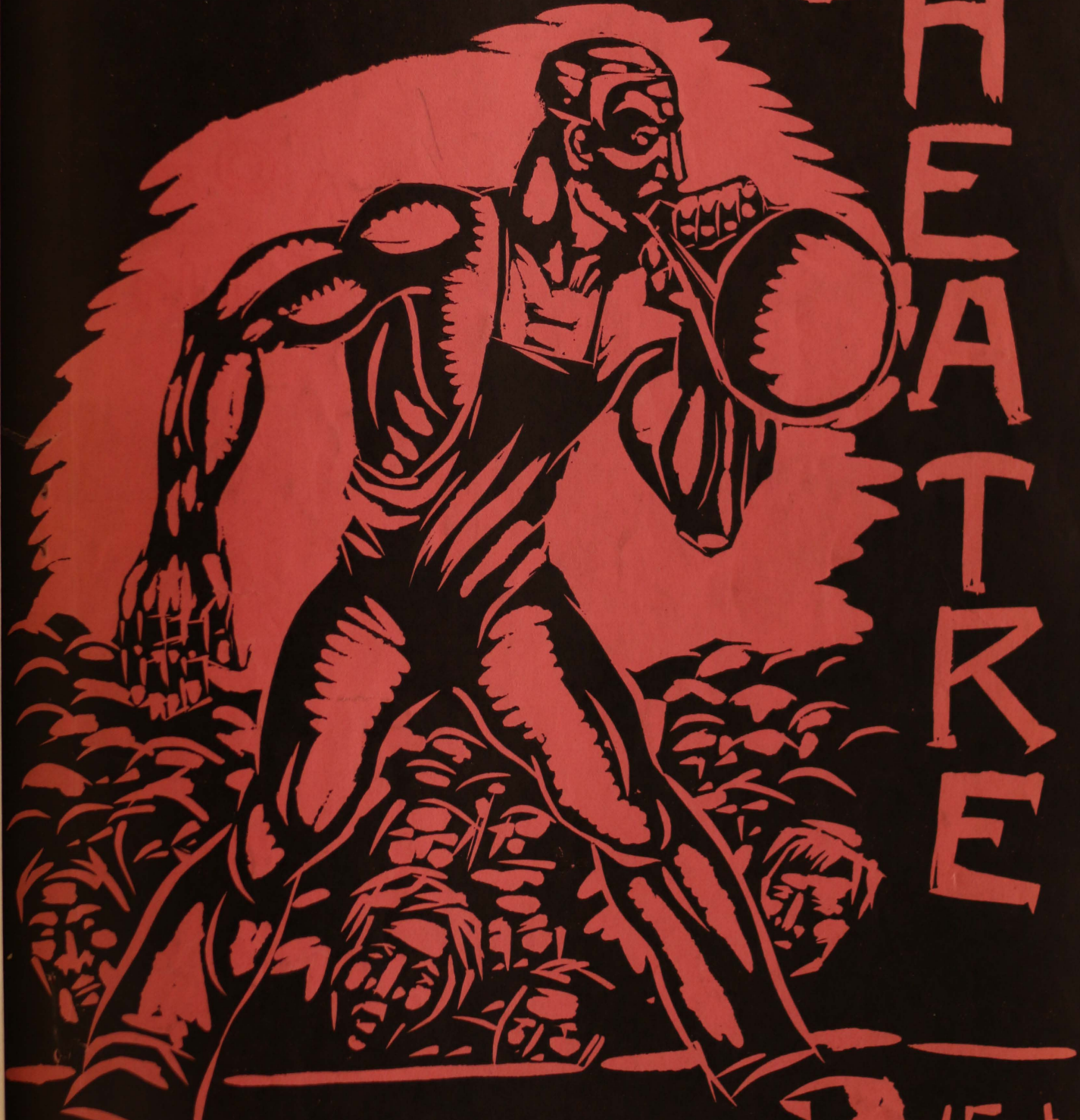


WORKER'S THEATRE



APRIL 1932

15¢

WORKER'S

THEATRE



APRIL 1932

15¢

W O R K E R S T H E A T R E

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

BY

UNITED WORKERS THEATRES OF NEW YORK:
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A
W E A P O N

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EACH GROUP needs

- a) at least 25 - 50 copies for propaganda purposes during the next year
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The Secretariat of the International Workers Dramatic Union, Moscow, states in an analysis of our magazine:
"Our work can only be made popular by a well printed organ!"

