers, farmers, students, etc., telling what they think of theatre performances, dance recitals, and movies they see. It does not matter whether or not the letters have literary style. **NEW THEATRE** considers the reactions of worker audiences, stated in their own words, of great importance.

evitable doom clearly written. The **Artef** has undertaken a giant labor—and has come off altogether creditably.

MORE PAMPHLETS

Virgil Geddes in his latest pamphlets, *The Theatre of Dreadful Nights* and *The Melodramadness of Eugene O'Neill*, stands at the cross-roads.

“Deeds and not profits will save the drama,” he states in *The Theatre of Dreadful Nights* . . . “The theatre will be improved by revolutionary men working with the drama as a form of literature.”

This passage has the ring by which Lenin judged revolutionary sincerity — “deeds, not words.” Geddes deserves comradesly sympathy in his intellectual drive toward revolution. But—

“I wait for some inner fire,” he says . . . “some art I cannot describe . . . so sharp and true its theme, I do not wish to explain or even remain capable of analyzing it.”

It is imperative here to “remain capable of analyzing” the class basis of this “art.” Geddes fetishises and mystifies his intellectual activity in the theatre.

Mysticism, as Marx shows in *Capital*, is used to disguise the money relations of capitalism. The Pope, who espouses mystic miracle plays, is one of capitalism’s billionaires. As Geddes says about the arty Theatre Guild: “You deal in art . . . and make your final decisions solely from a commercial position . . .”

This barrier of art mysticism, which is a dangerous escape from the fact that the capitalist theatre exploits sincere work, should and can be overcome. Theoretically, it may be advisable to read Lenin’s *Materialism and Emperio-Criticism* on the class struggle in “culture,” practically, to join forces with a revolutionary theatre organization.

SIGNIFICANT indeed is the fact that the first American production of Maxim Gorky’s new play, *Yegor Bulitchev*, is given neither by a commercial theatre nor by an art theatre, but by the **ARTEF**, Jewish Workers Theatre, whose members spend their days in the shops, evenings at rehearsals, and week-ends performing.

Nor is the play likely to be produced by many theatres outside the workers theatre, though it is a worthy counterpart of Maxim Gorky’s famous early work, *At the Bottom*, commonly known as *The Lower Depths*. Here we have the people “at the top” in the Russia of 1916, (their American prototypes are not far to seek), with their in-

NEW THEATRE

Organ of the League of Workers Theatres of the U.S.A. (Section of the International Union of the Revolutionary Theatre), Workers Dance League, and National Film and Photo League.

EDITORIAL BOARD

BEN BLAKE Editor
LEON BLOCH Managing Editor

ASSOCIATES

IRVING LERNER Film
MIGNON VERNE Dance
CHARLES DIBNER Art
OSCAR SAUL Theatre

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Erno Basche	Gustav
Michael Blankfort	Wangenheim
Anita Block	Friedrich Wolf
Samuel Brody	Jay Leyda
Nathaniel	Romain Rolland
Buchwald	Vsevolod
John R. Chaplin	Meyerhold
Hallie Flanagan	Alexei Popov
Joseph Freeman	Sergei Tretyakov
Virgil Geddes	Heinrich Diamant
Michael Gold	James Shelly
Mordecai Gorelik	Hamilton
Stephen Karnot	Harry Elton
Alfred Kreyemborg	Anne Howe
John Howard	Alfred Saxe
Lawson	Leon Moussinac
Paul and Claire	Seki Sano
Sifton	Victor Cutler
Lee Strasberg	Alice Evans
Erwin Piscator	Dorothy Mitchell
John E. Bonn	Lester Glass

Correspondents in
Hollywood—London—Paris—Moscow.

Mass Dance In Soviet Union

DANCING is taken seriously; just as seriously as tractors and kilowatts of electricity. It is becoming as much a part of the daily lives of the people as is the harvest or the increase in pig-iron production. Along a broad cultural front, a plan has been formulated, which calls for the cultural and recreational development of the masses and dancing as one of the arts takes its place alongside of kilometers of paved roads and tons of grain in the goals set by the Gosplan or planning engineers.

The training of a vast army of dancers among the great mass of the population is as important to the government as the training of any army of soldiers for defense. The bodies of the youth of the Soviet Union must be developed and disciplined, and dancing plays an important role in that training, aside from its cultural benefits both to the youth and the older citizens.

The Five Year Plans, besides power stations and smelting furnaces, calls for mass participation in dancing, as well as other forms of cultural and recreational activities. While vast sums and tremendous amounts of energy and time are being expended on industrial development, the cultural needs of the people are not being neglected, millions are being spent in an effort to develop the people's cultural interests and activities. Schools for the training of instructors in cultural activities, such as singing, dramatics, music and dancing are prevalent throughout the Union.

At a specially called convention of dancing masters the problem of dances suitable for presentation to the masses was presented. They would need to be dances which could be taught

quickly to large groups congregating perhaps for one meeting, therefore they would need to be simple. Interest of those participating would have to be maintained, and the dances would have to have a degree of cultural as well as physical value.

SINCE there was an immediate need for folk dances and folk dances aren't developed by request, the masters worked over the old dances, simplifying the most difficult steps, discarding complex figures and movements and condensed the dances to four or five simple steps in each dance. All fancy pirouettes and spectacular leaps and deep knee bend steps were eliminated. All the steps which we usually associate with Russian dancing were done away with and dancing in circles while holding hands or by two in a circle was added to the form.

These dances as simplified were presented to instructors of the Institute for Physical Culture, who in turn taught them as part of the college curriculum to the enrolled students. After graduation and during the summer holidays the Institute graduates are assigned to the various parks for Culture and Rest where their task is to instruct groups of volunteers from the Komsomols or Young Communist League who have offered their services toward the cultural development of the Soviet Union. These Komsomols are the teachers of the great mass of citizens who frequent the parks.

Each park has a sector devoted to organized mass work which is divided into five parts; dancing, music, singing, dramatics and experimental. While each part is an entity in itself, the complete sector often synthesizes for the production of

huge mass pageants. The Komsomols choose whichever sections they are especially interested in and they specialize in the branch of their choice. However, they are all expected to train in the other sections so that they may become proficient in leading groups and instructing in all branches.

THE dance section has its group of Institute graduates and Komsomols-in-training and a staff of accordionists, who supply the music for the dancing, (although at times the symphony orchestras in the park are used for this purpose). For several hours each day the Komsomols are given intensified instruction in the large repertory of dances.

When evening comes and the workers begin to arrive at the parks for recreation, the dance section is divided into small groups, at the head of each group an Institute graduate.

Accompanied by an accordionist, these small groups form circles throughout the park, and with the accordionist seated on his case in the centre, they dance. A group of spectators soon gathers about and when the dance is finished, the dancers invite the audience to join them in the next dance, and many accept. One of the leaders takes the centre of the circle and group teaching begins. The first figure is described, demonstrated, the description repeated and then danced by the entire group, the other figures are taught successively in the same manner and then all put together and the complete dance executed and repeated.

After each dance the increasing circle of onlookers is again invited to join the group of dancers. This continues for as long as three hours, while each Komsomol has an opportunity to teach at least one dance and more and more people are persuaded to join, so that at times there are as many as 3000 workers dancing in

various parts of the park at one time. In such manner great masses are being taught to dance and large numbers of people are getting daily contact with and developing an interest in dancing never before available.

Music from Moussorgsky, Schubert, Tchaikovsky, Ghys and Rubenstein is the most common used for the dance group in the largest park in Moscow, known as the Park for Culture and Rest. Many of the dances taught are consciously grotesque or comic, and the performers all apparently have a good time and dance with vigor and spirit.

THE directors of the organized mass dance sector are aware that the dances now practiced, being pre-revolutionary and seming from the old feudal and serf days are the folk creations and expressions of a people enslaved and oppressed who had opportunity for dancing only at a wedding perhaps, or an infrequent holiday. Hence the characteristic figures, movements and form, which bespoke their hopes for freedom from the slavery of the master and the soil, are not suitable for the youth of a revolutionary era. This type of dancing does not fit into the present age of strife, struggle and construction. It is symbolic of nothing the Union stands for, it is anachronistic, and in the parks for Culture and Rest, where intellectual and cultural activities are presented and avidly taken up by the masses, the old folk dances, though simplified, strike a discordant note.

Of course the dance in the Soviet Union is now in a transition period. There are frequent conferences of dance directors and teachers, where the problems of developing new dances in keeping with the new life are discussed and plans adopted. Mass dancing in the Soviet Union faces an unlimit-

Community House Drama

LITTLE theatre groups have been established in almost every community house in New York City and in many other communities throughout the country. For years they have been coasting along producing any old play that happened to strike the fancy of the members of the group. Sometimes there has been attention to form in playwrighting, acting and staging; almost never has there been the least concern about substance.

It is time that the community house theatre took stock of its resources and potentialities. In this article I shall attempt to analyse the broader factors involved. It is obviously impossible, in the space available to treat specifically the individual groups; but that will be the concern of future articles.

The function of the community house theatre is admittedly two-horned. Primarily the aim of the group is, and should be, to provide a means of social and cultural development. Secondly it should aim at a maximum development of artistic skill, on the part of its members, in the various theatre arts.

In most of the groups I have observed and in the three groups I have directed, this fundamental principle has never been clearly stated and certainly not comprehended. The average house director starts with the false premise that a theatre group will bring good publicity and probably contributions to the house. "Therefore," they say, "let us establish a theatre group." The more thoughtful add, "and it will give our idle members something to do."

IT is this false reasoning that provides the false structural basis for all future work. Experience should have taught directors of community houses that a theatre group organized

on any such opportunist lines will bring only adverse publicity and create enemies for the organization. In addition, a community house theatre which does not serve the two-point purpose that I have stated above does not deserve existence. The community house which fails to provide the opportunity for social and cultural development, and also for artistic growth through the theatre, fails miserably in its self-selected purpose. That organization should be subjected to self-revaluation and either reform its policy or close its doors.

I cite a one-act play called *The Man With The Iron Jaw*, as a typical example of the kind of plays most community houses are producing. Of course there have been a few notable exceptions in the midst of all these failures, one of them being the old Henry Street Settlement whose Neighborhood Playhouse produced such plays as Francis E. Faragoh's, *Pinwheel*.

The Man With The Iron Jaw is the story of a strong man in a circus who escapes the arms of one woman only to fall into the embrace of another. This play has one great philosophic principle to prove. To wit, "it is better to succumb to the superior wiles of a clever woman than to the machinations of the mother of a dumb one."

HOW profound! What depths of cultural inspiration. It seems to be just another indication of the incompetence or, what is worse, the refusal of the community house leaders to find the well-springs of American culture.

And are we to believe that in the problem stated in *The Man With The Iron Jaw*, we are to find a motivating force toward social development? A mere reading of the material

that makes this play should be sufficient to disprove any such supposition. Such insight requires no massive intellect.

This is no isolated example that I have selected. Rather it is superior to much of the material used in the community house theatres.

In strong relief against this background of deadly innocuity another experience stands out. Recently I selected a one-act play for production by a community house group. The play had vitality both in subject matter and design. It dealt with the problem of survival in a capitalistic society of a large number of poor New England farmers.

