

# Workers theatre

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# Workers Theatre



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## KENTUCKY MINERS STRIKE!

As we go to press, more than ten thousand miners have already answered the call of the National Miners Union in Kentucky and are carrying on a bitter strike against starvation and terror and for a top price of \$4.80 cents a day, or recognition of the union and the right to organize.

This strike is recognized as the highest point yet reached by the American labor movement. Four months ago these miners were forced back into the pit heads by the most brutal terror, kidnapping, beating, jailing and murder and what is worse, agonizing hunger. The miners had been betrayed by the United Mine Workers Of America and the miserable remnants of what was once the I. W. W. Under the leadership of the N. M. U. the Kentucky miners have staged the most remarkable come-back ever witnessed in the history of American labor.

To the last man, woman and child, the mining population of Southeastern Kentucky are determined to win this strike. They declare they will sacrifice their lives upon the picket lines if given ONE SMALL MEAL A DAY.

Winning the miners' strike means that the working class of the entire South as well as the North will be given new courage, new determination to battle against the hunger campaign launched by the profit-mad boss class which rules this benighted land.

The Kentucky miners are absolutely destitute. Themselves, their wives and children are clothed in rags. There isn't even grass to eat in the barren Kentucky hills. No use to appeal to the near-by farmers for relief! They too are stripped naked. Flu, the starvation disease, takes a ghastly toll of lives. Pellagra threatens every mining camp.

**THE MINERS MUST HAVE FOOD!** Relief will win the miners' strike! The Workers International Relief has been appointed by the Kentucky miners to carry on a nation-wide appeal to raise that relief which will win the strike!

It is necessary to reach the broadest masses and to do this, IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO PASSIVELY COLLECT RELIEF. Every contributor must be drawn into the KENTUCKY STRIKE RELIEF VOLUNTEERS to mobilize greater masses for huge strike collections!

The Workers International Relief appeals to you to gather a group around you and bring them into the W. I. R. to be organized into the Kentucky Strike Relief Volunteers (A MASS ARMY OF KENTUCKY STRIKE RELIEF VOLUNTEERS FOR MASS COLLECTIONS OF FUNDS, FOOD AND CLOTHING TO WIN THE KENTUCKY STRIKE! THIS IS THE MAJOR TASK FACING THE WORKING CLASS TODAY!

Join the KENTUCKY STRIKE RELIEF VOLUNTEERS  
OF THE WORKERS INTERNATIONAL RELIEF  
16 West 21st Street, New York City

## THE TASKS OF THE WORKERS' LABORATORY THEATRE IN THE W.I.R.

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H. Elion, W.L.T.

Since the formation of the Workers' Cultural Federation, the question as to the role of the Workers' International Relief in the field of cultural work has been a source of confusion. Various comrades active in the different departments of the Federation showed a tendency to interfere with the attempts of the W.I.R. cultural groups to collaborate with other non-W.I.R. cultural groups and to draw them into relief work. Such a stand is incorrect. The W.I.R. is a mass organization. As such it has its own program. The Workers' Cultural Federation was not organized with the idea of displacing or interfering with the cultural activities of any organization. It is a coordinating agency. This was stated time and again at the June conference as well as after the conference.

The program of the W.I.R. does not only make provisions for coordination of cultural activities of the W.I.R. groups. It also states the attitude of the W.I.R. toward non-W.I.R. cultural groups. The resolution of the 8th World Congress of the W.I.R. states in part:

"In order to carry out this work (cultural work) the W.I.R. cannot dispense with collaboration with the already existing cultural organizations. The cultural organizations must be kept informed on the current and special tasks of the Workers' International Relief so that they may be able to take into account the special wishes of the W.I.R. on certain occasions, and on the other hand, the W.I.R. must be informed as to the field of activity of each cultural organization in order that it may know what tasks can be most suitably allotted to the different cultural organizations, and in what manner they can be used for the agitation and propoganda work of the Workers' International Relief."

The W.I.R. cultural groups and particularly the Workers' Laboratory Theatre have the task of drawing in as many independent cultural groups as possible for relief work. During a strike it is of utmost importance to reach all workers with the message of solidarity and attempt to mobilize them for relief. Wherever there are W.I.R. branches this work is carried on by these branches. In some sections of the country where there are no W.I.R. branches at present, and where, let's say, a theatre group exists, it is the special task of the Workers' Lab. Theatre to induce that group to undertake relief work and help in the organization of a W.I.R. branch.

In this sense the Workers' Lab. Theatre has to act as a coordinating agency for the W.I.R. Material in the form of plays and technical advice have to be given to groups in spite of the fact that the Dram-Bureau performs that function. However, this work should be carried on in a coordinated manner so that we do not interfere with the activities of the Dram-Bureau.

The W.I.R. will play an increasingly important role in the coming

miners' struggle. The cultural groups can help a great deal in mobilizing workers for the support of all workingclass struggles.

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**CAN YOU HEAR THEIR VOICES?**

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A. Saks, W.L.T.

Following out the dictates of bourgeois economists in the field of economics and politics, the keenest of bourgeois reviewers and critics cry out pathetically that culture is in confusion, that plays do nothing but repeat and rehash what should long have seen the grave, but that all this is natural because of the similar confusion on the political and economic fields. And revolutionary critics and reviewers must agree with them that all is confusion in the camp of the bourgeoisie, and that such confusion is natural. Also that it is natural that from this confusion, which is better called decay, shall arise a new culture of a new class. And as on the political and economic front the working-class is making tremendous strides toward the overthrow of capitalist economics and politics, so on the cultural front, in China, and Japan, Germany, India, Poland, Czechoslovakia and thruout the whole world the knell of bourgeois culture is sounding. Bourgeois culture is dying in confusion and the stink of its own civilized past. And as bourgeois culture sinks, workingclass culture arises. And in its place rises the culture of the proletariat.

One of the surest signs of the decay of capitalist propaganda (art) is the decline of the little theatre movement which is dedicated to the more artistic, humanitarian and experimental theatre. Here are gathered the intellectuals of bourgeois drama, and with the backslide of the little theatre movement these individuals are left high and dry. Either they must backslide too, as they generally do and continue turning out drama for the cemetery, or they can break with the old and turn toward the new. Such a turn has been attempted in the latest play dealing with the menace of communism. A play that has been hailed as a fine revolutionary drama. **CAN YOU HEAR THEIR VOICES?** is its name and it is taken from a story in the **NEW MASSES** by Whittaker Chambers, adapted into play form by Hallie Flanagan and Margaret Clifford.

The evolution of this play from the original story, to the English play version, thru the Yiddish translation by N. Buchwald, is a lesson in ideology. Whittaker Chambers wrote an excellent story in the **NEW MASSES** with a fairly clear workingclass line. Flanagan and Clifford mutilated the class line of the story and adapted it into play form with a clear liberal ideology. Buchwald made a weak effort to change the liberal version back again to a play fit for workers' theatres but emerged with the liberal line still headfirst. Here is a synopsis of the play as played by the **ARTEF** (Yiddish Workers' Theatre) at the Hecksher Theatre, 104th St. & Fifth Av.

The drought has come to Arkansas. The framers of Arkansas, on the verge of starvation, are torn between their fast waning faith in the government and their desire for food. Classconscious worker Jim Wardell believes in taking food when faced with starvation and says so. Four scenes deal with the miserable conditions in Arkansas--the slow starvation--gradually leading up to the militant hunger march to town and the seizure of food by the workers. Interspersed in contrast we have two scenes at the home of capitalism-- Congressman Bagehot, wife and daughter. The daughter Harriet is one of the country's educated women, the representative of the liberal class. Harriet has just come home from college and pa and ma are giving her a 250,000 dollar ball. The ball is in full swing with all the nauseating, disgusting obscenities as only the capitalist class can display. Society dining and swining in its usual moronic fashion.

Briefly this is the gist of the play. Now let us glance at the original story and the adapted play. Chambers' story in the NEW MASSES introduces no liberal element at all. Flanagan and Clifford inject the liberal daughter into the play and thus serve their class. For the liberal in the play is both hero and heroine. She is the character who evokes most sympathy from the audience. She is intelligent enough to realize social forces but her economic position keeps her from accepting them. Thus she knows that the workingclass is slowly, gradually going towards communism. This is her big problem. Something must be done. Where are the masses going is the question, and the answer is-- to communism. Then what are we going to do about it? We--the educated minority. It is up to us. I quote from the play. Scene four, at the ball. Harriet is fed up on the riotously drunken, screaming capitalist friends who comprise the guests. She is thinking in her liberal way of those people who are starving while she is raising hell, and in her drunkenness she gets something off her mind which she has been wanting to say for a long time.

Harriet-----Listen, I've got something to tell you. Come here.

First young man- It's an announcement. Who's the lucky man?

Harriet----- No, there's nothing tender about this. I want to tell you about the drought.

Everyone----- Hurrah, the drought, is there a drought?

Harriet----- (under stress of terrific excitement) There's a drought--in the United States--in the South--it's a terrible thing--it's killing the crops--it's making people hungry. It's making people thirsty and you know what it is to be thirsty, my friends. (Chorus of groans and cries of "Give the girl a drink," etc. Harriet leaps to top step and her voice crashes thru their drunken laughter.) Well, we're the educated classes. We're the strength of the nation. What're we going to do about it? What're we going to do about the drought?

How do the hilarious guests respond to this plea? There is a

moment of complete silence, then renewed hysteria. Everybody shouts "Down with the drought". The orchestra begins "Just a Gigolo". The lights dim to a flood of scarlet. Everyone except Harriet begins to dance." That is the answer of the educated classes. But economically Harriet cannot take no for an answer. As an intelligent liberal she must make her plea. There are surely other intelligent liberals in the world who realize that something must be done. Now I turn very quickly to the last slide of the Flanagan-Clifford play. "In the darkness the curtain is lowered and a slide flashed on the screen. Slide 9. THESE BOYS ARE SYMBOS OF THOUSANDS OF OUR PEOPLE WHO ARE TURNING SOMEWHERE FOR LEADERS. WILL IT BE TO THE EDUCATED MINORITY? CAN YOU HEAR THEIR VOICES?"