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"A WELL PRINTED ORGAN!"

GENERAL

A YEAR OF THE WORKERS' THEATRE MAGAZINE

The Workers' Theatre movement in the U.S.A., tho nearly ten years old, has been slow in developing. One of the reasons for this was the lack of a suitable organ by the aid of which the movement could be propogandized, organized, coordinated. Several times the advisability of such a publication was brought up, but each time the proposition was shooed off with the warning-- it will cost at least \$3000 to start with.

In March 1931 the Workers' Laboratory Theatre decided to find out for itself. It appointed an editorial committee, advanced it a loan of \$5, \$6 was collected among comrades and work was begun. The magazine was divided into 4 sections, a comrade was assigned to each section to edit, stencil and mimeograph it, and one comrade was assigned to make the cut for the cover on linoleum. A bottle of printers ink was bought, a typewriter roller was borrowed for spreading the ink, and using a tailor's iron the cover was printed. The whole membership of the WLT was then drafted to assemble and clip it and thus the first 200 copies of the Workers' Theatre Magazine came out in April 1931, proving that, given collective cooperation and a united will it is possible to publish a magazine on an expenditure of \$11. (As a matter of interest it is worth recording that, following the example of the W.T.Mag., at least 4 more publications are being published in a similar manner).

And now the W.T.Mag. is publishing 1000 copies a month and would publish more if not for the fact that, due to increased contents and circulation, the magazine committee, active in other theatre activities, sometimes has to stay up nights mimeographing and assembling the magazine. A movie section has been added and periodically articles on music and dancing are being published. The Prolet-buhne and the Film & Photo League have since been invited to participate in the publication and with their aid the magazine is in a fair way to be printed in the near future.

The achievements of the magazine should not be reckoned on the basis of publication and circulation figures, however. They should rather be reckoned on the basis of usefulness to the movement. Considered from that angle, the magazine has proven its usefulness. By publication of plays in every issue it has

helped to vitalize, organize and draw into the workers' theatre hundreds of workers' dramatic groups. By subsequent criticisms of these plays it has helped to train many playwrights who, tying up the plays with the miners' strikes, with the textile strike, with the Scottsboro case, with unemployment struggles, helped to raise relief as well as to arouse mass sentiment. It has helped to train writers whose task it is to reorientate the Theatre that it may serve our cause. It has cooperated in the election campaign. It is read in New York and California, in Texas and Canada, in Tokyo, Moscow, Berlin, Amsterdam, London. As a result of its constructive policy the magazine is highly thought of even by many theatre workers not identified with our movement.

Work achieved thus far should be but a promise of greater efforts to reach our goal, of greater self-criticism to make our work more effective. We should have undertaken a definite program of attack on the existing commercial and Little Theatres; we should have cooperated more with new groups; we should have trained more writers-- we did not do so, not because we forgot our tasks but because our forces are limited. Printing the magazine will aid us in solving these problems.

The struggle is getting sharper-- our movement is growing stronger, and we are proud to have been able to contribute to its growth in a small way. And on this first anniversary of the Workers Theatre Magazine we send revolutionary greetings to the First National Workers Theatre Conference and to all our readers who made our contribution possible. We urge them to take pride in our common work, for unlike the bourgeois theatre, we do not run away from life, we face life. Shoulder to shoulder with the workers we fight on all fronts, not as actors or writers, but as workers-- first and last-- workers, helping to dramatize, organize, propagate the class struggle.

THE EDITORS

THE ARTEF

Nathaniel Buchwald

(Cont. from Feb. issue)

The Artef was originally conceived as a proletarian art theatre to counteract the influence of the bourgeois theatre among the Jewish workers. As stated in a previous article, the traditional reverence on the part of the Jewish workers for the serious drama and the artistic presentation of plays was taken advantage of by the bourgeois Jewish Art Theatre to build up a proletarian following for its thoroly bourgeois, chauvinistic plays. Even to this day when the class line is drawn sharply in the minds of

the revolutionary Jewish workers not only in the realm of politics and economics, but also in the realm of art and culture, the bourgeois theatres still have a standing among these workers and exert a considerable amount of influence. To the extent that the ARTEF competes successfully in an artistic sense with the bourgeois art theatres it weans away the workers from those theatres and mobilizes them on the side of the theatre with an outspoken class content.