At first the powers-that-be at the community house were un-animously opposed to the play on the ground that the members of the cast could not understand

it. After I read the play to the cast and they received it enthusiastically, the opposition became more hidden. Every effort was made to insure failure.

THE first rehearsal was set for a week after the first reading of the play and the casting was undertaken in the interim. At that first reading there were present about fifteen persons. The roll call at the first rehearsal accounted for exactly five. Investigation revealed that in the space of the week between the reading and the rehearsal the officials at the house had secured a musical play and had cast it and secured a director. The majority of my actors had been seduced away by the titillating strains of the old familiar music and the easy nonsense of the comedy.

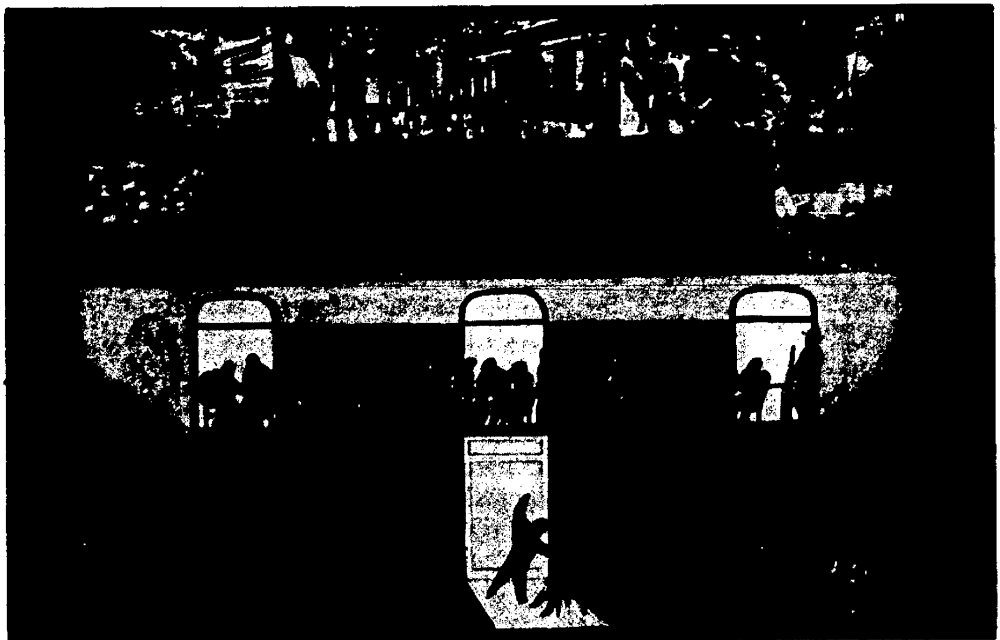
Not content with the extent of the carnage, every device was

employed for halting the performance, beginning with failure to notify the cast of rehearsals, to holding a rehearsal of the musical comedy on the same night as the play rehearsal, in an adjoining room cut off by ill-fitting sliding doors. Of course, in the latter predicament rehearsal was impossible because the voices of the actors became inaudible.

Not every community house group is confronted with such serious obstacles to the presentation of cultural, socially conscious drama. But there are varying degrees of darkness.

The more enlightened members of community house groups and all those outsiders who feel a devotion to the theatre arts must maintain a relentless campaign of education in order to bring order out of chaos and light into of black decay.

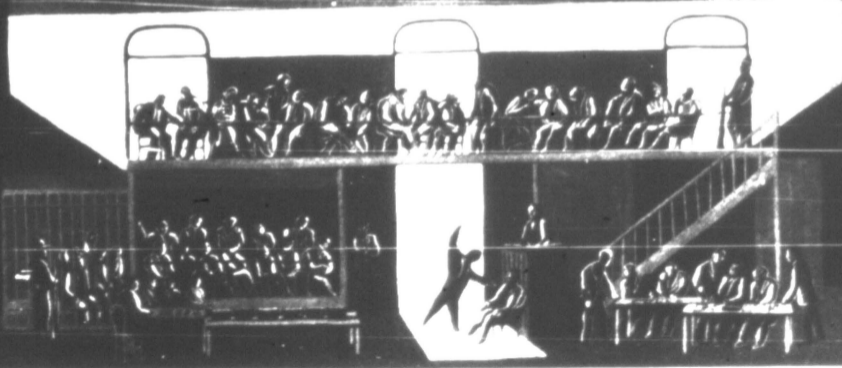
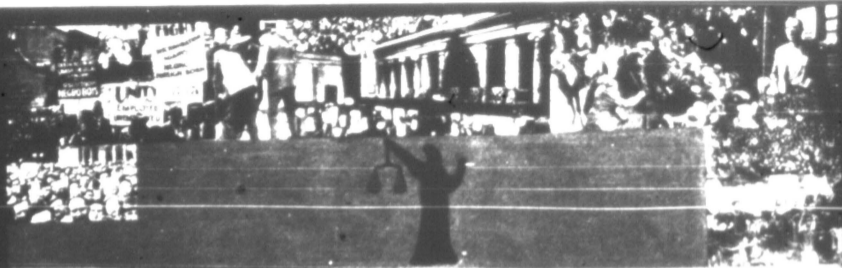
*THEY
SHALL NOT
DIE; Court
Room, Dexter,
Alabama; by
Mordecai Go-
reluk:—The
International
Theatre Art
Exhibition at
the Museum
of Modern
Art.*



This design projects the play by John Wexley frankly as a propagandist medium. Making no effort to appear "impartial," it places the bullying prosecutor and terrorized witnesses directly below a silhouette of abstract justice. Above this silhouette is a space in which is mirrored, by means of projected photographs, the ever-widening impact of the Scottsboro case upon the masses of the American people. Instead of

Courtesy of Theatre Arts Monthly

working inward toward an introspective mood of passive sympathy, the design explodes outward toward panoramic facts and the need for public action against the Scottsboro frame-up. The scenic technique employed here is descended from that of the American Theatre of Action, Piscator's theatre, and the earlier productions of Meyerhold.



PLAYS selected should say something, and say it well. The test of good drama must ever be veracity. One must ask two questions in weighing the value of a script, "is it true intellectually and is it honest aesthetically?"

The great danger to be avoided is the play that starts out by presenting an important problem, truthfully, and then goes on to sugar-coat reality or so warp the real presentation of actual conditions that audience-awareness is lulled into acquiescence. This kind of play is more vicious because it is more insidious than the out and out false play, the one that starts out with a set of false values and develops untruth with no concern for artistic honesty.

To stamp out the false and enthrone the true, community house audiences and casts must learn to develop their critical faculties. It is only by sharp critical insight and a refusal to compromise ideals that there can arise a real dramatic tradition among community house drama groups. — LEON BLOCH

WORKERS BOOK SHOP
and **CIRCULATING LIBRARY**
Carries A Complete Line of
MARXIST - LENINIST
Books - Pamphlets - Periodicals
on
Economics - Politics - Science
Fascism - War - Soviet - Life
VISIT WORKERS BOOKSHOPS
50 East 13th St., N. Y.

699 Prospect Ave., Bronx
62 Herzl St., (In Coop. Barber Shop), Bklyn.
27 Hudson St., Yonkers

PATRONIZE

APEX
Cafeteria

100 % Industrial Union
827 BROADWAY
Bet. 12 & 13 Streets
NEW YORK CITY

BAR—
GRILL—
CAFETERIA

National Theatre Festival

Workers Theatres Astir From Coast to Coast

THE first stage of the preparations for the second National Theatre Festival of the League of Workers Theatres of the U.S.A., (L.O. W.T.), which takes place in Chicago this April is well under way. All over the United States, workers theatres and farmers theatres are busy with meetings, conferences, and productions aiming to equip them for getting the utmost benefit from this national event. New York, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco are buzzing with activity. Boston and New England, too, are beginning to stir. The first phase of preparations culminates during International Theatre Week, February 15 to 25, when New York and the Pacific Coast conclude their preliminary competitions to choose the dramatic groups that will represent them in the performance part of the Festival.

The Pacific Coast—the Western District of the L.O. W.T.—is setting the pace for the entire country. Their preliminary festival and conference will take place Saturday and Sunday, February 17 and 18, at Portland, Oregon. The theatre competition will be held on Saturday, when groups from Los Angeles, San Francisco, and other cities, will present one-act plays. The winning groups will be sent to Chicago. On Sunday a conference will be held, starting at 10 a.m. and lasting through the afternoon. Two delegates from each dramatic group on the west coast have been invited, together with one from each other cultural and mass organization.

Membership affiliation and the payment of dues to the L.O. W.T. are an important phase of the preparations. The annual

dues at the rate of twenty-five cents per member of a group have been sent in to date by the Workers Theatre of San Francisco, John Reed Dramatic Group of Detroit, Ukrainian Dramatic Circle (N.Y.), Artef (N.Y.), and Prolet-Buchne (N.Y.). There too the Pacific Coast leads the way by pledging to have all its groups paid up and formally affiliated by February.

New York's preliminary competitions will take place in two sections. Eighteen Jewish workers dramatic groups will hold their own contest on Saturday, February 4, starting at 2 p.m. and lasting through the evening, at the Hinsdale Workers Club, 568 Sutter Avenue, Brooklyn. Six English-language workers theatre groups will hold their semi-final competition on Sunday, February 18, at the New School for Social Research, 66 W. 12th St.

Tours—from the Pacific Coast to Chicago and from New York to Chicago—are planned for the winning theatre groups of these two centers. The tours will take place in March and April, with each of the two touring groups making their way slowly, stopping off at many cities and towns to give performances and to speak on the workers theatre and on the national festival. The tours will be timed to conclude in Chicago in time for the festival. Organizations that want the groups to stop in their town, should write to the National Office of the L.O.W.T. immediately.

A two-day theatre conference will be the main business of the festival. In the-flurry of the preliminaries, little has as yet been done to prepare for the conference. While the theatre competitions will be very in-

structive and interesting, the conference on the experiences and problems of the revolutionary theatre, on the political situation and its relation to the theatre, on the bourgeois theatre, and on the many other phases of theatrical work, will be invaluable to the further progress of the workers theatre and its allies in the bourgeois theatre. Material on the conference proper will be ready shortly.

Every theatre group irrespective of whether or not it is to participate in the theatre competition, has the right to send two delegates to Chicago.

Communications on any question regarding the second National Theatre Festival should be sent to Ann Howe, National Organizational Secretary, League of Workers Theatres, 42 E. 12th St., New York City.

Western groups and individuals should write to V. Cutler, 2702 Brooklyn Ave., Los Angeles, California.

Middle-western communications should be sent to Ardys Belisch, 1729 Thorndale Ave., Chicago, Illinois.

Meet The Theatre Union

THE Theatre Union was organized with two central concepts: 1. That there was an immediate need for a workers' theatre to produce plays with working class propaganda content. 2. That such a theatre must compete in technical skill and artistic attraction with the Broadway theatre and the Hollywood movie; and yet be so cheap in price that the average workers, who cannot lay out \$2.20 for a Broadway seat, could attend.