Proof conclusive of the ignorance (either willful or otherwise) of the part that social forces have played in shaping feudalism into capitalism and that now must make way for communism. Only thru the workingclass can this change for the better take place. Only thru the leadership of the Communist Party can the workers and farmers of America get rid of exploitation and its ills. The desire to compromise, the inability to accept the Communist Party as the rightful leader of the workingclass in its struggle with capitalism is what keeps the play from being a good revolutionary drama. The translation has stuck too faithfully to the liberal version and left the character of Harriet intact. The story had Wardell as a good strong classconscious worker. The play weakened the character considerably with speeches of much less strength and vigor. The translation carried thru practically the same character as the play with a few slight changes. Chambers drew in the character of Frank Francis, a sly whining worker without much guts. Flanagan and Clifford changed the character to that of a strong figure opposed to Wardell who goes thru tremendous suffering and not once does he show any signs of the realization of his class. Always a narrow outlook, at the end he attempts to shoot the capitalist (Purcell). (The original story does not have such a scene.) He is a conventional fool in the opening of the play and so he remains, venting his wrath in an individual fashion by attempting to shoot Purcell. The translation follows the liberal version. The original story has excellent dialogue and much more important and interesting revolutionary conflicts with capitalist illusions. The play has much weaker dialogue and besides presenting the characters in an entirely different light have left out some very important proletarian conflicts. Again the translation follows the liberal line. Thus we have a strong workingclass story, an adaption that did well for the liberal cause, and a translation that falls far short of its purpose.

Given a play with as weak a revolutionary line as this one, it would naturally be the duty of a workers' theatre to strengthen in direction what had not been accomplished in translation. Characters in the workers' theatre are interpreted from the class angle. We look at each character with the eyes of a classconscious worker and present him accordingly. A non-revolutionary play can be made revolutionary in direction providing the director is politically conscious and sees every move with the eyes of a classconscious worker. But the class line



interpretation of the characters is noticeably lacking-- the weakness of the workers, the laughable weakness of Turcell (established law and order), the picture of Harriet, the liberal, as a sympathetic, captivating little girl winning the support of the workers by her charm and warm interest in the plight of the farmers. The fact is that not once in the entire performance do we forget that these are actors on the stage trying to play the part of workers. The class interpretation has suffered at the hands of acting as an art in itself.

These then are the two basic criticisms in the presentation of "CAN YOU HEAR THEIR VOICES". Ideologically weak in both translation and direction, where the strength of a workers' theatre lies. The fundamental difference between a professional revolutionary theatre and a theatre of Broadway and Second Av. is a difference of ideology.

The importance of the Artef as a cultural weapon among the Yiddish proletariat makes it imperative that the Artef be consistently clear, not only as to what a workingclass technique consist of, but also must see that this workingclass technique be carried out. The power of any revolutionary organization lies not alone in knowing your theory, but further, in turning your theory into action.

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### TECHNIQUE IN THE WORKERS' THEATRE

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A. Prentis

Shall the workers' theatre adopt any of the techniques of the bourgeois theatre? This question, first asked at the cultural convention, has not been answered. For while attempts to answer it in the negative have been made, such answers, however, have shown an incomplete grasp not only of the essence and history of the bourgeois theatre but even more so of the workers' theatre.

The problem must be approached analytically. We must know what is the aim of the bourgeois theatre, we must compare with it the aim of our theatre, we must analyze the elements or tools that the bourgeois theatre uses to accomplish its aim. Knowing our aims, we should ask ourselves, can we utilize any of these tools to accomplish them? The problem is simple and obvious. Suppose we follow this out.

The ultimate aim of the bourgeois theatre is to make money. The immediate aim of their theatre is to give their audience what they make them crave for-- escape from reality. To the sex-starved spinster-- love, to the sexually suppressed husband-- hot sex, to the drudging wife-- mysteries and love and racketeer thrills, to the poor-- riches.

The ultimate aim of the workers' theatre is solidarity of the working class. The immediate aim is education-- propaganda and

training in tactics to accomplish this aim. The workers audience must face reality, get acquainted with it on the stage, and train itself to cope with it in actual life.

A produced play, whether bourgeois or workers', may be assumed to consist of two parts: 1) the written play and 2) its production. To take the written play as a beginning, what are the elements and the technique the bourgeois play uses to accomplish its aim-- can we utilize any of those elements or techniques to accomplish our aim?

Since the aim of the bourgeois theatre is escape from reality, its plays must aim at the illusion of the audience, making them identify themselves with the action. And since identification can occur only if the play is plausible, the bourgeois plays are based to a great extent on what is known as the 3 unities-- the unity of action, the unity of time, and the unity of place. Meaning by the first, that the entire play must be based on one main idea; by the second, that the entire play must take place within 24 hours; by the third, that the entire play must occur in one locality. (While the bourgeois playwrights do not strictly adhere to these unities, nevertheless they are the bases of their theatre.)

To the above may also be added several other unities-- unity of subject matter, unity of language, unity of situation. Since the aim of theatre is identification with the action, such an effect can be produced only if the play deals with subject matter, situation and language that the audience can understand and is familiar with-- middleclass. Only then can the audience easily identify itself with the action.

With the above in mind they divide the play loosely into 3 parts-- 1) the Introduction, when the audience is made acquainted with the facts necessary for it to know to understand the further progress of the play; 2) the development where, as the play progresses, the attention of the audience is drawn further into the action, and its emotions made to react with the drama in the play; and 3) the Climax, where the play coming to a culminating point stops short, having brought out the idea of the playwright.

These are briefly the basic elements of bourgeois playwriting, not always followed but consciously or unconsciously always aimed at. The actual details of writing the play we need not go into here as they are all implied in the above classification. Besides, the matter of writing dialogue, situation, etc., will be governed by the style of the writer, by the subject matter and by the theme.

We said before that the workers must face reality on the stage and train there to cope with it in actual life. How may this be done? Since we cannot transport our audience to the scene of action of a certain past or present event in the class struggle, we may do the reverse-- we may transport that event to the theatre and stage it realistically enough to give the audience a sense of being present at that event. (If we are efficient enough we make the audience also an active, not a passive, actor in the play.) We find at once that our theatre must also have

"illusion"-- not the illusion of the bourgeois theatre where the play starting plausibly reaches a situation not always probable in real life, (A simple example- a poor girl at the beginning, marrying wealth at the end, or virtue being rewarded) but the illusion of being-present and participating in a real event which could have a probable result if we pursue certain tactics. (For example- the winning of a strike because of adherence to a real militant union.)

Since, therefore, we also aim at illusion, we may subscribe to all the unities that the bourgeois theatre subscribes to-- unities of action, time and place, subject matter, language and situation. But with this difference-- that now that the subject matter, language and situation will concern themselves with the workers rather than the middleclass, the plays and the method of treatment will both have to be modified, not only because situations are vastly different, not only because the psychological make-up of our actors and audience are different, but also because our places of presentation indoors or outdoors are different from that of the bourgeois theatre. The basic principles, however, remain the same.

So will also the matter of dividing the play into introduction, development and climax remain the same. This division is obvious and efficient, and helps to draw the audience towards identifying itself with the action. The matter of actually writing the dialogue will again depend upon the individual make-up of the writer-- the worker writing the play on his own, or at the suggestion of the collective-- and will be governed to a great extent by the content.

We may therefore sum up, that as far as the written play is concerned, we may adopt the so-called bourgeois technique and adapt it to our own use.

The matter of the play "production" will be taken up in the following issue.

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## PROLETARIAN MUSIC

A. Shapiro

Proletarian Theatre, in form determined by the means at the workers' disposal, in objective identified with the workingclass, is a reality. It has been produced, it is being produced, it is developing. Proletarian Music must become such a reality.

The seemingly strongest argument in the criticism of proletarian art generally is -- the impossibility of a Proletarian Music. Surely music is abstract form, for abstract expression, of abstract emotion if nothing else is. Some time ago a book was written by protagonists of Proletarian Art. Whether our aims

were clearly set forth in that book is not the question here. The reception concerns us. The "Sunday Times" reviewed it. And when it came to talk of the conception of a Proletarian Music, the proper height of proper indignation was reached. What can one mean by, what is as silly as, the thought of revolutionary chords, harmonies and counterpoints?!

A theory in justification of proletarian art we do not need. An historic law determines its inevitability. In the art of a period, that which its separate specimens have in common, the general motivating force in an artistic movement,--its basic collective emotion--is determined by the social forces of that period; the art of every period will idealize and defend the philosophy of the class which is in the ascendancy at the time.

There are cases in history where a class having outlived its developing phase, (when its growth meant social growth) having been left as a social obstacle, maintained its hold on society thru a forcefully imposed formalism. Artistic movements reacting against such hollow formalisms took the form of spontaneous, naturalistic expression. The Renaissance movement, a rebellion against the formalized asceticism of the Church, was such a movement. It grew with the growth of monarchies and strong nationalities. Also the Romantic movement of the early 19th century was such a movement, an opposition to the aristocratic formality of the 18th century. It came in the wake of the French Revolution, on the wave of Republicanism, and was an expression of that individualism which characterizes the philosophy of the bourgeoisie. But there are other cases, where a class came into power thru unlimited individualism, and when it had outlived its social usefulness maintained itself amidst an equally unlimited individualistic chaos. The reaction to such a social state must be in the form of a purposeful, collectivized effort. Our movement is such a one.

In these general movements in art, has music been an exception? It hasn't. Is there an example of music which took the form of a purposeful, collective expression? There is. Why then is a Proletarian Music impossible? It isn't.

The example in mind is the music of the middle ages-- the church period. Oratorios, carols, operas were produced; the forms developed in this epoch dominate the music of succeeding centuries and are to this day known as church forms-- christian music. Are the doctrines of the church any less foreign to musical forms than the theory of class struggle? Yet if we were to approach our abstractionist critics with talk of christian music, we would find that church harmonies and church counterpoints present no contradictions to their abstracted brains. An artistic movement to bourgeois critics becomes visible as an historic movement to bourgeois historians-- after it has already turned its back on them.

The means of expression which we have are-- words and music. The instruments of expression are-- voice, piano, fiddle, ac-

cordian, guitar, mouth organ, etc. Pure music (music without story or words) expresses basic emotions, for our purposes, emotions which accompany our philosophy (indignation, denunciation, solidarity, fight, etc.) This must accompany words which express concretely as well as emotionally our demands, tasks, propaganda. Words and music thus combined must be brought to the workers by the instruments we have-- at their meetings, demonstrations, in the streets, thru backyards-- to wherever workers are. The song will develop, music and words, into a form determined by the content, and in an idiom best understood by the workers. Developing from the simple to the complex, higher forms of programmatic music will evolve such as choruses, oratorios, etc. also in this idiom. (Programmatic music is music with words.) Musical figures and forms will come into use which will be peculiar to and instantly recognized as proletarian music.