The original nucleus of the theatre included playwrights, technicians, some people with business and executive experience, and actors. A few scripts were at hand which the Theatre Union considered suitable for production; and others were being written by writers who knew what the Theatre Union stood for. Really good manuscripts that combine a clear grasp of social conflicts with tense dramatic writing are, undoubtedly, going to be hard to find. In *Peace On Earth*, by

George Sklar and Albert Maltz, however, the Theatre Union was fortunate in getting one of the rare plays that combines, both requirements.

The problem of organizing a suitable acting company was not easy. Bent upon the highest artistic standards, the Theatre Union found at once that it would have to call upon professional actors. A nucleus of these, already conscious of class line-ups, had been drawn into the theatre through meetings, discussions, and active participation in organizing, getting members, and raising funds. The play, however, called for 40 actors. Equity regulations made it impossible to use half professional, half amateur actors. It was obvious, then, that if the Theatre Union was determined to put on a thoroughly competent performance, it would have to fill some roles with actors chosen solely for their ability.

ONCE the casting began, however, it was surprising how many good Broadway actors applied for parts who were honestly eager to join a theatre devoted to what they called "social drama" or "propaganda drama." Many of them were disillusioned with Broadway; many felt bitterly their insecure economic condition under the Broadway real-estate regime; many were hunting for some new outlet that would enable them to make serious use of their talent. The actors who play the leading roles in *Peace On Earth* are, with few exceptions, people either definitely allied with the cause of a workers' theatre from the start, or the more thoughtful actors who had begun to rebel

Among the younger actors, nearly all of them are class-conscious or "sympathetic." The



Dock Scene from PEACE ON EARTH; Theatre Union Production extras are members of the



Workers Ex-Servicemen's League.

At first some three or four of the cast, more removed from contact with the labor movement, presented difficulties. They balked at certain lines and certain bits of action. They talked of "soap box."

The first public performances of *Peace On Earth* changed all this. The parts labeled "soap box" suddenly stood out as the most vital moments of the play. The audience of workers warmed under them; stood up, cheered, and applauded. At these moments above all others the air became electric with that peculiar tie between player and audience which creates the supreme moments of the theatre.

BACKSTAGE nobody talks about "soap box" anymore these days. In the eight weeks that *Peace On Earth* has been running a change has come over the cast. Those who were close to the Theatre Union have blossomed under the inspiring warmth of the audience. They have grown surer of themselves, bolder, and better actors. The others have begun to think.

What is better, they have begun to read. John Strachey's, *Coming Struggle for Power*, is circulating up and down the dressing room aisle. Almost every day new articles dealing with war, with workers, with social drama and literature appear on the bulletin board. Some of the W.E.S.L. men are doing a rushing business in ten cent pamphlets on working class problems. Actors have begun digging into Marxist literature. Almost anytime before, between and after plays you will find the aisle full of arguing actors; argument never lets up: the new deal, the working class movement, the Soviet Union, profits, the future of the drama, the Negro problem, wages, and "recovery." A radio in one of the dressing rooms plunged the whole cast into a tumult of de-

bate during President Roosevelt's opening harangue to Congress. One of the most recalcitrant actors is now reading avidly to find out what the social world he lives in is like. A W.E.S.L. is his literary guide.

Out of the 40 there are now, besides the corps of worker ex-servicemen, 12 others who know their economics. They work like leaven among the group; a gradual, irresistible process of enlightenment. Millicent Green, for instance, says: "I've always felt that the theatre should be a means of political and social expression. This is the first play in which I had a chance to express that feeling myself. No other play ever did it. A few plays attempted it with a slightly satirical approach; but no other play involve both the actors and the audience like *Peace On Earth*."

"FOR some years now I have wanted to contribute to the social struggle. I've often talked to my friend Eleanor Curtis on how I could do it. I cannot, like Eleanor, go out and talk on the street corner. I cannot type or write. But I can act. Now for the first time I feel that I can contribute in the way most natural for me to contribute—through my acting." An amusing commentary on what has happened to the actors is the news that the man who plays John Andrews, the munitions manufacturer, is reading the *New Masses* line for line. And the bishop is proud of every hiss he draws when he cries: "If Jesus Christ were walking the earth today he would be the first to join the fight."

The development of an excellent young actor for a workers' theatre is seen in the progress of Fred Herrick, a member of the cast in *Peace On Earth*. Young Herrick first acted in *We the People*, by Elmer Rice. A few months later he attracted attention as the un-

employed youth in the Theatre Collective's revival of 1931 by Paul and Claire Sifton. He is now doing some interesting work playing three roles in *Peace On Earth*.

But better than any amount of arguing, better than any contact with advanced members of the cast, has been the audience. Night after night an audience almost wholly of working class elements crowds into the old Civic Repertory Theatre. That audience knows what it likes. It comes to the Theatre with eagerness and freshness; it is unabashed and vigorous in its applause, boos, hisses, and cheers. The actors are crazy about that audience. "I've never played to an audience like that before in my life," says Robert Keith, who has been a lead in many Broadway plays. "These are the people who should make up the audience of the theatre. They are honest; they have feeling. To play before them makes the actor feel again that the theatre is a great art."

SINCE January the Theatre Union has opened its studio for actors. One group is rehearsing scenes from *The Sailors of Catarro*, by Friedrich Wolf; and together with discussion of technique there is sandwiched in considerable debate on social democracy and dictatorship of the proletariat. Another group is doing scenes from *The Third Parade*, by Charles Walker and Paul Peters; and inevitably the role of the government in the attack on the bonus marchers of 1931 must be treated also. A third studio class is studying acting technique, without which no theatre can hope to achieve telling propaganda.

The improvisation method introduced from the Soviet Union by the Group Theatre is being used in these technical studies. The Theatre Union, however, in applying this method to proletarian material, has given it a new meaning. Head-

lines out of the working class press are dramatized; and in this way the actors are made increasingly aware of what type of material the Theatre Union will deal with and how in their acting they can meet the requirements of this material.

Out of this studio will come the nucleus of what the Theatre Union hopes one day to have as its permanent acting company, a company which will have a hand in the management of the theatre. As yet, however, financial obstacles prevent the Theatre Union from having a permanent company. The next play, for example, may be the Negro play *Stevodore* which would require, in the main, Negro actors and only a few whites. The studio is meanwhile doing fruitful work with a large group of Broadway actors who will more clearly understand the role of the theatre and the propaganda play in America; and who will prefer, when there is a part for them, to play with a workers' theatre rather than in a commercial Broadway play.

— EMERY NORHRUP

Prospects For The American Theatre

1

Do you believe that the American theatre will recover from its present decline? Why?

CLAIRE & PAUL SIFTON

Perhaps the "American theatre will recover from its present decline." It depends on whether American capitalism recovers in a measure and temporarily by an adaptation of State Capitalism as now seems possible. If so, the theatre, which is an adjunct of American life under capitalism, will be arrested in its decline. If not, the American theatre, as we now know it, will reach fewer and fewer people and attempt more and more to find artistically stimulating dramatic subjects which will avoid even the slightest allusion to the central dramatic fact of our time—that King Capitalism has lost his pants. Simultaneously, what may be termed "outlaw theatres"

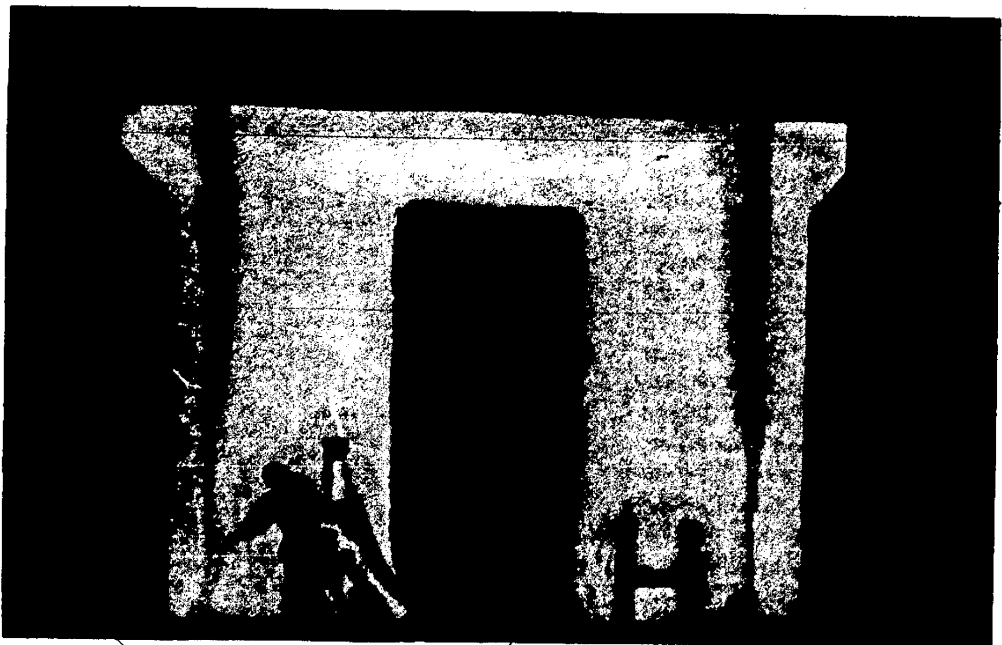
will develop. These will stress the facts that the polite theatres ignore. This has already begun.

JOSEPH FREEMAN

Your first question, for example, is whether the American theatre means, primarily, Broadway. Its financial recovery is dependent upon the recovery of American capitalism, I do not think American capitalism is ever going to stage a comeback to the pre-crisis level; its body is being eaten by an incurable cancer that will eventually destroy it. But some temporary advances over the lowest levels of the crisis have already taken place for those classes which benefit from capitalism. These advances are taking place at the expense of American workers and farmers.

The theatre is not run for the workers and farmers. It is

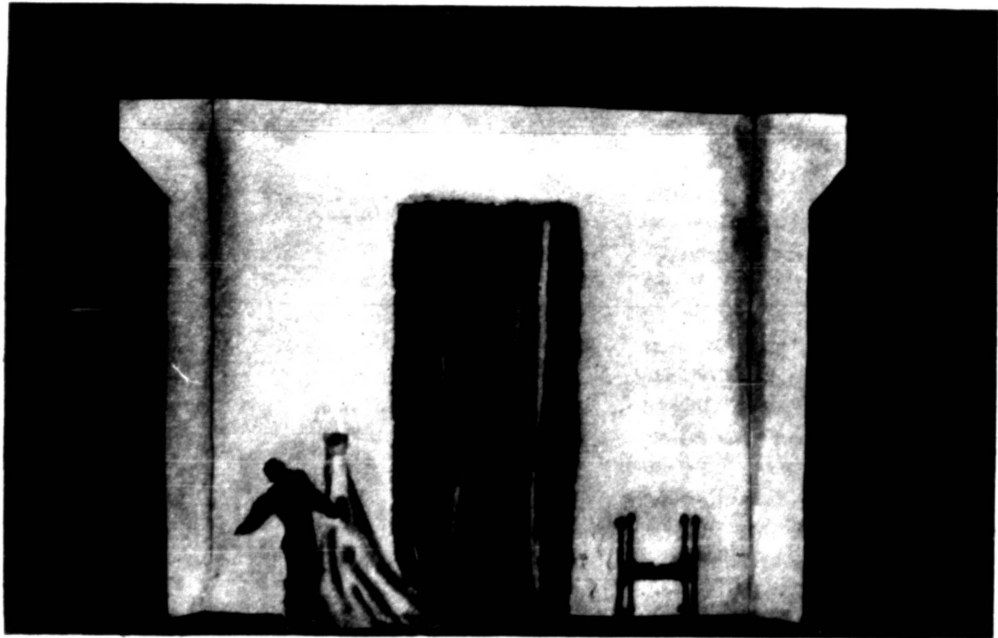
HAMLET,
The Queen's
Closet;
by Donald
Oenslager;
—The Inter-
national
Theatre
Art Exhibi-
tion at the
Museum of
Modern Art



The "atmospheric" type of setting. Static and symmetrical in composition, the intention of this design is obviously to create a mood of abstract thought. The design wishes to emphasize the "timeliness" of the tragedy.

Courtesy of Theatre Arts Monthly
to view it apart from the feudal economy in which it arose, and to present it as a serene, eternal, passively-viewed experience in interstellar space.

*HAMLET,
The Queen's
Closet;
by Donald
Oenslager;
—The Inter-
national
Theatre
Art Exhibi-
tion at the
Museum of
Modern Art*



The "atmospheric" type of setting. Static and symmetrical in composition, the intention of this design is obviously to create a mood of abstract thought. The design wishes to emphasize the "timeliness" of the tragedy,

Courtesy of Theatre Arts Monthly
to view it apart from the feudal economy in which it arose, and to present it as a serene, eternal, passively-viewed experience in interstellar space.

run for the upper and middle classes of the large cities, chiefly New York. Artistically the Broadway theatre has been bankrupt for some time because the ideas of capitalist society are bankrupt. From the revolutionary viewpoint, therefore, the Broadway theatre cannot "recover" artistically, if we take as a standard the best that has been done in the theatre. But there is one important fact which we ought to face. The Broadway theatre is likely to develop very vigorous plays out of the crisis, clever in their technique and reactionary in their message. The era of sex and gangsters on the stage may be more or less over; but the era of political and social plays has only just begun.

There is a direct connection between Broadway and Hollywood, and if you have seen recent movies, you must realize that the dramatic arts in U.S.A., are being used very effectively for capitalist propaganda in a direct way, and will be used more and more for that purpose. The social plays we are likely to see are going to be reactionary, but the technical skill of Broadway will make them dangerous, and by the time they are revamped in Hollywood for the millions of movie fans, they will constitute a tremendous force on the side of the ruling class. This is a fact which we must face and combat. You do not dispose of an enemy by pretending that he is dead.

WORTHINGTON MINOR

Eventually. Because the theatre always recovers.

2

Should the Theatre

- A—Be an "escape" from life?
- B—Reflect contemporary social conflicts?
- C—Should it exclude class struggle from its themes?

CLAIRE & PAUL SIFTON

Difficult to answer this question as phrased. Which theatre?

The present American commercial theatre does serve as an escape from life; yet no play is purely escapist. The lightest musical comedy has certain social, economic, ethical assumptions which amount to propaganda for the maintenance or modification of present standards. For instance, Joe Cook's last musical, *Fine and Dandy*, was a neat compromise between boom-time respect for big business and the later "Oh Yeah" attitude, which however, did not show disrespect for the still sacred fact of Money. In a watery way, the commercial theatre, then, does reflect contemporary social conflicts. Always conscious of the cost of operation and the tolerance of the customers, it goes as far as it dares. It does not consciously exclude class struggle from its themes, but, in practice, producers, directors and playwrights have sensitive intuitions which tell them what the public (the public which can raise from \$4.40 to \$8.00 per couple for two and-a-half hours' entertainment) wants, what it will stand for and what it will refuse.

It seems to us a waste of time to tell the commercial theatre what it should and should not do. Acceptance of the theory of the class struggle would seem to make it obvious that there can be no such thing as "the theatre" in an absolutely pure sense. Economic determinism holds in art as elsewhere. The respective classes will have their respective theatres. The dominant type of theatre naturally will be that which best meets the requirements of the dominant class. In America, the theatre's farthest left is, with a few exceptions, reformist exposes of cynical debunking which, lacking positive alternatives, plays into the plans of those who advocate "a strong government." In Russia, our impression is that the theatre's farthest right is the presentation of old classics of the romantic school.

JOSEPH FREEMAN

Your second question is difficult to answer because it is not specific. Should the theatre serve as an escape from life? Should it reflect contemporary social conflicts? Should it exclude class struggle from its themes? As long as the capitalists control the theatre, it will evade the truth about capitalist society; it will run plays which serve as "escapes" from life; it will distort contemporary social conflicts when it treats them at all. Only a revolutionary theatre can present plays reflecting the class struggle truthfully because only from the viewpoint of the working class is it possible to tell the truth about capitalist civilization.

WORTHINGTON MINOR

A—What else, at its best, has it ever been?

B—Why not, if the play is good?

C—Why exclude anything? The theatre can survive all kinds of limited and limiting perspectives.

3

Which outlook upon life offers the greatest creative stimulation for the dramatist of today?

A—Conservative?

B—Fascist?

C—Liberal?

D—Revolutionary?

CLAIRE & PAUL SIFTON

Difficult to answer this objectively. Who knows? On the evidence of plays produced, the answer would seem to be Liberal and Fascist, in the order given. But how many revolutionary plays are written but not produced? Moreover, demand creates supply—if there were more chance for production of plays written from a revolutionary viewpoint, there would be more such plays. — Seriously, and subjectively, the revolutionary outlook offers us the greatest creative stimulation.

JOSEPH FREEMAN

You ask which outlook upon life offers the greatest creative stimulus for the dramatist of today. Who is "the" dramatist of today? A mythical figure like the "average man" or the "typical American." If a dramatist is a fascist he will write fascist plays, if a liberal, he will write liberal plays, and if a revolutionist, revolutionary plays. You will not be able to change the plays until you have converted the man. You cannot get a fascist playwright to write revolutionary plays by selling him the idea that the revolutionary outlook offers the greatest creative stimulus. What we must do is to convince the honest dramatist that the revolutionary viewpoint is correct. Only when a dramatist sees the world from the revolutionary viewpoint, can he see it truly. He understands fundamental social and individual relationships, which the conservative, fascist and liberal viewpoints conceal. Conservatism is based upon lies, and no great art can be created out of lies. The revolutionary movement explodes the lies of capitalism; it shows the way toward a new world. Out of its truth a great art can be created.

WORTHINGTON MINOR

I can't imagine. I only know that Hitlerism is bad because it excludes Jews—and somehow that race seems to have an aptitude for dramatics, witness the Christian Legend.

4

Do you believe that the trend indicated by such plays as *Steel*, 1931, and *We, The People*, is a factor making for a better theatre or a worse one?

B—Can revolutionary plays (of the type referred to above) succeed on Broadway?

CLAIRE & PAUL SIFTON

A—The trend indicates a different theatre.

B—Not now.

JOSEPH FREEMAN

Plays, like *Steel*, 1931, and *We, the People*, naturally make for a better theatre. Whether they can be a financial success on Broadway is doubtful. The fact is, they have not been financial successes.

WORTHINGTON MINOR

A—All being execrable examples of bad taste and bad dramatic writing, I would infer they could only be good insofar as they created disgust in some more talented writer.

B—No plays as bad as these will ever survive.

5

A—Is there need for a workers theatre in America—a theatre consciously reflecting the viewpoint of the revolutionary working class?

B—Have you seen a performance by a workers theatre group?

C—Do you believe that the workers theatre holds any promise for the future of the theatre in America?

CLAIRE & PAUL SIFTON

Yes to A, B and C, with this proviso: The "conscious reflection of the viewpoint of the revolutionary working class" is apt to result in bad plays being inflicted on audiences of workers. Any conscious reflection runs the risk of being artificial and unsuccessful in the theatre. It frequently comes over the footlights as cold intellectual setting-up drill, than which nothing is more deadly in the theatre. Much better to have unconscious reflection of the working class point of view; that is, the intellectual assumptions are implicit, clothed with the emotional sense of comradeship and common destiny.

JOSEPH FREEMAN

I have answered the first four questions at length in order to emphasize the answer to the fifth. There certainly is need for a workers theatre in America. Only such a theatre can

consciously reflect the viewpoint of the revolutionary working class. Neither business men seeking to jack up the Broadway theatre, nor playwrights looking for "stimulating" material can be a substitute for such a theatre. Only a group which is part and parcel of the workers' movement for emancipation, which sees the contemporary scene from the revolutionary viewpoint as a matter of the deepest conviction, can produce plays that will reveal the true nature of capitalist society—provided that such a group does not neglect the technical arts of the theatre.

I have seen a number of performances by workers theatre groups, and I believe that they are very promising, but I doubt whether they can promise anything to the commercial theatre. If they "hold any promise for the future of the theatre in America" it is for that revolutionary theatre which will grow with the growth of the revolutionary movement.

WORTHINGTON MINOR

A—I would think that any dramatist seeing the world through the window of a single perspective would exclusively write dire, drab, and flatulent plays.

B—No!

C—I don't even know what it means. It sounds like a horny-handed Kiwanis.

6

A—To what do you attribute the tremendous vitality of the Soviet Theatre?

B—Do you believe that this theatre marks an advance of theatrical art?

C—What, in general, if anything, can the American Theatre learn from the Soviet Theatre?

CLAIRE & PAUL SIFTON

A—First to the vitality of the Russian Soviet idea as it is being applied to Russia,—and second to the fact (we assume)

that the theatre more or less takes the place of the church as an instrument of inspiration and maintenance of morale.

B—We don't know.

C—Any answer we might make would be uninformed, vague, nine-tenths guess-work.

JOSEPH FREEMAN

The tremendous vitality of the Soviet theatre is due to the new life created by the October revolution, which brought up from the depths the immense creative forces of the masses. The revolution has given the theatre vast new themes; it has brought it millions of new spectators; it has activated millions of talented amateurs. The theatre is not an isolated activity in the Soviet Union; it is an integral part of a tremendous cultural movement, which is itself an integral part of the building of socialism. As the October revolution marks an enormous advance in civilization, so the Soviet theatre marks an advance in the art of the theatre, but the American theatre under capitalism can learn from the Soviet theatre only technical innovations and even these to a limited extent. The Broadway theatre cannot import the essence of the Soviet theatre for the same reason that American capitalism cannot import the planning system. The Soviet theatre, like social-economic planning, is an integral part of the struggle for a communist society.

WORTHINGTON MINOR

A—I would think it must have something to do with the heritage of a most imaginative group of minds bred under the Tsarist regime.

B—From the evidence of the plays I have read from Russia lately, there has stolen in a sort of Y.M.C.A. attitude that could hardly be termed an advance.

C—Ever so much in discipline of actors, imagination of directors, and care in production.

JOHN DOS PASSOS

I don't think the New York theatre's going to recover. You can quote me, if you like, saying that of course a Workers Theatre is a desirable thing if it's well run and puts on good plays. I think the whole art vs. propaganda row is a dead horse and I can't see what can be gained by flogging it any more. If you can make a go of a

Workers Theatre and attract an audience and hammer into them some valuable truths the result will be a first rate theatre probably, and first rate plays. You can get about as far cursing out fascism as you would cursing out typhoid fever—no use arguing about it. If you put on a good play capitalizing the conscious workers' point of view that'll be useful prophylaxis.