A pure proletarian music will develop. But, the simple song form itself from which this music will grow is not mushroom music and must rise from foundations already laid. In the past, songs arose as accompaniments to rituals, dances, pageants, work-movements; the song form came in conjunction with or as a result of a theatrical act. Workers who endeavor to reach their comrades with song cannot help but make their class struggle attitude manifest in their very walk and actions as well as their songs; they cannot help but be worker-actors as well as worker-singers. These considerations point to proletarian music as a problem to be confronted by workers' theatres. Agitprop Theatre must bring with it an Agitprop Music, and this music must be in the idiom of American folk and street songs. We must learn to know, digest, and live into this idiom, (which on the part of American workers requires no artistic metamorphosis) and with it create the song of the class struggle. Workers' theatres, arm yourself with a workers' music!



## PROBLEMS OF PLAY-DIRECTING

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J.E. Bonn, Prolet-Buehne, N. Y

(Continued from Dec. issue)

### 4- The Dramatic Language

As the playwright of the workers' theatre has but a minimum of theatre effects at his disposal, he depends, more than the playwright of the old style stationary theatre, on his own medium of expression: the language.

Most of our playwriting comrades and theoreticians of the workers' theatre underestimate this part of the task of playwriting. They see very little difficulty in writing dialogues or monologues for the stage as every worker is familiar with the use of the language thru the daily routine of speaking, writing and reading. This opinion is wrong as it is based on the notion that there is only one language. But we have many types of language according to the different conditions under which communication is produced and received. And in fact the type of language we are accustomed to in our daily use is different from the dramatic language as required in the theatre.

In our daily routine we are using two types of language. The first type is the conversation type. We form and produce it ourselves by means of speaking. It is received by a single person or by a small group by listening. The second type may be called the literary type. We form it ourselves and produce it ourselves by means of writing and it is received by a single person by reading. This is the type of language we use in letters, in workers correspondence and in articles. Our conversation language is slower in the development and in building up of the content than our literary language. An idea which we formulate in the conversation by 4 or 5 sentences can be expressed in an article by one sentence. For the listener receives the language under more difficult conditions than the reader. The listener hears every word only once while the reader has the opportunity to go over each word as many times as he wishes. The listener depends on the tempo of the speaker while the reader can vary the tempo of reading as it seems necessary to him in order to understand what he is reading. On the other hand the listener has some advantages over the reader. While the reader sees but the colorless written words, the listener receives the language modulated by intonation and strength of voice varying according to the sense of the words and sentences.

Thru the long daily routine we are accustomed to apply these two types of languages, so that we do it unconsciously and are not aware of the difference.

Which technique does the dramatic language require and how are its relations to the types of our every-day language? While the two types of our every-day language are received in the same form in which they are produced (the conversation as spoken language and the literary as written language), the dramatic language is produced in written form while it is received as spoken language. The fact that dialogues and monologues of a play are written ~~is~~ leads us into the mistake of using literary language which either sounds dry and unnatural when spoken by the players or which cannot be spoken at all. That is the reason why so many of our workers plays suffer from dead and ineffective language. But there is a sure means to avoid this failure: before we are sufficiently familiar with the dramatic language to apply its technique unconsciously we must make it a rule to speak each word and sentence before we write it down. For when we ourselves are able to speak a sentence naturally and effectively, our comrade-players can also be taught to do it.

That does not mean at all "write as you talk". The language of a play does not sound natural when we use the language of our every-day reality. The theatre has its own reality which may be more or less different from our every-day reality. So may the dramatic language be more or less different from our every-day language. The main prerequisite is that this language can be spoken.

But it is not enough to write a language that can be spoken by the players and can be understood by the audience. We have to apply a technique of the language which corresponds to the conditions given by the performance. We have to take into account the attitude of the audience. The visitor to a performance, with all his senses and emotions occupied with the happenings of the play, is only to a limited extent able to take an initiative of his own. The task of the political theatre, however, is to activate the audience to the highest degree. This can be achieved only when the initiative comes from the performance. Therefore, the whole performance must be, from beginning to end, a strong continuous action. The language of the political theatre, the dramatic language, must be a language of action. All sequences of ideas and motions must be transformed by the language into action. The form of action in the language is the dialogue. It contrasts sharply opinion against opinion, situation against situation, emotion against emotion, attack and counterattack. The dramatic dialogue is the linguistic form for the struggle. There it is the most adequate means to reflect, to explain and to agitate the class struggle.

(to be continued)

## REVOLUTIONARY THEATRES IN FASCIST JAPAN

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Japanese workers' theatres were first organized by dock strikers in Kobe, in 1921, and by striking printers in Tokio, in 1925. They were feeble, if valiant, and gave place in turn to the Trunk Theatre, so called because its members could pack all their paraphernalia in a small trunk, and carry it on foot or by street car to strikes or mass meetings.

This revolutionary Trunk Theatre was organized by radical elements of the intelligentsia who were thrown into the revolutionary proletarian movement almost at its very outset. This concurred with the collapse of post-War prosperity, the conclusive defeat of the impotent Japanese petit-bourgeoisie, and the first offensive of the Japanese working class.

Five years have elapsed since the founding of the Trunk Theatre, years of constant struggle against opportunism, eclecticism, social fascism and brutal white terror.

A typical example of the strong influence which the Japanese revolutionary theatre movement has now come to exert on the Japanese theatre in general is offered in the case of some of the younger actors of the classic Kabuki school (the 300 year old theatre which is today one of the strongest weapons in the hands of the fascist ruling class of Japan): These actors rebelled against the brilliant Kabuki tradition to organize the Zen-Shin-Za (Advancing Theatre) in June, 1931, with growing Left tendencies.

Today the left wing of the Japanese theatre movement is under the leadership of the PROT, Japanese Association of Proletarian Theatres, which is one of the sections of the NAPF, Pan-Japanese Federation of Proletarian Art Groups. With it in the NAPF are the Association of Proletarian Writers, P.P. (artists), Pro-Kino (Cinema), and P.M. (musicians).

PROT now has twelve theatrical groups, with approximately 300 members, in all parts of Japan: three in Tokio, and one each in Shizuoka, Nagoya, Osaka, Kyoto, Kobe, Kochi, Matsue, Kanazawa and Matsumoto. Of these the Left Theatre of Tokio is the oldest, strongest and largest.

The Trunk Theatre, from which the Left Theatre evolved, began with five or six members. Today the Left Theatre comprises about eighty members, divided into seven sections, with its own directors, actors, electricians, stage designers, property men, and costume and stage-effect staffs. No one gets paid for his or her work; all of them manage to live from work they do outside of their theatre.

The following are among the full-length plays presented by the Left Theatre: A.V. Lunacharsky's DON QUIXOTE FREED (staged by the Vanguard Theatre--a second name adopted by the Trunk Theatre--in 1926); S. Fujimori's MOZAEMON CRUCIFIED, dealing with



one of the peasant outbreaks in the Tokugawa period (staged by the Left Theatre in 1928--prohibited by censor); B. Lavrienoff's RAZLOM (by the Left Theatre in 1928--also prohibited); Tom Murayama's ALL OVER THE LINE, a drama of the big 1923 strike on the Peking-Hankow Railway (Left Theatre, 1929); N. Tokunaga's SUNLESS QUARTER, dealing with the 1926 printers' strike in Tokio (Left Theatre, 1930); Juro Miyoshi's COAL DUST, dealing with a big miners' strike in Japan (Left Theatre, 1930); ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT, entirely revised by Tom Murayama (Left Theatre, 1931); Tom Murayama's RECORD OF VICTORY, dealing with the revolutionary May Day campaign of the Chinese proletariat in 1930 (Left Theatre, 1931).

Beside the Left Theatre, it is well to name the Shin-Tsukiji-Gekidan (New Tsukiji Group). This was formerly a petit-bourgeois dramatic group known as the Tsukiji Little Theatre, founded in Tokyo in 1925, and similar in its ideology to the New York Theatre Guild or the Paris Vieux-Colombier. Shaken from their base by the sharpening class struggle reflected in the growing strength of the left wing theatre movement, in 1929 the majority of this group organized a new theatre: the Shin-Tsukiji. It was an adherent of the Left Theatre, and in May of this year it formally affiliated itself to PROT. The best plays produced by Shin-Tsukiji up to now are: Gorki's MOTHER; S. Fujimora's INSURRECTION; Tretiakov's ROAR CHINA; Ivanov's THE ARMORED TRAIN, prohibited by the censor); Billi-Belotzerkovsky's ECHO; STORM OVER ASIA (based on Pudovkin's original), etc. Soon after its affiliation to PROT, Shin Tsukiji played Tom Murayama's stirring ORIENTAL COACH WORKS in Tokyo.

Besides these "big" performances, which run 2 to 3 weeks almost every month, there are the so-called "small" and "medium" presentations. The latter consist of one or two-act plays given in halls near workers' dwellings on such occasions as the "3:15" and "4:16" events campaigns (recalling the 1928 and 1929 brutal raids on homes of Japanese Communists), the May Day campaign, the Anniversary of the October Revolution, etc. The "small" performances are given by groups of three or four players moving from one place to another, a constant and integral part of revolutionary mass agitation. Their "agit-prop" plays are of course quite illegal, since the Communist Party of Japan has been driven completely underground. The Proletarian Moving Players of Tokio is one of the strongest of these small groups. Most of the theatres outside of Tokyo are beginning to follow this line of illegal or semi-legal agit-prop performance.

Though the "big" and "medium" performances are supposedly legal, a manuscript is often so mutilated after passing through the hands of the "Section for the Preservation of Peace," the "Red Squad," the "Gendarmerie Corps," and the police, that it can hardly be staged. (For instance, it is officially prohibited to wave a red flag or to represent a uniformed "cop" on the stage). This suppression is partly counteracted by printing the cut portions of the plays and having them distributed illegally by the Drama League-- a mass organization with nuclei in almost every factory.

(to be continued)

# PLAYS

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## LIBERTY in U.S.A.

A satirical dialogue by the Proletbuehne, N.Y.

Characters: Policeman and Statue of Liberty.

Policeman walking back and forth on the stage, playing with his club.  
Liberty coming from the audience.

Policeman: Off the streets or I'll fire! Don't you hear me? I said off the streets.

Liberty: That's all right, officer. Everything's O.K.

Policeman: What do you mean "everything's O.K."? When I say off the streets, then you've got to stop immediately and go right ahead. So off the streets, or I'll fire.

Liberty: Don't get excited officer. I assure you, everything's O.K. The street can't be any freer than when I fill it. I am liberty herself in person

Policeman: Don't fool around. There is no such thing as Liberty in person in whole U.S.A., so there can't be anyone like that tramping around the streets of New York. Officially there is only one Liberty here, and she stands fast and secure on her island - can be seen from 8 in the morning till sunset. Admission, including going up into her body and empty head, 25 cents.

Liberty: Correct - and that's me.

Policeman: What are you really our good old showcard?