The Moscow Scene

THE theatre in the Soviet Union has become a mighty weapon for political education of the masses; it expresses the desires, aims, and energy of the many millions of builders who are determinedly working on the problems of socialist construction. The artistic growth of the Soviet theatre, its achievement and improvements as regards contents, theatrical art and the rise of audience attendance, is the result of the upward swing of the cultural revolution which is being carried out under the experienced guidance of the C.P. S.U. and of the world proletariat. Only the Soviet theatre places before itself the task of reflecting those class struggles which occur in the world arena. The themes and repertoire of the Soviet theatres form an encyclopedia, interpreting in an artistic form a huge variety of problems of social and everyday life, as well as on all branches of human knowledge. An analysis of the repertoire of the past shows that that of the present and future exceed all projects ever planned by theatrical intellectuals. It is sufficient to look over the production plans not only of the Soviet capitals (Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkow, etc.) but also that of the provincial theatres, and one will clearly understand what place the theatre occupies in the general plan of cultural develop-

ment of the country. Already there are being erected new theatre buildings in Ivanovo, Archangel and Novo-Sibirsk.

In the suburbs of Soviet capitals, in the places where the means of deadening proletarian class-consciousness were the church and the public-house, new workers palaces of culture are growing, palaces which provide colossal possibilities for the development of theatre art. There is scenic equipment in these theatres which in its technical perfection is not only ahead of the capitals, but even better than many a theatre in Western Europe.

The Soviet brings everything into the service of socialist construction and turns the theatres into weapons for arousing the consciousness of millions of toilers in the cities and villages. And this is why plays and play-writing takes first place in the Soviet theatre. The struggle against formalism, against naked slogans, against schematism are the characteristic features of the present theatrical season.

When drawing their production plans, the majority of companies agree that the theatre must reflect and show those new processes which are taking place in the land of Soviets. It must rise to the level of those tasks which Communism has placed before the proletariat. A manual worker, or a field

worker yesterday, today becomes not only an engineer, but a man of science, an inventor, an artist. The theatre strives to mirror the social processes which called these people into life; as a result we have plays like *My Friend and Snow*, by Pogodin; *Rasbeg* in the Okhlopokov Theatre (Red Presnia Theatre); *Fear and Bread*, in the Art Theatre. But having won a definite place in the theatre, the revolutionary proletarian drama cannot remain on the same level. It goes further, it develops new tempos of creation. The present season presents plays like *The Lie* by Afinogenof, *The Optimistic Tragedy* by Vishnewsky, *Ploughing Virgin Soil* by Sholokhov, which all continue the history of Soviet reality in the Soviet theatre.

THE Soviet theatre, while placing before itself such tasks, does not forget that our young generation which grew up under quite different circumstances, does not know and has never seen old dark Russia under the oppression of autocracy or the heroic struggle of the proletariat during the October Revolution and carries these themes to their highest point. A number of theatres are working on the preparation of Gorky's play, *The Enemies*, which pictures the pre-revolutionary epoch of 1905. Igor Bulitschov and others masterfully picture the attitude of various social strata to the imperialist war and the February Revolution. Dostigayew and others also by Gorky, show the development of the revolution in its next stage.

The international theme occupies a considerable place in the Soviet theatre, reflecting the class struggle of the proletariat in the lands of fascist dictatorship, in the land of crisis, unemployment, hunger; it also reflects the participation of the proletariat and toiling masses

of other countries in socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. To the cycle of these themes belong plays like *Trial* by Kirshon, being played in the Art Theatre, *Joy St.* by Zarkhaz Theatre of Revolution, and a number of other theatres. The play of the German Revolutionary dramatist, Friedrich Wolfe, *The Tragedy of Christian Betz* will be produced in Leningrad, at the State Theatre in Moscow and other theatres.

Much attention is devoted to the literary inheritance of the past, the classics. The most outstanding of them are Shakespeare, Ostrovsky, Schiller, Shtchukov, etc. The problem of the classical inheritance is for the Soviet Union not only a problem of demonstrating the past, but also a question of study and learning from these classics. The Soviet theatre, while mastering the Leninist understanding of the necessity to apply all achievements of science and culture to the proletarian revolution, is critically working over the inheritance of the past and presenting it to the Soviet audience, throwing its own bright light on the past. Plays of old classics on Soviet stages interpreted by the minds of the Soviet theatre receive new life, thus more truly reflecting those social and class processes of the centuries preparing for the great October Revolution.

All these achievements of the Soviet theatre are only the first results of the historical decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., of April 23, 1932. The new tasks of the Soviet government in connection with the above mentioned decision on literature and art, and particularly with that of the new competition for the best play, which immediately caused a response of the Soviet playwrights only confirm the fact that the pre-requisites for new victories are now being created.

— HEINRICH DIAMENT

The Artef Theatre And Its Accomplishments

THE Artef, which is a proletarian theatre whose players are workers devoting their spare time to study, offered its first presentation *Bam Toier* by Benush Steinman, in the early part of 1928. The play, a half-mystic, half-revolutionary drama met with amateur treatment on the part of both the players and the director J. Mestel. During that period, the Artef Studio was instructed by several Jewish dramatic experts in voice culture, acting and history of theatre and other theatre arts. It is to be noted however, that throughout this entire period there is no definite orientation as to repertoire and manner of direction in the studio, although its tendencies are revolutionary in character.

Naftoli Botwin, a revolutionary play of Poland during the year 1924, by A. Veviorke, directed by Em Jo Basshe, although not entirely successful, was the Artef's first positive attempt at realistic presentation. With the arrival of Beno Schneider, a pupil of the brilliant Soviet director E. Vachtangoff, the Artef Players Collective was formed. Beno Schneider maintained that after three years in the studio, the Artef was mature enough to devote its efforts to realistic revolutionary plays. The irrefutable success of *Ristokraten*, F. Aroness' adaption of the comedy by Scholom Aleichem, proved the correctness of his assumption. The presentation of *Jim Kupperkop* in 1930, a play of American capitalistic industrialism by the Soviet author S. Godiner, and *Brillianten* in 1930, a comedy of the NEP period in Soviet Russia, by A. Veviorke, justified the Artef as a proletarian, revolutionary theatre.

The principal achievement of Beno Schneider is that he was successful in having the players develop a sense of certainty and finesse in individual and ensemble play. This was realized in later plays as *Roar of Machines*, By F. Cherner, a play dealing with the New York needle-trades strike; *Drought*, by H. Flannigan, a play of contemporary American farmers' life; *Hirsh Leckert* by I. Kushnirov; *Four Days* by S. Daniel, dealing with the struggle of the Bolsheviks to occupy Vilna; and *A Steppe in Flames*, by A. Veviorke, portraying Jewish colonization in the Soviet Union.

In all these plays, the Artef Collective shows its capability, as a well-trained group and as proletarian artists, in conceiving its purpose as not only playing good theatre, but also portraying the life and struggles of Jewish workers in a revolutionary manner. Five years of work have demonstrated to the Jewish workers that at a time when the Jewish bourgeois theatre on 2nd Avenue caters to the Jewish middle-class by presenting trash that savors of spicy innuendos, the Artef has acquired a working-class audience that demands plays of the class struggle in America and elsewhere, artistically produced. This, then, is the object of the Artef Theatre. In view of this it has presented *The Third Parade*, by Ch. Walker and Paul Peters, based on the bonus expedition to Washington in 1932. The play has already been well received by both the English and Jewish press.

The Artef Theatre performs every Saturday and Sunday evening at the Heckscher Foundation, at Fifth Avenue and 104th Street.

•
THE DARK TOWER; by Alexander Woolcott & George S. Kaufman, at the Morosco Theatre.—The Dark Tower does not tower very high as a drama.

Stage In Review

COME OF AGE

By CLEMENCE DANE and RICHARD ADDINSELL; Staged by MISS DANE at MAXINE ELLIOTT'S THEATRE.

IN *Come Of Age*, Miss Dane starts out with a view of fundamental social and economic conflicts that cry for solution, but her dream turns into a nightmare before the first act is half way through.

The play is based on the tragic death of the poet Thomas Chatterton in the eighteenth century and his reincarnation in the twentieth. Harried by economic difficulties, the 17-year-old artist discovers that "poison is cheaper than bread." In spite of his admitted ability, publishers not only exploit him woefully but also defraud him of what pay they promise him. Miss Dane has her character say that it is not true that a poet can work better on an empty stomach, that ideas come but the body is too weak to set them on paper.

In a dim but moving prologue, which Miss Dane calls scene 1, we see Chatterton asking from Death a chance to taste life—a chance to live and feel fully, to experience joy and pain until he shouts with their energy—a chance to mature with living. Here Miss Dane states her project in unmistakable terms. Here we get drama from the conflict between creative genius and the organized greed of publisher-capitalists of the eighteenth century.

AFTER bringing Chatterton back to earth Miss Dane finds herself in a dilemma. She is faced by an artistic and intellectual necessity for invidious comparisons between the effects of eighteenth and twentieth century capitalism. She must have seen that Chatterton faced essentially the same problems in 1734 as he did about 150 years earlier.

But instead of developing her theme straightforwardly, Miss Dane employs a series of evasions calculated to make us believe that in this year of grace the capitalist world is made safe for poets. *Come Of Age* degenerates into a sugary "love and success" story, further obscured by a rhyming dictionary style.

Having led us to believe that Thomas Chatterton would embrace life in her reincarnation, Miss Dane skilfully engineers him into a series of escapes from reality. From the second scene to the last curtain we have nothing but meaningless outbursts of what is intended for poetry; a scramble for money, fame and sensual pleasures.

MISS Dane is no longer adolescent, she has reached an age of ripe maturity. Surely she has been in the world much too long seriously to pretend that she is speaking from conviction.

It is significant that both the acting and scenic art in the first scene surpasses anything of the kind later in the play. We can not escape the conclusion that honest, skillful play writing motivates excellence in the other theatre arts. In that scene with death Stephen Haggard, who plays Thomas Chatterton, shows rare promise and good acting, limited only by his lack of experience.

As the play proceeds his acting degenerates. It becomes brittle and uninterpretive, as he seems to recite rather than create character. At one point he resorts to pantomimic slogans: when he feels the need for an expression of satiric laughter he turns full on the audience and strikes a grimacing pose which seems to shout "this is satiric laughter."

Judith Anderson as *A Woman*, continues in her long career of drawing-room technique.

This kind of performing, which one can hardly call acting, is in perfect harmony with the brittle, surface-touching substance of the play. Perhaps it would be expecting too much to ask Miss Anderson to seem at least to be A Woman rather than just a glorious Miss Anderson, limited as she is by this play.

IT seems that her fundamental weakness lies in the fact that she, a victim of Broadway's type-casting system, fails to begin at the logical beginning in creating character. That beginning should be with the physical qualities, after the actor has created the character in the mind. Thus we are brought face to face with the important question of make-up.

If Miss Anderson will make up and costume herself to present a physical likeness of A Woman as written by Miss Dane, she will have travelled a long way towards a better quality of acting, since the very mood created by her own physical environment will impel her in the right direction. In this regard a study of the make-up technique of the Moscow Art Theatre should be of at least some little aid.

The settings as done by James Reynolds are also adversely affected by the script. Mr. Reynolds is handicapped by the necessity of creating a modernistic, hoity-toity living room. He carries out his assignment in perfect harmony with the rest of the production, which is high praise for any scenic artist. It is too bad that he hasn't better subject matter, since he gives us a glimpse of something real in his work for the prologue.

Incidentally, there is incidental music by Richard Addinsell. The music is off-stage, and aside from its purely musical value, its dramatic value is negative. Also, there are other actors, but they are used as stage props rather than living values.

— LEON BLOCH



YEGOR BULITCHEV

by MAXIM GORKY; Yiddish Version by L. FEINBERG; Directed by BENO SCHNEIDER; Scenery Designed by M. SOLOTAROFF; by the ARTEF THEATRE (Jewish Workers Theatre).

THE most ambitious production ever undertaken by an American Workers Theatre is that of Yegor Bulitchev, given its first American staging by Artef. And the Artef has risen to the occasion to a notable degree.

Gorky's new play, a tremendous current success in the Soviet Union, illuminates in brilliant fashion the problem of art and propaganda. There are here none of the outer trappings of propaganda; no such terms as "imperialist," "capitalist," or "class struggle." But in effect there is exposed the rottenness and decay of present-day bourgeois society, and particularly its family life, its church decadents, and all that these encompass.

YEGOR BULITCHEV, a wealthy merchant, the head of a formidable household, is stricken with cancer. It is then that this household starts to dance a jig. They plan and maneuver to get hold of the inheritance. Yegor is keenly aware of this and denounces them at every

provocation, but he cannot rise above his illness; he cannot free himself from the inner and outer cancers. His mind is alive, young, even revolutionary; but his body is decaying and the buzzards have sensed the carcass. What's to be done? He derides the priest, the abbess, the woman of witchcraft—called in by the abbess. This witch, with her incantations, bounces from God to some form of hocus-pocus, a weird performance. Yegor will have none of it. He dies trying to avoid the touch of a religious maniac. He does not succeed. But just then the music of the revolution is heard, and his youngest daughter stands by the window keeping time, with head erect.

The conflict is in this vital figure of Yegor Bulitchev. Symbolically it is a fight between the old order and the impending revolution—between his training and his vision. Actually it is expressed as his futile fight against the cancer which is gnawing him internally, and his household, another cancer, that is eating him externally. Without really seeing money one is as aware of it as if it were dangling in every scene. Yegor's death is greedily awaited. The money, the money, the money! Only his youngest daughter, a godson, and a maid are free from this obsession—their eyes are towards the revolution. The revolt is realized, too late for Yegor, who is strangled by the old life.

This production has called forth some of the Artef's best work. The acting is generally capable and marks an advance over their previous production, but some of it suffers from over-stylization and is often labored. The designer, Solotaroff, has succeeded in producing sets that have strength, simplicity and beauty, yet at the same time create the atmosphere of wealth and power which the play calls for. — JENNIE HELD

TOBACCO ROAD; by Jack Kirkland, based on the novel by Erskine Caldwell, Directed by Mr. Brown, Settings by Robert Redington Sharpe—

Tobacco Road is an intensely interesting play of de-generated poor white tenant farmers of Georgia. Thorough indeed, is the description of the immorality and destitution of these folk. Yet their simple, direct, honest reactions lend a great deal of humor, thus offsetting the monotony of the single set used, and of the morbidity of their lives.

At no time, either through situation or suggestion in the dialogue do we know why these human beings exist in this revolting, primitive state.

Tobacco Road contains excellent material for a revolutionary play. Henry Hull's sensitive, complete Jeeter Lester is a brilliant artistic achievement.

•

THE SCHOOL FOR HUSBANDS; Moliere's Comedy in Adaptation by Arthur Guiterman and Lawrence Langner, produced by the Theatre Guild—

The play is frothy, with some good sense, good dancing and good singing. From the interpretation, given this comedy by the Theatre Guild, one is made to recall the Piccolli—indeed the marionettes! What couldn't they do with it.

The production was lavish, with good taste. The Guild spares nothing, that is, nothing short of the meaning. The lines and rhymes are very funny, very amusing.

We certainly need a real interpretation of Moliere. That's a job for a theatre with social vision—that is to say, for the revolutionary theatre.

*New Theatre
Advertising
Brings Results*

The Dance

SINCERITY and a wide diversity in method characterized the first joint recital of the Workers' Dance League, which took place at the City College Auditorium, in New York last month. An enthusiastic audience, which included representatives of the bourgeois press, greeted them.

The most precise criticism of the workers' dance groups in general would be that instead of building on the old technique, which is both necessary and desirable, they are putting up a structure of this old technique; instead of forming a new technique out of old and new elements, they are patching together with big chunks a mosaic of old styles and methods.

Of the five groups which participated in the recital, probably the ablest both from the point of view of technique and of ideology (the two can be separated only in discussion) were the New Dance Group and the recently formed Theatre Union Dancers. The Workers Dance Song which the New Dancers put on as a first number was a pleasing work dance—in which joie de vivre is revealed as the joy of working—but their second number, Charity, was the richer and the more powerful. The black cleric costume of the man on the little platform, the fake generous god-bless-you motions, the pretty good-will posturings of the girl dancers, all showed the tremendous possibilities for satire in the dance; and the sudden fierce exposure by the grey-clad workers, erect figures of the hungry demanding food,—this showed, too, the power of the dance to express and arouse a militant spirit.

IN the Anti-War Cycle the Theatre Union Dancers were not unworthy of their Peace On Earth dramatic bro-

thers, particularly in the realism of the depression sector and the elegant satire of diplomacy; the protest part seemed less clear, less convincing.

The New Duncan Dancers received much applause for their Soviet folk dances,—alternating with the March of the Builders—portraying the relaxation of the emancipated toilers after work hours. But their technique in this, and even more in In Memoriam (for Bruno Tesch, the Nazi-murdered young German Communist), has a slight touch of the sentimental; seems somehow not quite militant enough. Despite the courage of the imprisoned youths and the upraised fists of the victims sent to execution, one senses an air of mere resignation about them.

The Red Dancers, the pioneer outfit of them all, and never in the second place so far as militancy is concerned, did an effective piece in Southern Holiday, an anti-lynching dance-drama; their always popular Red Cavalry, too, had dash and fire. But notwithstanding Edith Segal's personal force as an artist, the group loses because of the technical immaturity of most of the members, Edith Segal herself is artistically more strong than versatile.

The Jack London Rebel Dancers of Newark put on an ambitious War Trilogy—Depression, War, and Disillusionment and Revolt. They have revolutionary vigor and determination; technically, however, their performance was markedly uneven.

Some of the dancers clearly understand that the fight against capitalism is the workers' task and the dance is one of the means; and that the dance grows in the fight and the technique grows out of knowledge and revolutionary spirit,—that all the manipulating of and ex-

perimenting with old and new dance elements come within the above framework, and, whether produced fast or slow, the art of the dance will be proletarian and Marxian, not essentially traditional or Grahamesque or eclectic.

Although the January affair was the first joint recital, it was the third joint activity of the groups: first was the mass dance which several groups (before the Workers Dance League was formed) gave at the Bronx Coliseum on May 1, 1932; second, was the competitive Spartakiad held at the New School for Social Research on January 4, 1933. At present the League consists of more than fifteen affiliated member groups, including those in Boston, Newark, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Chicago. The actual professional or semi-professional membership is 330 or more, but counting the non-member student groups there are over 700.

The revolutionary dance if immature, has its future before it and is one of the most rapidly developing sectors of working class culture.

— OAKLEY JOHNSON

What They Say

RIVA HOFFMAN, dancer, director of Riva Hoffman School of Dancing—

I can describe the Workers Dance League recital only in terms of superlatives; it is the most vital, dynamic performance I have seen this year. The Theatre Union Group was strong, the New Duncan Dancers sincere and spirited, the New Dance Group admirable for its comedy. All the performers were unusually well trained and in spite of the difficulties that arise from the limitations of space, place, time and funds the separate groups have already accomplished a great deal. Both the individual efforts of

each group and the collective effort of the Workers Dance League are extremely inspiring and deserving of encouragement.

When all the groups have worked hard and their spirits are so large that they join hands and work together, they can have an even greater effect upon their sympathizers and make an even greater impression upon those whose sympathies they wish to engage. Then they will have something so big that it will take you out of the realm of the everyday recital and transcend it. I believe that when such a goal is achieved these dancers will have found what they are really working for

FE ALF, dancer and former teacher at Wigman School—

I enjoyed, more than anything else, the audience at this recital. They had enthusiasm, receptivity, demonstrativeness,—in short, all those elements that would make dancers eager to perform for them. I do not feel, however, that the direction the revolutionary dance groups are taking is a correct one. It seems to me they are failing to recognize the vast possibilities of the Mass Dance. In the world outside, they are fully cognizant of the value of mass pressure, yet in their dances they neglect that form of mass expression in favor of solo and small group dances.

Dealing with the specific dances, I find Southern Holiday the clearest dance politically, The Blue Eagle the most courageous political attempt, seeking as it does, to delineate a contemporary political problem, and Charity the most effective satire. The cycle of the Rebel Dancers was clever, but the group did not present itself technically as an integrated whole. On the other hand, while the cycle of the Theatre Union moved me aesthetically because of its clear-cut design and organization, it failed to convey clearly its particular message.

Had the dances not been titled, they could have portrayed anything. I think Graham technic too subjective, too individual to encompass significant, impersonal ideas. The New Duncan Dancers were refreshing and entertaining, but all I could gather from them was that they enjoyed dancing; they did not seem to feel very strongly about the content of their dances.

Although the recital as a whole did not stir me as profoundly as I might have wished, the evening proved provocative and interesting.

BRIEF DANCE REVIEWS

DORSHA, Washington Irving High School—Dorsha's years of rigorous training have given her excellent muscular control, a precise, finished movement and a technical eclecticism that borrows to good advantage whatever best suits her purpose. Her years of living, however, have given her naught but a sense of futility and despair before what she terms the "compelling forces" of existence. Completely oblivious to the swirling social currents about her, she expresses in her dances the "weltschmerz" of the pining adolescent. The mere titles indicate the trend of her thoughts—Nostalgia, Compulsion, Brooding, Futility, Moon Spell, Love's Cruelty, etc.

Numbers such as The Shawl and Street Arab—in a lighter vein, were not quite so effective as the others. Her brief program notes before each dance greatly enhanced their understanding.

VECHESLOVA & CHABUKANI, Carnegie Hall—As a sheer exhibition of a ballet technique, these two Soviet dancers far surpass anything within the immediate vicinity. Unfortunately, the official character given to their debut by the widely publicized phrase, "Soviet dancers given permission by the U.S.S.R.",

belies the true nature of their dancing. There is certainly little that is "Soviet" in it. It is more in the tradition of the old Imperial Ballet than anything else. The content of their numbers was inconsequential.