Liberty: Sure thing. You and I always stood up for each other. What would liberty mean without the police?

Policeman: And whom would the police fight against if there were no Liberty?

Liberty: Excellent, excellent!

Policeman: Our Jimmy himself couldn't have said that better. But, lady, what are those? (Pointing to the dolls)

Liberty: Don't you know, these are my children.

Policeman: You've got children? Gee, you must show'em to me, Mrs.Liberty.

Liberty: With pleasure, officer. Here, this is little Democrat, isn't he a nice baby?

Policeman: Very nice baby.-- B-b-but, say Mrs.Liberty--- do I look sick?

Liberty: For God's sake, what's the matter with you?

Policeman: And to think-- I haven't raided any speakasy to-day-- and I see the same child doubly, here-- and-- there..

Liberty: Hahahahahah, it's all right, officer. This is another child. This is little Republican.

Policeman: I don't see any difference between them.

Liberty: I hardly see any difference myself. They have the same face and the same character. They are twins.

Policeman: You mean to say that these twins belong to you?

Liberty: That's putting it the wrong way, officer. I belong to the twins. Everything belongs to them, the money, the munition factories, the railroads, the church, the lord God and--- even the president of the United States. Oh they fix everything from prosperity and speed-up to throwing those damn reds into prison.

Policeman: These twins seem to be good workers.

Liberty: Please be more careful with your language, officer! Let me tell you, they are no workers, they are respectable people. They are bosses who make others work for them.

Policeman: Excuse me Mrs.Liberty, I didn't mean it that way. But one of them is crying.

Liberty: Oh, that's nothing to worry about. That's the little socialist. (Takes the third doll in her arms) Oh, his pants are wet again. He's always doing that, but otherwise he is a good obedient child who wouldn't harm a soul.

Policeman: This baby looks kind of suspicious to me. He looks obviously towards the left.

Liberty: On the contrary, officer. The child is cross-eyed. When he seems to be looking to the left, he is really looking to the right.

Policeman: Is that so? That's O.K. then. But who is this fat little chap with the wooden head? (Pointing to another doll)

Liberty: Don't you know him? That's little Laborfaker.

Policeman: Labor - did you say labor? Just let me take care of him. (Trying to get hold of the Laborfaker)

Liberty: No, no, officer - you misunderstand. This is Hoover's special pet. If we didn't have this little Laborfaker and his two fathers, Green and Woll, who do you think would explain to the workers that they have to work longer hours and get less pay?

Policeman: That's different. Who would dare to raise a hand against this true servant of our masters, Mrs. Liberty, you have wonderful children - one is better than the other. And the best one I guess you saved for the last.

Liberty: Hm, hm, hm, I wouldn't say that - hardly - you know - oh, let's not bother with the last one. (Very embarrassed, fussing around with the other children)

Policeman: But Mrs. Liberty, you can trust me fully. You know, we have two strictly separate departments, one for the public, and the other for private donations.

Liberty: Hm, that sounds all right. Then I'll confess to you - - the last one is a good for nothing.

Policeman: How's that?

Liberty: He has no money.

Policeman: Very suspicious.

Liberty: And yet he wants to live.

Policeman: A dangerous criminal.

Liberty: Even worse than that - he wants to bring me into bad company. He says I Liberty - belong also to the working class. (Crying)

Policeman: There, there, don't cry Mrs. Liberty, every decent person knows that you belong only in the best of society. I take care of the working-class. Remember: Union Square and City Hall.

Liberty: Oh, I didn't mean that. I mean to say he is a dangerous Red. Why, he says that the negroes are also human beings. He says, in Soviet Russia,

Policeman: Russia? There is no such country. It hasn't been recognized by President Hoover and Green. It doesn't exist.!

Liberty: Of course, and this Red wants the workers of the world to unite. He belongs to the Third International, the International of the working-class, the Communist International.

Policeman: Stop! That's too much. We have only one official international.

Liberty: I know, I know - the international of the people who own the money, the people who do not work, the people who make the wars.

Policeman: Three cheers for the international of capitalism, nationalism, and imperialism.

Policeman & Liberty: Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! (Go off stage, singing a patriotic song)

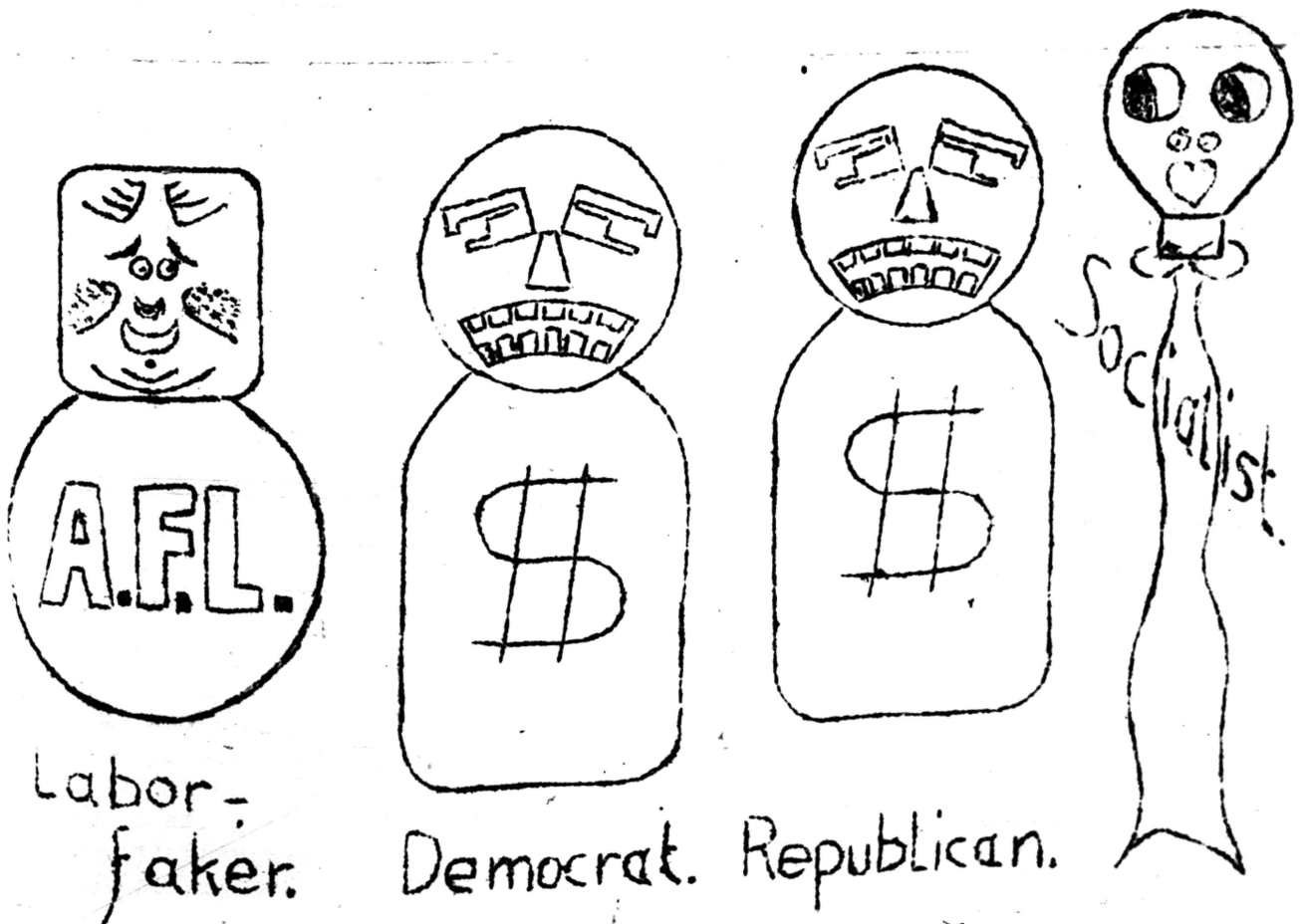


Props for "Liberty in U.S.A.":

Policeman: Cap, and club.

Liberty: Long white dress, a crown, baby carriage, 4 dolls.

If there is no carriage available, Mrs. Liberty can carry the dolls on her arm and place them on a chair on the stage. A drawing of the dolls will be given below.



TEMPO, TEMPO!

-----agitprop play by the Prolet-Buchno, N.Y. - translated  
from the German by B. Stern, T.L.T., N.Y.

Characters: Capitalist and seven or ten workers.

Capitalist: Tempo, tempo, watch your step.  
Hold on tight and show some pep.  
Move your hands and bend your body  
Without end and not so shoddy.  
Faster, faster, shake it up.  
No one idles in this shop.  
Time is money, money's power.  
Profits come in every hour.  
Can't stop profits for your sake.  
Tempo, tempo, keep awake.

Worker:

We are humans not machines.

Capitalist:

You don't like this fast routine?  
Get your pay and get out quick.  
You speak like a bolshevik.  
Tempo, tempo, watch your step.  
Hold on tight and show some pep.

Woman worker:

My head, my head, o help, help me.

Capitalist:

You want attention, that's your game.  
Get your pay and get out quick.  
There's no place here for the sick.  
Tempo, tempo, watch your step.  
Hold on tight and show some pep.  
Number fifteen, number ten,  
I must fire two more men.  
Here's a youngster strong and willing  
Will not find the pace so killing.  
To do more work for much less pay,  
That's the problem of the day.  
Tempo, tempo, work with me.  
Help bring back prosperity.  
Speed them up and cut their pay,  
Tempo, tempo, that's the way.

Directions:

Drum beats accompany the words and movements.  
At the beginning all workers come from the left side of the stage. (Right and left as seen from the audience)  
Workers come and go on the stage doing different kinds of work movements. Two workers are working in back centre, their backs turned to the audience. Cap. is speeding them up.

Worker stops before capitalist while saying these words.

Capitalist fires him. Worker goes off stage to the right.

She collapses.

Cap. fires her, two other workers help her getting off stage (to right)

Cap. sends the two workers away that have been working in the backcentre and puts a young worker who is coming from the left, in their place. One worker after the other goes off stage, all to the right. Cap. remains on the stage.

Cap. & Workers:

Tempo, tempo, tempo, tempo,  
Tempo, tempo, no delay.  
Tempo, tempo, tempo, tempo,  
Tempo is the cry to-day.