Yet, because of their infectious freshness, youthful abandon and sincerity the ingratiating couple completely captured their audience. At times, as in the Pas de deux from the ballet Don Quixote, and Pas de deux from the ballet Flame of Paris, their performance took on the character of an acrobatic display, with each taking turns at "tricks" that left one completely breathless.

As one spectator put it, "The Soviet ballet schools have beaten the old schools at their own game." The integration of this technique, though, with a new subject-matter is yet to be developed.

TAMIRIS AND HER GROUP, Booth Theatre—The group compositions were interesting, showing good construction and design and were successful in their conveyance of mood. Song of the Open Road (First and Second Movements) was particularly well executed. The Composition for Group, despite its ambiguous title, possessed social implications, yet caution plus an essentially confused ideology prevented their clear enunciation.

Tamiris, herself, was disappointing. Her solo numbers, with few exceptional moments, were characterized by a lack of communication, emotional or intellectual, to her audience. She undertook much, yet fulfilled little, as for instance, in Three Negro Spirituals, where her superficial treatment barely grazed the surface of that rich spiritual fervor and emotional intensity which animates these classic folk songs. In her dances suggested by Walt Whitman's poems, her abstractness was in

ill accord with the essential directness and simplicity of the poet. In Salut au Monde, she managed to impart something of the spirit of the poem, but even here, the effect was hampered by poor construction.

— BEN WOLF

NEWS AND NOTES

NEW DUNCAN DANCERS—At its last membership meeting the group discussed the failings and achievements of its past performances. It is also making a study of the other revolutionary dance groups in order to enrich its work.

A class for children will be started. At present they are holding classes for beginners and intermediates on Mondays and Wednesdays at 5:30 at 2-4 West 15th St.

NATURE FRIENDS DANCE GROUP—The group has expanded and now includes a beginners' section. Their repertoire of dances has also been enlarged and now includes, besides their old numbers, Red Cavalry, Black and White, and two originally created numbers—an anti-war dance and a funeral march for Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg.

RED DANCERS—This group is bustling with activity. They have revised their organizational make-up so as to now include a dance committee, which receives suggestions and plans new numbers, and an educational committee to generally supervise all educational activity, conduct study courses, etc.

A Junior Red Dancers has been organized, composed of children from 6 to 10 years of age.

Two of the Red Dancers performing group, Ad Bates and Syd Brahinsky, are now functioning as teachers. Another, Sasha Spector, is teaching a group in Brooklyn.

TORGSIN

orders enable your relatives in Soviet Russia to purchase all sorts of domestic or imported articles at low prices.

For orders on Torgsin apply to your local Bank or their authorized agents

INSOVIETRUSSIA

there are Torgsin stores in over 1,000 localities. Torgsin orders may be sent to anyone, in any quantity.

To cities that have no TORGSIN stores Torgsin mails your order by parcel post.

PRICES REDUCED
about 50%

TORGSIN

GENERAL REPRESENTATIVE in U.S.A.

261 Fifth Ave. New York, N.Y.
(20th Floor)

ARTEF THEATRE

8 EAST 18th STREET
NEW YORK CITY

Announces its Presentation of
MAXIM GORKY'S
Latest Drama

"Yegor Bulitchev"

at the
**HECKSCHER FOUNDATION
THEATRE**

Fifth Avenue and 104th Street

Every
**SATURDAY
and SUNDAY
EVENING**

NOW AVAILABLE
Soviet and American Classics
For Club and Home Showings
on 16mm (silent)

"ROAD TO LIFE"
and Others

We Furnish Machines, Operators
229 - 7th Ave. — BRY. 9-2963

CAUCASIAN RESTAURANT

"KAVKAZ"

332 East 14th St. New York City
Tompkins Square 6-9132

MOST EXCELLENT SHASHLIKS
Banquets and Parties
No Cover Charge

UNIVERSITY PLACE BOOK SHOP

105 University Place, New York

ALgonquin 4-5998

BOOKS BOUGHT AND SOLD

10 per cent discount with this ad.

Dramatic Contests NEW YORK CITY (PRELIMINARY COMPETITIONS)

18 DRAMATIC GROUPS OF THE
JEWISH WORKERS CLUBS

SUNDAY, FEB. 4, 1934
2-7 P.M. — 8-11 P.M.

at **HINSDALE WORKERS CLUB**
568 Sutter Ave., Brooklyn

SUN., FEB. 18, 1934, 8:30 PM

6 ENGLISH-LANGUAGE GROUPS

including

THEATRE OF ACTION
(Workers Laboratory Theatre)

Theatre of Workers School

Two Pioneer (Children's) Groups
and Others

At the **NEW SCHOOL**
FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH
66 W. 12th St.

FINAL COMPETITIONS
SUNDAY, MARCH 4, 1934
Place to be announced.
LEAGUE OF WORKERS THEATRES
42 E. 12th St., N. Y. C.

NEW SCHOOL Sat. evening
66 W. 12 Street **FEB. 17—7 & 9:30**

The **FILM** and **PHOTO** **LEAGUE**

And the present

NEW MASSES

The History of The Soviet Film

Subject V.

THE JEW

Tickets available at New Masses
Office, 31 E. 27 St. 50 cents

Finnish Federation, Inc

35 E. 12th St. New York City

Complete and Modern

Printing Plant

We will be glad to give estimates on
any work.

Phone: Algonquin 4-4260

Special attention given to mail orders

March of the Movies

MASSACRE; based on Robert Gessner's book of the same name; produced by First National Pictures; directed by Alan Crosland; with the following cast: Richard Barthelmess, Ann Dvorak, Dudley Digges, Claire Dodd, Henry O'Neill and Robert Barrat.

SO far, this season we have the historical film, the musical film, transcontinental bus film, and (latest) the out-of-door film. This year the out-of-door cycle is specializing in the social, economic, and romantic relationship between the Caucasian and Mongolian races (Esquimos and Indians).

Social Science in the cinema is not only a profitable venture (and adventure) but it also builds prestige for the company. It gives the critics something to write about and at the same time pats the New Deal on the back. *Massacre* follows the *Cabin In The Cotton* (Barthelmess was in that one too), *I Am A Fugitive From A Chain Gang*, *Mayor Of Hell*, and *Wild Boys On The Road*. As a matter of fact, *Massacre* not only follows a tradition but the director has gotten hold of a carbon copy of *Mayor Of Hell* and substituted Indians for delinquent boys.

DESPITE its faults and its failure as a social document (we can't even consider it as a film in any way but the very general) it is a motion picture that will attract considerable attention. For the first time the American Indian is presented on the screen as an exploited subject people. The first half of the picture is a gesture in exposing the corrupt government agents who together with the clergy, as servants of the Indian Bureau, a subdivision of the Department of Interior, which is in turn a section of the Wall Street subsidized National

Government succeeded in reducing the American Indian to a race of tubercular and syphilitic slaves. To those unacquainted with the Indian problem (there are many because of the efficient propaganda machine of the Indian Bureau) and to those who have not read Robert Gessner's *Massacre* this film will have the appearance of a severe indictment. But reading Gessner's book is like living through a horrible nightmare and Alan Grosland's film just barely scratches the surface.

In spite of the splendid subject matter *Massacre* remains a sterile and ineffectual film—even as propaganda for the new administration for which it cheers faintly. Let us see why. In the first place the form is wrong. Gessner's volume was not a novel but a sociological document. It presented such a mass of indicting material that it provoked a Senate investigation. (The Indians have been having them for years.) All of its material was documentary. Facts, figures, evidence supplied real drama. Consequently the logical and most effective medium would have been an honest documentary film. Certainly no one can deny the power of *Shanghai Document* as an exposure of Western imperialism.

SECONDLY, after a brief statement of the facts the director turns his attention to a secondary theme—the love element. This is erroneously but habitually developed into the major theme. Thus the spectator is more concerned with the melodrama than the "message." When the director has finished with his story he reverts back to the original theme. But by that time he has a number of things to do: finish the love story (happily); do something about the exploited Indians; and

place the new administration into its proper role. But there is very little film left—only a couple of hundred feet (at 90 feet per minute). Consequently the result: indecision, confusion, chaos.

Richard Barthelmess (Paul Muni was supposed to play his part in this film) never seems to have gotten over his To'able David complex. He still is that very earnest and righteous little laddie. Dudley Digges the new professional bad man of the films repeats his Mayor Of Hell role with the same com-

petence. Alan Grosland, the director who has been making films for years (just a bad habit) never displayed much talent. By watching his films one would never think there was any progress in the field. His lack of imagination and ingenuity made him fall back on the Mayor Of Hell pattern.

The story is about the Sioux tribe and their Bad Lands reservation in North Dakota. Hollywood being a stickler for authenticity made the film in a Southern California desert.

— IRVING LERNER

The Revolutionary Film

Problem of Form

The question: What is the medium of revolutionary film production in capitalist countries such as America? The answer: First and foremost the filmed document. Movie reportage. Reality recorded on film strips and subjected to the painstaking technical operations, montage, whereby these strips are built up into wholes embodying our revolutionary interpretation of events. This is neither a makeshift nor a degradation of the creative potentialities of the cinema. The bourgeois film has vulgarized and perverted the greatest faculty of the movie, never having raised it above the level of the newsreel.

Are we for the documentary simply because the studio-acted film is beyond our material reach? No. Strange as it may seem our orientation in this question is one of principle based on what we think is the most convincing and effective medium for "the camera in the class struggle." It is true that the method of the revolutionary filmed document will lead us miles away from the forms and requirements of the enacted studio film. This may cause many to shed a tear. It is, in fact, already causing tears. Our

answer? We are forging the film into a working class weapon. And workers' films will be most art when they are most weapon.

In the film there exists no "happy medium" between the histrionic recreation of reality and directly recorded reality itself. "The illusion of reality in the cinema," writes Leon Moussinac, "must remain constant, even in the domain of the fantastic. In other words, in the cinema the sensation of reality is indispensable to emotion." Associate filmed reality and its reconstructed counterpart into a unified structure and you find "the sensation of reality" irremediably disrupted.

We are practical people. Our theories are acquired at the cost of badly burned fingers. Exhibit A: The Struggle For Bread.

We have, on the other hand, long ago discovered and tested the power and effect of simple and direct visual reporting.

Our records of the Detroit Ford Massacre, the Scottsboro Case, the Bonus March, etc., are ample proof that even when we abstain from "constructively editing" our photographed documents, they nevertheless re-

Dancers Study...

Improve your work in preparation for leading and teaching groups.

WORKERS DANCE LEAGUE OFFERS THE FOLLOWING COURSES:

Development of Dance as Art Form, Pedagogy-Methods of Approach, Accompaniment to the Dance, Physical Aspects of the Dance, Fundamentals of 6 Schools, Practice Teaching, Problems in Direction, Social Forces in Art, Research in Social Forces in Dance.

Fee for complete curriculum, \$5; W. D. L. members, \$2.50; Single course, \$1.50.

Courses start February 2.

Fri. 5:30-7:30; Sat. 3:30-6:30;

Sun. 12:30-3:30

WORKERS DANCE LEAGUE
80 E. 11 St., N. Y. C.

3rd BIG MONTH!

NOW AMONG THE HITS!