Policeman:

Tempo, tempo, move along,  
Do not idle here too long.  
Streets are free for all to tread  
Except for unemployed and red.  
Tempo, tempo, one, two, three  
You cannot get away from me.  
To distribute leaflets free  
That tell of workers' misery  
Is a crime and not permitted  
It's high treason to commit it.  
Tempo, tempo, one, two, three,  
In the name of law and order  
I'll deport you across the border.  
Tempo, tempo, one more victim.  
First we club him then convict him.  
You're not allowed to strike for bread,  
Devil take you, goddamn red.  
Tempo, tempo, one, two, three  
You cannot get away from me.  
In the name of law and order  
I'll deport you across the border.  
Unemployed are demonstrating,  
There they march unhesitating,  
Watch them shout and storm and rage as  
They demand their work or wages.  
Tempo, tempo, one, two, three,  
You cannot get away from me.  
In the name of law and order  
I'll deport you across the border.  
Tempo, tempo, no delay,  
Tempo is the cry today.

Workers & Policeman:

Tempo, tempo, tempo, tempo,  
Tempo, tempo, no delay,  
Tempo, tempo, tempo, tempo,  
Tempo is the cry today.

Worker:

Soviet tempo - tempest's might  
Onward without parasite

With these words all the workers  
cross the stage (from the right  
to the left) Cap. is driving them  
on, goes out with the workers,  
exchanges his hat for a policeman  
cap, also taking a police club.

Policeman is pushing and pulling  
the workers over the stage (from  
left to right) one or two at a time.  
Workers are trying to resist but  
policeman is stronger.

Workers all off stage (at right)  
at the end of these lines.

With these words, workers cross  
stage again from right to left, in  
one line, policeman drives them on.  
He goes off stage with the workers  
(left) exchanges cap for capitalist  
hat.

Crossing the stage (left to right)  
pushing capitalist about the stage.

Worker:

Soviet tempo - worker's power  
Moving, growing, every hour.

Rythm is stronger and the appearance  
of the workers militant and  
victorious.

Worker:

Soviet tempo - every man  
Helps complete the five year plan.

Workers cross stage singly or in  
groups according to the distribution  
of the lines. They push capitalist  
aside who tries to stop them.

Capitalist:

Insane tempo, absurdity,  
Respect for private property.

Worker:

Fight the thief and profiteer  
Onward, onward, without fear.

Capitalist:

Have respect for your tradition  
Honor god and your religion.

Worker:

Fight the hypocrite and priest  
Who do not work and always feast.

Capitalist:

Stop this aimless merriment  
Adopt me for your government.

Worker:

Down with all the wealthy classes  
All power to the toiling masses.

Capitalist:

Such words, such tones, I'm in confusion  
The mob is ruling, it's revolution.

Worker:

Soviet tempo - every man,  
Helps complete the five year plan.

Worker:

Industries are socialized,  
Farms are being collectivized.

Worker:

Production reaches higher stages,  
Shorter hours, higher wages.



Capitalist:

Take your time and do not worry,  
Slowly, slowly, what's the hurry.

Worker:

Faster, faster, drive ahead.  
Tempo makes for triumph red.

Worker:

Soviet tempo sets the pace  
Soviet tempo wins the race.

Last worker pushes capitalist off  
stage at the right. All workers  
off stage at right.

All workers:

Tempo, tempo, tempo, tempo,  
Tempo, tempo, no delay,  
Tempo, tempo, tempo, tempo,  
Tempo is the cry to-day.

With these words, workers come back  
on the stage (from right) in one line,  
with the word "cry" they make a left  
turn and face the audience.

Soviet tempo! Workers' tempo!  
Lenin tempo! Stalin tempo!  
Masses tempo! Builder's tempo!  
Fighters' tempo! Victors' tempo!

Tempo, tempo, tempo, tempo,  
Tempo, tempo, no delay,  
Tempo, tempo, tempo, tempo,  
Tempo is the cry to-day.

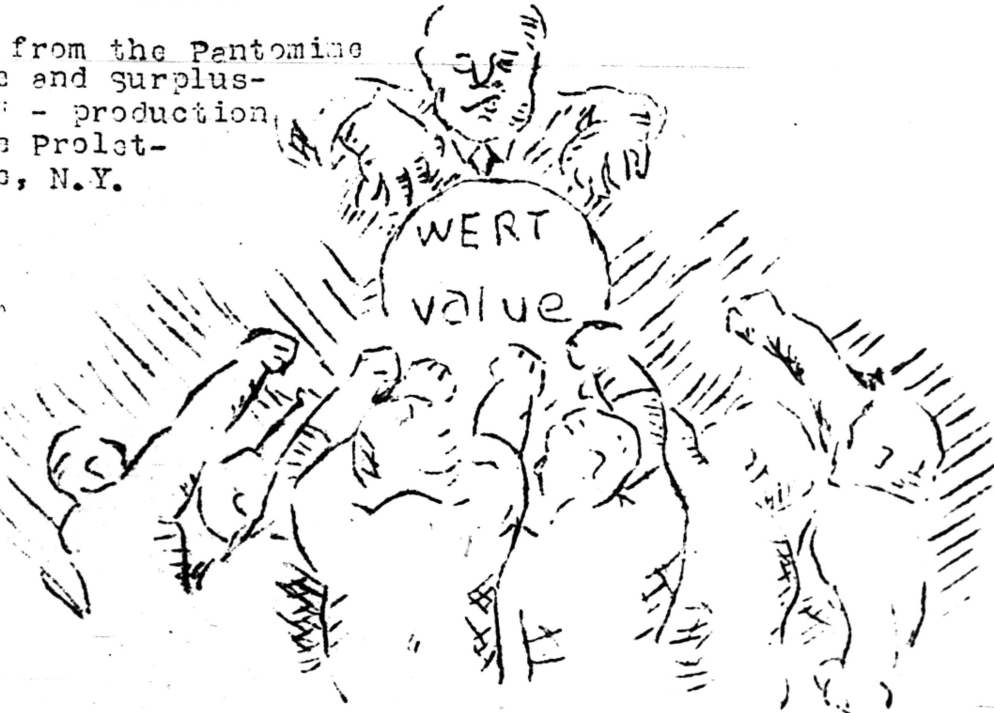
With the first word "tempo" workers  
make a right turn and march off  
stage to the left.

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Properties for "Tempo, tempo": Policeman's cap, capitalist hat and a club.  
Players should be dressed alike.

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Scene from the Pantomime  
"Value and surplus-  
Value" - production  
of the Prolet-  
Bureau, N.Y.



THE WORKERS' FILM & PHOTO LEAGUE OF THE W.I.R.

"As yet we have done very little, almost nothing, to hurl universal and fresh exposures among the masses of the workers".

Lenin-"WHAT IS TO BE DONE?"

"WINTER 1931"

A MOVING PICTURE SHOWING THE MISERY AND STRUGGLE OF THE AMERICAN WORKERS AND POOR FARMERS.

The economic crisis in the United States is so widespread that the suffering of the masses of workers and poor farmers is greater than it has ever been in the history of the country. Millions of men, women and children are on the verge of starving, yet wages continue to be reduced and the number of unemployed grows steadily.

The workers of the United States have begun to fight against these starvation conditions. The recent strike of 40,000 coal miners, the recent strike of 23,000 textile workers in Massachusetts, the rising struggle of the Kentucky coal miners, the present strike of the Eastern longshoremen, all reveal the increasing tempo of struggle among the working class.

The newspapers will not publish news of these struggles for better conditions. Neither will Hollywood, even in its news reels. Because of this conspiracy of silence, there is an urgent need for a film that will reflect the bitter struggle that will certainly take place this winter. It would picture the American Scene in its true colors. It would tell the truth that Hollywood is trying so hard to hide.

"WINTER 1931" is to be a moving picture exposure of this kind. It will be a unified structure composed of separate news events, each news item featuring some dramatic detail of unemployment and mass struggle. Sharply against the cold of winter will flash the flop houses, the tattered clothes, the bread lines, lonely men freezing to death, spontaneous strikes, suicides, the more and more insistent demands of the starving millions, their hunger marches and demonstrations. The leisure class will be contrasted with the underfed. The picture will be used to raise relief for strikers' families and to support the struggles of the unemployed.

This project will be directed by the WORKERS' FILM & PHOTO LEAGUE, a department of the WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL RELIEF.

The purpose of the WORKERS' FILM & PHOTO LEAGUE is to:

- 1- Dramatize the class struggle thru the camera's eye.
- 2- Raise relief funds.
- 3- Develop proletarian culture among workers.

- The equipment of the WORKERS' FILM & PHOTO LEAGUE includes:
- 1- Contacts for distribution of workers films with thousands of workers' clubs, societies, and other organizations.
  - 2- A technical staff of 45 still photographers and 9 cinema photographers, including Louis Jacobs, editor of "Experimental Cinema", H. A. Potamkin, movie critic, and Hiram Longview, cinema engineer.
  - 3- Dark rooms, cutting and finishing instruments and an adequate supply of cameras and tripods.

Branches of the FILM & PHOTO LEAGUE exist in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Cleveland and in many key cities and towns, always in direct contact with locals of the WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL RELIEF. The relationship that exists between workers film groups and the W.I.R. in the United States exists also between workers film groups and the W.I.R. in all countries. This enables the LEAGUE internationally to act as distributor of "Weltfilm", "Prometheus" (Berlin) films, "Mezraprom" (Moscow) and "Sovkino" films to workers thruout the world.

The requirements for producing the film are:  
 12,000 feet of film; traveling expenses of local camera men who will receive no wages; cost of raw stock for developing, printing and finishing the 8,000 feet of film that go into making an 8 reel picture. The extra 4,000 feet are a waste estimate.

\$4,500. is the fund needed to cover all expenses to photograph and develop "WINTER 1931".

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### "MOTHER KRAUSEN"

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M. Baker, Prolet-Buehne

There have been lately a number of German pictures on Broadway but "MOTHER KRAUSEN" was not amongst them. Why not? Because "MOTHER KRAUSE" is a true copy of proletarian life and its struggle for existence. Yet this film reached numbers of workers in America. It was presented before workers' organizations by the Workers' International Relief.

The picture "MOTHER KRAUSEN" shows us the life of proletarians in one of the poorest sections of Berlin. Crowded in a little flat Mother Krausen, a newspaper carrier, lives together with her daughter, her son and three sub-tenants: a pimp, a street-walker and her child. The pimp tries to seduce her daughter, but Mother Krause is forced to keep this tenant as she needs every penny to refund the 20 marks to the newspaper company which her son has stolen from her. The story reaches its climax when her son is arrested for robbing a store. At this moment Mother Krause gives up struggling and commits suicide by opening the gas jet. The picture ends with a demonstration of workers singing the International amongst them Mother Krausen's daughter

and her friend. This demonstration is shown a few times throughout the picture, expressing the idea that there is a way out of all the misery thru the solidarity of the whole workingclass. But it is only the youth who are marching. Mother Krausen is not among them. Her only way out was suicide. But a proletarian picture should show the way for the old as well as the young workers.

The scenery and characters are done well. It is not the usual make-up that we are used to in bourgeois pictures that hide the truth by glorifying the characters. The picture "MOTHER KRAUSEN" shows us the miserable conditions under which the proletariat is living but it does not show the cause of that misery. As a weapon in the class struggle a proletarian picture should expose the capitalist system and should show the way out of all the misery- the solidarity of the entire workingclass.

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A LETTER FROM JAPAN  
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November 7, 1931

To the "Workers Film & Photo League"  
Att: H. A. Potamkin,

We have received the letter of July 22nd by H.A. Potamkin. You may well realize how welcome your letter was. However, don't take it amiss that we have taken so long to reply. Circumstances forced the delay, so that we were unable to answer your communication until the present day.

We have already known of the formation of your league thru the "New Masses". From now on we wish to affiliate with you in the name of the International Proletarian Film Movement.

We have formed workers and peasants film circles and have eleven sections in Japan. In five years we have produced thirty and more films: document film, newsreel, caricature film and film drama. Our projection-troupes wander in land and factory. Since this autumn we have been producing a standard film. This will be profitable for the exchange of the foreign films and ours.

Please send us your films and published matter. We will also send you ours. Next time we will send you our history and description of our activities. We wish to know what is your relation to the "American Proletarian" and the "Experimental Cinema". We wish to affiliate with you permanently.

In the name of the 14th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution!

Comradely yours,  
JAPANESE PROLETARIAN FILM LEAGUE (PROKINO)  
Secretary Shuichi Uemura

## THE SCHEDULE OF IMMEDIATE SHOWINGS OF THE FILM &amp; PHOTO LEAGUE ARE:

Dec. 20- THE HUNGER MARCH FILM at the Star Casino.

The official moving picture of the Hunger March, showing police attacks and mass welcome from tens of thousands of cheering workers; demonstrations of unparalleled size and militancy; the historic scene at the capitol where the Red Front Band played the International and the workers shouted for unemployment insurance, while the police aimed machine guns at them; the sympathetic thousands who gathered in solidarity with the marchers.

Great mass showings of this film are planned also for N. Y. C., Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis.

Jan. 1- STORM OVER ASIA- I.W.O.- South Norwalk, Conn.

Jan. 4-5- " " " Shule #1, Brooklyn, N. Y.

" 7- TRANSPORT OF FIRE- Y.C.L., Albany

" 8-15 RUBICON- W.F.R., New Jersey

" 9- NEW BABYLON- Shoe & Leather Workers Indust. Union, N. Y.

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THE LEAGUE HAS FOR DISTRIBUTION THE FOLLOWING FILMS:

Mechanics of the Brain  
 Czar Ivan the Terrible  
 The Station Master  
 3 Comrades and 1 Invention  
 A Shanghai Document  
 10 Days That Shook The World  
 The Yellow Pass  
 Taras Shevchenko  
 Two Days  
 The Lash of the Czar  
 Krassin  
 Aelita (Revolt of the Robots)  
 Flames On the Volga  
 Prisoners of the Sea  
 Moscow Today  
 Village of Sin  
 Spartaciade  
 In Old Siberia  
 Her Way of Love  
 The Man With The Camera  
 The Girl With The Bandbox  
 (Moscow Laughs)  
 Seeds of Freedom  
 Afghanistan  
 Forest People of Siberia  
 Petty Scandal  
 Arsenal  
 Old and New

China Express  
 Cain and Artem  
 Storm Over Asia  
 Tur'sid  
 Igdenbu  
 Transport of Fire  
 Cities and Years  
 Jew at War  
 Rubicon  
 Tolikushka  
 Living Corpse  
 Volga to Gastonia  
 Strike Against Starvation-  
 (Coal Strike-1931)  
 Cannons or Tractors  
 5 Year Plan in 4  
 Harbor Drift.  
 Mutter Krausen's Fahrt ins Gluck  
 Mother Krausen (English titles)

SHORT SUBJECTS:

May Day in New York, 1931  
 Workers News, 1931  
 W.I.R. Children's Camp, N. Y.  
 Coal Strike, 1931  
 A Short Trip to Soviet Union  
 Albany Hunger March, 1931  
 Passaic Strike, 1927

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# REVIEWS

## TWO GROUPS AND AN AGITPROP GROUP

An Answer by C. Gordon.

In the Nov. issue of "WORKERS THEATRE" Com. Bonn reviews the performances of the 3 workers groups at the opening of a conference of the Jewish Workers Clubs. Com. Bonn shows clearly that the Agitprop-Theatre is more desirable, more effective, and is better received by a workers audience, than the descriptive narrative character play. The performance of the Prolet-Buehne has virtually proven it. By inviting the Prolet-Buehne to perform at the celebration, it was intended to demonstrate before the comrades of the Yiddish Dram Sections better methods of work than those which they use. At this performance we saw excellent work. In com. Bonn's review, however, we see theory but no immediate practical suggestion as to how to become an Agitprop Troop. This method of contracting black against a white background is worthy of an enemy, or of an obdurate dullard. I may tell com. Bonn, however, that the Yiddish Dram Circles look upon the Prolet-Buehne as the finest example of proletarian theatre which they try to emulate but cannot.

Com. Bonn will surely wonder why they cannot. I would suggest that com. Bonn reexamine a few questions that he already deems to have solved, namely: "Are the German comrades better actors?" Com. Bonn says: no! I say: yes! The German comrades have 3 years of agitprop experience.. The German comrades have a solid group of disciplined members that devote most of their time to theatrical work, while the Yiddish Dram Groups have had very little experience. The Dram Group of a given club during one month is not the same during the next month. The fact also that the theatre group devotes very little time to dram work, contributes to the poor quality of its acting ability.- The next question to consider is - "Have the German comrades better leaders?" Of course, they have! Com. Bonn himself is a highly trained showman, and each one of the group has acquired enough experience to become a good leader. The Yiddish groups, however, obtain their leaders from the ranks of the unexperienced players, and the result is: weak, ineffective performances, poor orientation and helplessness in adopting new theatrical methods.

I have answered the first two questions sincerely without trying to cover up our failings. Self-criticism and comradely understanding is the only way to avoid flaws and to remove existing evils. The third question that com. Bonn asks: "Is the technical apparatus of the German group better than that of the Yiddish?" The answer to this is obvious: where there's experience and discipline there the

apparatus will work smoothly.

I would now like to ask Con. Bonn a few questions: If the quality of the players, leaders, and technical structure is everywhere the same, and the most important thing is the policy of the work, then, why are the W.L.T. groups not as effective and as strong as the German Prolet-Buehne? They use the same methods of work as the Prolet-Buehne and are Agitation Groups from the first day of their organization. Yet there's a tremendous difference between the W.L.T. and the Prolet-Buehne. Have you German comrades who consist of one player group, a sufficient selection of plays, or do you suffer the same dearth of material as all the other groups? It is not known to me whether you enjoy any prosperity in this regard, even though you yourselves are the authors of plays and are closely connected with the German Agitation Groups? But we who have to provide 17 groups with play material, without possessing an apparatus to prepare it, without using the bourgeois material, and unable to avail ourselves of Soviet plays because of their local character, how can we be "choosy" without having anything to choose from?

In conclusion: what do we aim at by reviewing the performance of any proletarian group? It is not just to find flaws, or to bestow compliments, it is rather to show how to correct mistakes. It is necessary to acquaint oneself with the needs and conditions of the group under discussion. Con. Bonn did not even take the trouble to acquaint himself with the contents of the play which he reviewed. A play by a Soviet proletarian writer B. Orshansky, is turned by con. Bonn into that of a bourgeois writer Sholem Aleichen (that must be the fault of con. Bonn's notebook). I do not intend to aver that the Coney Island group played well, I thoroughly agree that the Coney Island group acquitted themselves boldly in this play; that the professional antics of the Prospect group have weakened the effect of a good proletarian play. It is, however, inadequate to conclude with the pious wish "we want good revolutionary plays". But it is necessary to show how to write good revolutionary plays. You, con. Bonn, know how to do it; we will not be too lazy to learn.

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MR. DOX, MR. FOX, AND MR. NOX.

Produced by Workers Laboratory Theatre  
N.Y.

Reviewed by Gertrud Schacht.

The new play of the W.L.T. is a very good one, and as it deals with the subject, how the bosses want to make profit and do not care about the workers at all, it is fit for any workers affair.

The Nov. 27th performance did not have the strong revolutionary effect, however, it ought to have. First, because the mass recitations at the beginning and at the end of the play were not brought out strong enough, and therefore did not have the response from the

audience for which the words called. The players have to speak more convincingly in order to arouse the audience.

Furthermore, in order to bring out the collective character of such a mass recitation it would be advisable for the players to wear some kind of uniforms, but this is of secondary importance, of course.

Box, Fox and Nox, the three capitalists in the play, acted impressively, only they were too funny. Even funny stage-capitalists must not make us forget the bosses' cruelty against the workers. The workers audience enjoyed these capitalists a great deal, but did not feel like fighting them when these closed down their factories, because they didn't make enough profit. Mr. Box, Fox, and Nox must be shown more cynical in order to emphasize the calculating meanness of the bosses.

The settings, three desks of the capitalists for instance, gave a nice picture on the stage, but the performance would be just as impressive without them. These things are not so easily transported, and a Workers Theatre surely has to do a lot of travelling. So why increase the difficulties of a Workers Theatre by carrying around a truckload of properties.

In performing Mr. Box, Fox, and Nox, the Workers Laboratory Theatre showed that it is on the right track towards becoming a good Agitation Troop. These little shortcomings do not amount too much and are easily eliminated. We always learn our best lessons through our faults

## THE LESSONS OF A CULTURAL EVENING

By A. Prentis.

We must start with the premise that a worker's audience comes to a play or a concert not only to be entertained or amused but also to prepare and train itself culturally or otherwise for the class struggle. With this premise we have a basis for analyzing the cultural evening at the Finnish Club at which 4 types of groups performed: sports, music, choral and dramatic groups.

To begin with the sports groups - one a Finnish, performing calisthenics, and the other a Japanese, showing Jiu Jitsu - did the audience learn, say, how to develop strong bodies like the Finnish athlete or did they learn what exercises will increase the chest expansion? What exercises will develop the biceps? No, they merely saw them perform feats of strength, and that is not sufficient. Neither was it sufficient to watch how one Japanese comrade defended himself from another by means of Jiu Jitsu. The comrades should have demonstrated to the audience in detail how they too might utilize the art; they should even have called on to the stage some comrades from the audience and taught them how to use it.