"PEACE ON EARTH"

THE GREAT ANTI-WAR PLAY

PRICES: 30c, 45c, 60c, \$1, \$1.50
No Tax

Civic Repertory Theatre

14th St. 6th Ave. WA. 9-3450.
Evg. 8:45. Mats. Wed. and Sat.

By VIRGIL GEDDES

The American Theatre—What Can Be Done?

Towards Revolution in the Theatre

The Theatre of Dreadful Nights

The Melodramadness of Eugene O'Neill

"Mr. Geddes is very angry, and that is an excellent thing."—New Masses.

25 cents each, postpaid

The BROOKFIELD PAMPHLETS
Brookfield, Conn.

A Certain Red Baiting Congressman Dislikes

THE NEW MASSES

It is Poison
To a Certain
Rev. Fascist Father

But You will
Want THE NEW MASSES

Because it tells you what is
really happening in the
United States and abroad
—and why it happens.

Because it is packed with vital
news from all strategic
points of America and the
rest of the world.

Because it contains brilliant, de-
cisive editorials, interpret-
ing the week's significant
events by foremost Marx-
ists, devastating satirical
drawings, articles and fic-
tion and poetry and reviews
by outstanding men and
women.

Subscribe Now to the weekly
NEW MASSES

NEW MASSES
Room 41, 31 E. 27 St.
New York City

Enter my subscription at
once for the NEW MASSES.
I enclose \$3.50 for one year
(); \$2 for six months ();
\$1 for a three months subscrip-
tion ().

(Check the one you want).

Name

Address

City

State

tain an inestimable importance if for no other reason than that they are irrefutably convincing exposes. The Pathe Newsreel of the Ambridge massacre is a supreme example of the political value to us of motion picture reportage. We must train working class camera-men whose function in the workers' film movement will correspond to that of worker-correspondents in the field of revolutionary journalism.

We have as yet accomplished little in the sphere of the documentary film in which it is essential for us to intervene; to organize the raw material into a unified revolutionary interpretation. This represents an almost totally unexplored form calling for the highest degree of skill and talent in the realm of cinematic creation. Our best teachers in this respect are the Soviet directors of the documentary school who have tremendously enriched the arsenal of revolutionary film culture with such masterpieces as Shanghai Document, Spring, etc. Our own Washington Hunger March and the sparkingly brilliant strip on the Washington Farmers Convention represent significant attempts in what must become the broad pattern for the production of films in the American working class film movement.

The resolution of the first conference of the Cinema Bureau of the International Union of Revolutionary Theatre suggests the didactic short film as an important form of our production. Match the moving diagram, chart or graph for workers study groups, if you can. We have completely neglected the educational short. We must build up a 16mm film library which will comprise a complete course in political education for workers. A joint task for the Film and Photo League and the faculty of the Workers School. In this connection we can avail ourselves of the mass

of data and research compiled by departments of visual instruction in various institutions of bourgeois learning. Important scientific discoveries on methods of education through the moving image have been made during the last few years. These we must dig out of the specialized spheres of college laboratories where they are doomed to remain by virtue of their narrow and exclusive application (does Hollywood need them?) and use them for our purpose. Three distinct branches of the documentary method, therefore, comprise the scope of our production. Film reporting, or the recording of highlights in the class struggle which are of political value as events overflowing the frame which merely acts as the carrier, Ambridge, Scottsboro, Detroit Massacre, Tom Mooney Run, etc. The synthetic documentary, the effect and intent of which is one hundred percent dependent on the intervention of the "editor", The Land of The Free, Imperial Valley, etc. The frankly educational film for purposes of direct political-economic instruction.

The Film and Photo League is beginning to assume a status more commensurate with its great cultural-political importance in the struggles of the working class.

The Hollywood machine is being geared to the political and economic policies of its Wall Street owners. The production of reactionary, openly pro-war films is no longer the exception but the rule. The League's program of struggle against Hollywood is clear. We have already tested this program in action. There exist among us no political differences concerning methods of agitation and propaganda to be employed in struggling against the films of the enemies of the working class.

— SAMUEL BRODY
(To be concluded next month)

News & Notes

DETROIT FILM & PHOTO LEAGUE—Made a one reel film for the Macedonian Workers Club and assisted in showing it on a tour through Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Penn., and New York. Arranged a tour of Fragment of an Empire, 16mm for the entire month of January. Arranged to synchronize victrola records to accompany silent films. Built a darkroom. Carried on a protest campaign against the probable opening of Thunder Over Mexico. Starting a class in elementary photography.

HOLLYWOOD FILM & PHOTO LEAGUE—Newly organized, late in November. Plans a symposium with speakers from the film industry. Taking headquarters suitable for darkroom and film showings.

LOS ANGELES FILM & PHOTO LEAGUE—(Because this group has been engaged in so many activities for this limited space, we can only include the most recent activities). Has produced 12 reels (16mm). Has made films in strike areas and exhibited films to the strikers and among other organizations. Has used the film of the San Diego police attack on workers in court to disprove the frame-up against the workers. After obtaining a hung jury, the defense succeeded in obtaining an acquittal largely due to the graphic undeniable evidence contained in the film. Arranged joint showings of newsreels with the T.U.U.C., the Relief Workers Protective Association, the International Labor Defense. Conducted a very successful film showing and theatrical performance jointly with the Workers Dramatic Council. Took part in the United Workers Press Bazaar. Circularized all workers organizations in an effort to stimulate film showings. Held a private showing of newsreels at the home of a

Hollywood screen writer and raised funds for production. Working out a plan of cooperation with the W.I.R.

FILM & PHOTO LEAGUE OF NEW YORK—Has completely discarded old methods of work and begun to become a force in the City of New York. Initiated and carried through a photo exhibit, America Today, obtaining photographs from the Leagues in L.A. and Chicago and numerous amateur and professional photographers who had no previous connection with the League. One hundred photographs mounted and hung in the headquarters. Supplies photos regularly to all working speakers to workers organizations. Lectures are delivered on Hollywood, Censorship, Soviet Films, etc. Organized a film production project jointly with Unemployed Council, now ready for production, with a scenario by Michael Gold. Now completing film on Misery Among Working Class Children, in cooperation with the Workers International Relief. Organized and successfully carried through series of showings on History of Soviet Film, jointly with the new weekly New Masses. Great deal of publicity obtained in metropolitan press popularized the League and Soviet films. Organized and now extending the Harry Alan Potamkin Film School. Established the H.A.P. Film Library. Doubled the membership of the Photo Section.

CHICAGO FILM & PHOTO LEAGUE—Established a class in elementary photography. Supplied photos for the pamphlet, Chicago On Parade, published by Herman O. Duncan c-o International House, Chicago. Sends photos sporadically to N. Y. Submitted several photos which were accepted for the National Photo Exhibit, America Today. Issued a leaflet and organized a protest against Thunder Over Mexico.

REPERTORY SERVICE

SHORT PLAYS

- Mr. Fox, Box and Nox—by Will Lee Contrast between production in U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. 15c
- Charity—by Jack S. Shapiro. Play on Relief 15c
- Recruit—by M. Leon. Anti-war play 15c
- Dr. Krupps. Satire on American specialist in U.S.S.R. 10c
- Long Live Mr. McFadden. An episode in two scenes 10c
- The Bulls See Red. Family scene on pea pickers strike 10c
- Adventures of a Telephone Booth 10c
- Liberty in U.S.A.—by Ben Blake. Satirical dialogue 10c
- Old and New—by Irwin Shappin. Life in the U.S.S.R. before and after Revolution 15c
- Pennies, Nickles and Dimes. Play in support of Daily Worker 15c
- Whose Got the Boloney—by W.L.T. Play on Election Campaign 15c
- Titans of Paris—by Irwin Shappin. (One-act Play on Paris Commune) 25c
- Station NRA—by Vivian Jacobsen. (One-act). Meaning of NRA to workers 25c
- Intervention (four scenes from Russian Play about the Russian Revolution) 25c
- Comrade—by Alice Pier and Burt Baer. Family scene on general working man's condition under capitalism (one act) 25c
- Hands Off—by Nathan Buchwald. 10c
- 15 Minute Red Revue. Revue by Prolet Buehne 10c

FULL LENGTH PLAYS (in book form)

- 1931—Play on unemployment by Paul and Claire Sifton in 14 scenes 50c
- Special Offer: Precedent—Play on Tom Mooney case from a legal point of view in 3 acts by I. J. Golden 50c
- Roar China—Imperialism in China by Tretyakov 50c
- Armoured Train—Play on Japanese intervention in Russian Revolution by Ivanov 25c
- Can You Hear Their Voices—by Hallie Flanagan and Ellen Clifford 75c
- A Handbook of Recitations (for mass and individual use) 30c

NOTE: All above charges do not include postage. Money must accompany orders.

Special Rates In Quantities for Bookstores and Organizations.

ORDER FROM

Repertory Dept., League of Workers Theatres, 42 E. 12th St., N. Y. C.

Truth Comes In Small Packages!

Only bit by bit can the human mind piece together the riddle of reality. But, that is the function NEW THEATRE has elected to serve. Certainly, the magazine is small, measured in pages . . . but those pages are crammed full of truth about all of the theatre arts.

When you realize that the leaders in every field of the theatre, dance and cinema contribute to your information and technical knowledge, within the covers of NEW THEATRE, it is extremely important for you to read this vital publication.

Don't forget that NEW THEATRE is the only publication devoted to the revolutionary theatre, dance and cinema.

A YEAR'S POST GRADUATE COURSE FOR \$1.00

The January Issue was sold out completely, except for a few hundred copies on news-stands (which we were unable to check) in less than a week. Subscribe now and avoid being without

To Make It Easy

NEW THEATRE
5 E. 19 Street, N. Y. C.

Please enter my subscription for New Theatre, for 12 monthly issues. Enclosed please find \$1 to pay for it. Foreign countries \$1.50.

Name

Address

City State

Make checks payable to Leon Eloch

National Student League

The militant vanguard of student revolt against war and reaction

Publishes

STUDENT REVIEW

The voice, the guide and the living history of the developing student movement in America

—X—

READ IT! SUBSCRIBE TO IT!
Contribute To Its Sustaining Fund!

STUDENT REVIEW

114 W 14 St., New York, N.Y.

() Please enroll me as a subscriber to the Student Review for one year (9 issues \$3.85). It is not necessary for a subscriber to be a student.

() I pledge annually to the Student

Review the sum of \$.....

() I contribute the sum of \$.....

Name

Street

City..... State.....

College

Make all checks and money orders payable to Alex Schinas!

The New Voice of
Revolutionary Literature

PARTISAN REVIEW

A Bi-monthly magazine of literature and criticism published by the John Reed Club of New York.

*Stories, Poems, Critical
Article, Reviews of
Books and Magazines*

15c per copy — 75c for 6 issues
\$1.00 for 8 issues

Editorial and Business Offices:
430 Sixth Avenue, New York City

PARTISAN REVIEW,
430 Sixth Avenue,
New York City

Enclosed please find:

() \$1.50 for year's subscription.
() \$ 75 for six months subscription.
() \$2.50 for six months' subscription to Partisan Review and six months' subscription to the weekly New Masses.

Name

Address

City and State