With the above-mentioned premise in mind, we must ask what are the requirements of a chorus or a musical group to help in training the audience for the class struggle? - First, the music and content must be of a militant, revolutionary nature; then, the content must be understood by everybody; finally, the instruments or voices must be of a type or arranged in such a manner as to make the first two requisites as effective as possible. With this in mind, we can say that the Freieit Mandolin orchestra, while playing revolutionary music known to everyone had only a weak effect, being what it is (besides having a soloist, who was not sure of what she is about) - and perhaps could be strengthened with banjos and guitars. The Finnish mixed chorus and the Hungarian male chorus, while very effective, neutralized their value by singing in their native languages not understood by the entire audience. And for this very reason the Ukrainian mixed chorus was the most effective, not only because they sang revolutionary songs, not only because the singers were capably directed but also because they sang in English which everyone understood. - As for the girl Pioneers, they should have had a number of boys to strengthen their chorus. Also their singing should have been given a quicker tempo.

We must again keep our premise in mind, and more when considering the work of the dramatic groups. We must assume that not only must a workers play deal with a situation in the class struggle, not only must it be produced effectively and understood by the particular audience, it must also be so written and produced that it act upon the emotions of the audience and arouse them to protest, to action, to resentment of the facts or disclosures presented in the play. That is what makes a workers play a more effective weapon than all the other arts, the movies excepted. If it does not arouse the audience, it is not necessarily a workers play.

It seems then, that according to the above, not one of the three groups performing that evening had fulfilled all the requirements. The Swedish Dram Section, giving a mass recitation of "The Party", was the least effective. Done in Swedish which few understood, there was no gesture accompaniment to clarify the action, and the tonal colors were not developed - there was no stress or intonation, that would have helped to understand the content and that would have moved the audience.

A similar criticism applies to the work of the Prolet-Buehne, (presenting the "Belt" and "Tempo! Tempo!") though to a smaller extent, because the mass recitation is accompanied by stylized gestures that make the content intelligible. But the language is foreign, and though the audience is moved, it is moved by the innate rhythm, by the tempo, not by the content of the play - it is not moved to action. A bourgeois audience would probably be moved by their work to the same extent.

Similar criticism, though to a still smaller extent, applies also to the Workers Laboratory Theatre's presentation of "Mr. Box, Fox and Nox", relating in two mass recitations and a short realistic scene the causes of depression. Though the action and the language were intel-

ligible, the audience was not moved or aroused to action or to resentment. This play could also be presented before a liberal or bourgeois group without undue strain.

We must touch upon this question at greater length. We find that many groups are taking to mass recitations and we must remember that a workers audience, not unlike any other audience, while capable of thinking, has no time to think during a performance and must, therefore, be reached through the emotions. A play, to move them, must present to the audience plot and action and conflict. A mass recitation, while having a definite value in Agitprop work, where questions of time and setting preclude plot and action, attempts to tell the audience, attempts to arouse the audience through the intellect. As such it is the same as a number of public speakers speaking to the audience simultaneously and simply distributing the work of speaking.

At the same time, a mass recitation could be made very effective. Being essentially a chorus where instead of singing the members speak, vocal color could be added by the actors stressing different words, by pauses, by harmonizing the voices of those having the same pitch, by contrasting the voices of those having different pitches, say, a high and a low, a male and a female.

A word about the sets. In "Mr. Box, Fox, and Nox" props and a painted backdrop were tried out for the first time. It seems to the writer that the props were very much in place but the backdrop was not. Unless a backdrop or scenery has the function of giving the local of the place, it is useless. If there is too much scenery, it overshadows the action. If there is too little, the audience won't pay any attention to it - better leave it out altogether. Scenery or a painted backdrop must have a definite function in the action of the play. - In this case it did not.

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## THE BONUS

Produced by the Workers Exservicemen's League.

In a recent lecture at the W.L.T. Lee Strassberg, director of the play "1931", stressed the fact that the worker-actor needs training. A member of the exservicemen's league replied that a worker-actor needs workers experience. It seems we need both training and experience.

This was illustrated clearly when the Workers Exservicemen's League presented "The Bonus" at the Manhattan Lyceum, and at several subsequent performances. This play describing in dramatic narrative how the demand for the soldiers' bonus was frustrated at the recent Legion convention, is utilized for the purpose of recruiting exservicemen into the W.E.S.L. To accomplish this aim it attempts to

arouse that part of the audience whose interests are directly concerned. When presented before an audience of exservicemen, the play went over so well that 26 joined up. When later presented before an ordinary audience, and they played somewhat better than before, the play did not quite click. Why? Also, why does a bourgeois play take several weeks to rehearse while these workers, who never acted before, rehearsed only 3 times before appearing?

The answer lies in - experience and training. The W.E.S.L. members were able to produce the play so well without much rehearsing because they had the authentic experience. The exserviceman-audience received it so well because they also had the authentic experience, they were sympathetic, their interests were in common. The subsequent audiences - indifferent or unsympathetic - had to be convinced. And they were only partly. Why?

As mentioned above the play was written to arouse the audience. This could only be done by developing the conflict, by making the audience take sides. And while the play has that conflict, in the acting it was not brought out convincingly. While partly due to inadequate staging facilities, it is a fact that Smith, Freeman and Philips are slightly mechanical, Hoover, Mellon and Lamont somewhat artificial. Simpson could put a little fire into his words. In a word: they could all stand some training.

Not the training that requires going to school for about 4 years and learning how to dance and fence, but continual playing, continual studying, continual learning.

In contrast to many other mass organizations, the W.E.S.L. recognized the eminent propaganda value of the theatre and - which is the most important thing - made use of it.

The newly organized group gave a fine performance so that we are not afraid to give some constructive criticism to help our comrades from the W.E.S.L. in their future dramatic work. It is with greatest interest that we are looking forward towards their next production.

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# CORRESPONDENCE

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"IT IS WITH STRONG EAGERNESS  
THAT I AWAIT THE MAGAZINES"

From a Friend in West Haven, Conn.

Dear Friends;

In the last Theatre Art's Monthly I observed an article on the spirit and ideals of your organization. In spite of its critical onlook, I assure you that I received it with heart-felt stamps of joy, for you seem to affirm strongly and certainly the very beliefs which I myself had formed vaguely within me - I, a foolish Utopist!

Would you kindly send me a copy of your WORKERS THEATRE periodical? When I receive the magazines I shall read them carefully, and absorb the true essence of your movement. Then I shall write to you, with absolute freedom, and tell you all I shall have to tell, as you requested I should.

It is with strong eagerness that I await the magazines!

Please believe all I have written. I send my most sincere wishes, and hope you receive deep response for your earnest and idealistic efforts.

Most sincerely,  
A.A.

AND FROM AMSTERDAM (Holland):

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Dear Friends;

In answer to your letter of Nov. 10th, I let you know, that I mean to subscribe to the magazine WORKERS THEATRE. Please send me all backnumbers and also the new issues. With the same post I send you 1 year's subscription 1.50 Dllr.

I read the address of WORKERS THEATRE in a number of New Masses, and I also read of your theatre in the German Magazine "ARBEITERBUENE UND FILM". I am very interested in the Workers Theatre, also in the U.S.A. and therefore I should be very glad if you could send me all backnumbers of your Magazine.

I hope you will mail the numbers of "WORKERS THEATRE" very soon.

With kindly regards  
E. K.

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# NEWS AND NOTES

WORKERS DRAMATIC COUNCIL, N.Y.  
 met only once in Dec., on the 14th. The second session was cancelled on account of the rehearsals for the Mass Pageant "The Trial of the Yellow Press". - The plan for the Workers Theatre Training course was accepted as presented by the Dram Buro. The delegates approved also of the arrangements for the Mass Pageant "The Trial of the Yellow Press" (for the 8th anniversary of the "Daily Worker"). A directorial committee of four consisting of an acting director, an organizer, a technical director and a musical director are in charge of the different parts of the preparation work. Rehearsals will take place twice a week. 5-6 rehearsals are provided in all. - The Chairman of the Dram Buro brought greetings from the Philadelphia groups, which had a special joint meeting on Dec. 13th. (A report on this meeting will be published as a separate News Item). - The next meeting of the Dram Council will be held on Jan. 11th and 25th.

Theatre Group. An Agitprop play will be written, directed and performed collectively. Preceding the meetings short lectures on outstanding problems of the Workers Theatre will be held. The course will be based on the following training plan:

NR.	LECTURES	MEETINGS
1.	Tasks of Workers Theatre by Reines, (W.L.T.)	Organisational meeting Election of functionari
2.	How to write a workers play by Elion, (W.L.T.)	Planning and writing of the play.
3.	Technique of play-directing by Shapiro, (W.L.T.)	Drawing of staging plan Casting, etc
4.	Special org. and political problems by Haller, (Prolet-Buehne)	Rehearsal.
5.	Special artistic questions by Bonn, (Prolet-Buehne)	Rehearsal.
6.	Students present re-organizational plans for their respective groups.	Performance.

The practical work in the meeting will be directed by Con. Bonn, (Prolet-Buehne).

## WORKERS THEATRE TRAINING COURSE

organized by the Dram Council, N.Y. will start in the second half of January. The aim of the course is to introduce the members of the various Workers Theatres into the theoretical and practical fundamentals of Agitprop work. A new method of teaching and training which will make the work more interesting and successful will be applied in this course. The students of the course will work together as a temporary Workers

Each Workers Theatre Group represented in the Dram Council can delegate 1-2 students. The beginning of the course and the exact dates of the meetings (which will take place on Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons) will be announced in the next Dram Council meeting on Jan. 11th. For information write to: Dram Buro, 16 West 21st Street, New York City.

**BE SURE THAT YOUR DELEGATE ATTENDS THE NEXT DRAM COUNCIL MEETING!!!!**

COOPERATION NEW YORK - PHILADEL-

PHILA. - A joint meeting of the Philadelphia groups with the Prolet-Buehne N.Y., arranged by the Dram Buro, was held in Phila on Dec. 15th. Representatives of the Phila groups (John Reed, Prolet-art, Vanguard) a member of the Prolet-Buehne and a comrade who organized cultural work in Houston, Texas, gave reports on activities, experiences, results and special problems. After Com. Meznikov gave a general survey of the situation in Philadelphia, Com. Bonn from the Dram Buro reported on the organisational structure and the activities of the Dram Buro and Dram Council in New York. A surprise performance of the agitprop play "On the Belt" was given by the Prolet-Buehne. - The various reports and especially the performance gave the basis for a lively and successful discussion on the problems of agitprop work. The result of the discussion was the unanimous recognition of Agitprop work as the most efficient and most desirable working method of the Workers Theatre, and all agreed in the notion that a thorough political education and a strict but comradely discipline must become the main foundation for our work. - As a practical result of the meeting the following resolutions were passed:

1. To organize a Phila. Dram Council
2. To organize a training course similar to that of the N.Y. Dram Council. (N.Y. promised to send instructors if necessary.)
3. To establish a permanent cooperation between N.Y. and Philadelphia
  - a) by sending regularly reports to N.Y.
  - b) by appointing a Phila comrade as member of the Dram Buro.

4. To arrange in Febr. a preliminary Spartakiade for Philadelphia, to which the Prolet-Buehne and the Workers Laboratory Theatre of N.Y. are invited as guest groups.
5. To participate in the National Workers Theatre Conference to be held in New York, April 19

There is no doubt: the workers of Philadelphia are decided to develop their workers theatre to a powerful and efficient weapon against the capitalist class, and, there is no doubt either, the Phila groups have the forces capable to carry out this task.

- And what are other districts and cities of the country doing for a better Workers Theatre in the U.S.?

WORKERS LABORATORY THEATRE OF THE  
W.I.R., N.Y. The WLT gave three performances of "Mr. Box, Mr. Fox and Mr. Nox" in December. - Bookings for January so far are: 1.6. Affair of the W.I.R., (Midtown Br. 16 W 21) 1.8. Mass Welcome to the W.I.R. delegation just returned from the 8th World Congress of the W.I.R., (New Star Casino, 107th St and Park Ave) 1.9. W.I.R. of Jersey City (Ukrainian Hall, 160 Montecor Str. J.C.) - The WLT is also participating with other groups of the Workers Dram Council in a Mass Pageant to be presented at the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Daily Worker on Jan. 3rd at the Bronx Coliseum, and also at the Lenin Memorial meeting on Jan. 19th. - Workers Theatre Nights have been held every Saturday beginning Dec. 12, when Com. Bushwold of the "Froide and "Artef" spoke on "Form and Content in the Workers Theatre", and the WLT presented "Mr. Box, Mr. Fox and Mr. Nox". On Dec. 19, Lee Strassberg of the Group Theatre, director of "1930

spoke on "Training the Actor in the Workers Theatre", and the Dram group of the Workers Exercisemen's League presented "Bonus Thieves on Trial". On the third night, Dec. 26, Com. Bonn of the Prolet-Buehne spoke on "Agitprop Theatre - its Aims and Methods", and the Prolet-Buehne presented "I.L.D., More Than Ever!", "On the Belt", and "Scottsboro". The discussion which is part of each program gets hotter and more interesting each week. - Workers Theatre Nights will continue on Saturday evenings thru January, at the W.I.R., 16 W 21st St. N.Y.C.

PROLET-BUEHNE, GERMAN AGITPROP TROOP, N.Y. gave during December 10 performances; 4 of them before German speaking audiences, 5 before mixed audiences of Jewish, English, and Italian speaking workers. One performance was given for an audience sympathetic to the Socialist Party. The group had one new production, a New Years Eve Farce. - Bookings for January so far are: 1.1. (9 P.M.) "Scottsboro" (I.W.O.Br. 2; 64 E4) 1.1. (10.30 P.M.) "On the Belt"; "Tempo! Tempo!" (Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union, Central Opera House, 67th Str. and 3. Ave) 1.3. Participation in Mass Pageant "Trial of the Yellow Press" (Daily Worker Celebration, Bronx Coliseum) 1.9. "Scottsboro"; "I.L.D." Ladies Tailoring Group, 350 E 81) 1.16. Full evening program of 5 plays (Cooperative Kindergarten affair, 2800 Bronx Park East) 1.19. Participation in Pageant Lenin Memorial, Bronx Coliseum) 1.30. "Hoppla, Wir Leben!" "On the Belt" (Daily Worker Celebration, Newark). - Two members were elected for participation in the Training Course, conducted by the Dram Council. The group endorsed the recommendations of the Dram Council.

oil for a National Workers Theatre Conference in April 1932 and decided 1. To help in the preparations by raising funds and otherwise, 2. To send a delegate to the Conference, 3. To take part in the preliminary contest for the Theatre Spartakiade at the opening of the Conference. - The group also decided to give over one copy of each play of the Prolet-Buehne to the Repertory Dept. of the Dram Buro. - As the Prolet-Buehne gives most of its performances for non-German speaking audiences, the membership decided to build up an English repertory. The first production in this series will be "The Story of the 9 Negro Boys in Scottsboro, Alabama", translated from the group recitation which is since 6 months on the German repertory of the Prolet-Buehne.

RED PLAYERS, N.Y. gave during Dec. 6 performances of "Step on it". For about two weeks the group was not able to play because some of the members had to go to jail suddenly. There are no bookings for Jan. so far, for the group usually receives notices only a short time before the performance.

UKRAINIAN DRAM CIRCLE, N.Y. gave 2 performances of a 3-hour-play in N.Y. and Jersey City. The Dram Circle divided itself into two groups: one group will continue produce 3 and 5 act plays of the old style, while the new group will be developed into an Agit-prop Troop.

JACK LONDON CLUB-DRAM SECTION, NEWARK, made its first appearance with a remarkable performance of "Mr. God is not in". "Step on it" is in rehearsal now. The group already started its preparations for the National Theatre Spartakiade in April by assigning members to write a mass recitation.

JEWISH WORKERS CLUBS' DRAM SECTIONS

East Side Workers Club gave during Dec. 2 performances. Bookings for Jan. are: 1.9. "Jack and Jim", 2 scenes (E.S.W.C., 196 E Broadway) 1.23. Lenin Memorial affair of the Club "Red Horseback Rider", a mass recitation; and "Instinct", a Soviet play (E.S.W.C. same address) - 6 members are taking part in both Pageants, "Daily Worker", and Lenin Memorial.

Conoy Island W.Cl. gave 2 plays in Dec. One of them concerning the recent breadstrike in Conoy Island was written by members of the group. Bookings for Jan: 1.16. Recitations at Lenin Memorial evening (2921 W 32nd Str. Brooklyn) - 2 members are taking part in the Pageants, Jan. 3 and 19.

Brownsville Youth Club gave one performance in Dec. - The group will play "Instinct" at a Lenin Memorial evening, 105 Bedford Ave, Brooklyn. - 2 members are participating in the Pageants.

Williamsburg W.Cl. gave 2 performances in Dec. Performances in Jan. will be: 1.1. at Downtown W.Cl., 14 Clinton Str. and 1.23. at 795 Flushing Ave, Brooklyn.

Bronx W.Cl. will perform "Fritz and Edger" and a mass recitation "Union Square" on Jan. 9, at 1610 Boston Rd. Bronx.

Boro Park W.Cl. will perform "Success" on Jan. 9, at 1473 - 45rd Str. Brooklyn.

Downtown W.Cl. will perform "Success" on Jan. 23, at 11 Clinton St. The classes of the Jewish Dram Sections are being held regularly on Wednesday 8 PM and Saturday 3 PM, and are well attended.

THE RED DANCERS OF THE W.I.R., N.Y. are taking part in the "Daily Worker" and Lenin Memorial Pageants.

SEND A COPY OF YOUR REPLY TO DRAM BUREAU, REPERTORY DEPT. 16 W 21 Str. N.Y.

BLUE BLOUSES DRAM STUDIO, CHICAGO was the first group to send back the questionnaire concerning the National Workers Theatre Conference which was sent out to all out-of-town groups by the Dram Bureau. The Blue Blouses agree with the set date and want to support the conference as much as possible for they realize the importance of a National Workers Theatre Organization. Plans are being made to build up a Workers Dram Council in Chicago.

JOHN REED DRAM GROUP, PHILADELPHIA gave 3 performances during Dec., 1 of "It's Funny as Hell" and 2 of "Mr. Box, Fox, and Hox."

REVOLUTIONARY COMPETITION OF PROLET-BUCHNE AND WORKERS LABOR THEATRE - a revolutionary competition in selling the Magazine "WORKERS THEATRE" was carried out between the two groups during Dec. The challenge was to sell 50 copies of "WT". The results are as follows:

PROLET-BUCHNE	97 copies.
W.L.T.	62 copies.

That means that both groups succeeded in reaching the aim. However, the W.L.T. with a much larger membership than the Prolet-Buchne should have been in the lead. Instead of that the Prolet-Buchne is the winner with 55 more copies sold than the W.L.T.

WORKERS THEATRE GROUPS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY! What have you done so far in preparation for the National Workers Theatre Conference? Did you send back the questionnaire that was sent to you by the Dram Bureau? Did you start preparations for the National Theatre Spontaneous? If not, do so IMMEDIATELY! Communicate with the Dram Bureau, Write for all informations to the Dram Bureau, 16 West 21st Str. N.Y.



## RED SPOTLIGHT

On the evening of the 26th of December Red spotlight found itself in possession of a quarter. It thereupon tiptoed its way into the quarters of the Workers Laboratory Theatre at 16 W. 21st St. to attend one of the Saturday evening theatre nights. Upon entering it began to cast its malignant rays into every suspicious nook and cranny with of course none too benevolent intentions.

For a time R.S. seemed to be doomed to disappointment. Comrade Ann unburdened himself of an interesting and instructive talk on the agitprop theatre, the Prolet-Buchno performed three corking agitprop plays and everything, sadly enough for Red spotlight, seemed just about as it should be.

Suddenly something happened. A comrade rose and asked the speaker to explain the value of an agitprop play in German to an English speaking audience.

Red spotlight sat up startled! What an opportunity to have almost missed! It blushed for very shame, turned itself on in full and began to buzz. But to its dismay Comrade Bonn, instead of hitting back, admitted the inconsistency and announced that the Prolet-Buchno will shortly take to English. "Well", sighed Red spotlight, "If the other language groups get wind of this and follow suit, I am going to have a very dull time".

We are told by a sympathizer who possesses the price of admission that "1931-", recent production of the Group Theatre, is full of good propaganda, altho the propoganda is not obvious. (The non-obviousness being, of course, a recommendation as to its intrinsic value as a play).

This is extremely interesting tho somewhat puzzling. We can't for the world understand the value of that sort of propoganda, unless it is meant to sort of put one over on the audience.

To our somewhat naive way of thinking it would seem that the clarity of the message need not at all interfere with the power of the play.

However, we must point out as a matter of fairness that the fault may lie with us, since we have forgotten some time ago the meaning of intrinsic value.

We must point out also, and that also as a matter of fairness, that the play "1931-" carries its message pretty obviously, except that it is just as obviously not entirely our message.

Conclusion: Let us carry on our obvious propoganda and let us make it good and obvious.