This aspect of the situation makes it necessary for the ARTEF to continue its policy of presenting full-length plays with all the paraphernalia of modern stage-craft that is sometimes mistaken for the "theatrical art". It goes without saying that full-length plays produced in the more or less orthodox manner may at the same time be carriers of powerful revolutionary propaganda and be justified on that score. It is also clear, however, that the time, money and energy required for the effective staging of full-length plays burdens the proletarian theatre with a task often beyond its capacities and monopolizes its resources to the detriment of the movement. The accomplishment of this specific task of producing a play becomes in a sense and end in itself, and the direct propaganda needs of the hour are sometimes lost sight of in the pre-occupation with building up the instruments of propaganda.

In the case of the ARTEF, the necessity of theatrical presentations that have a direct bearing upon the various campaigns and struggles of the labor movement has become more apparent as the ARTEF grew and extended its influence among the Jewish workers. The leadership of the ARTEF have been realizing for some time the necessity of a transition to agit-prop work in the sense of producing short plays that could be easily moved from place to place and be given without complicated settings and stage effects. But a sharp break with the practice of producing long plays and a transition to short agit-prop plays as the sole activity of the ARTEF has been and continues to be out of the question.

The reason is two-fold: first, the long play, presented "artistically", is still rooted in the traditions of the Jewish workers and is still useful both as an antidote to the bourgeois theatre and as an instrument of revolutionary propaganda; secondly, because the player-group of the ARTEF are still opposed, for good or bad, to the idea of reducing the proletarian theatre to "lower", "inartistic" forms of agit-prop work. The argument is frequently heard among them that revolutionary plays presented without the benefit of stage-craft haven't the necessary effect upon the audience and to this extent defeat their own purpose. Whatever merit there may be in this argument it undoubtedly springs fundamentally from the bourgeois notion that puts the accent upon the artistic aspect of a play rather than upon its ideological content.

These petty-bourgeois "art" sentiments are still current to a

considerable extent among the ARTEF players. The notions inculcated by their early directors and teachers from among the professionals of the bourgeois theatre have not yet been dispelled. This is one of the most serious shortcomings that the leadership of the ARTEF must be charged with. As a matter of fact, the ARTEF has been allowed to function as a proletarian organization with a divided apparatus in which the player-group have been least engaged in the political and organizational end of the work. The leadership has been in the hands mainly of non-players. This condition tended to perpetuate the political passivity of the bulk of the players and furnished fertile ground for the petty-bourgeois "art" notions. Inevitably, a sense of antagonism developed as between the players and the organizational and political leadership. The Art Council supplied the players with scrips, the Management Committee mapped out the course of activity, the time and place of performances and the players were reduced to the status of mere actors, mere specialists of the stage.

The situation is presented here in a somewhat exaggerated form in order to emphasize a basic weakness in the ARTEF. As a matter of fact, the players have been represented both in the Art Council and in the Management Committee and even more so in the Party fraction that lays down the broad lines of policy.

The leadership of the ARTEF have failed to bring about the activation of the player-group in the organization and left the players far behind in the matter of realizing the urgent need of agit-prop work. That is why we notice on one hand a tendency to break away from the long-play form, and on the other hand a stubborn clinging to that form in the ARTEF. That is why earnest steps in the direction of agit-prop work go hand in hand with regressions in the direction of an "art" theatre. The ARTEF leadership have failed to develop the players politically to the same extent that they have developed artistically.

Much, however, has been accomplished also in this respect. The players are becoming more and more imbued with the real spirit of an agit-prop troupe. The "art" notions among them have been driven to cover and the necessity of linking the ARTEF activities directly to the revolutionary mass struggles is generally conceded. But, the fear still persists among the players that a transition to agit-prop and the short play will inevitably involve the abandonment of the long play. To dispel this fear and to create a basis for the production of both long and short plays is one of the immediate tasks of the ARTEF with respect both to its players and its audience.

For the Jewish workers, too, are inclined to belittle agit-prop theatre as the sole form of proletarian theatre. There would undoubtedly arise considerable protest among the revolutionary Jewish workers if the ARTEF were to abandon its pres-

ent policy of long plays and embark on a policy of skits presented upon bare boards without the accustomed stage effects. Much of the popularity that the ARTEF has gained among the Jewish workers is undoubtedly due to the high artistic standard it has achieved as compared with the bourgeois theatres. To many Jewish workers the ARTEF is concrete proof of the idea that art and propaganda can go hand in hand.

So far as the ARTEF leadership is concerned, the immediate future course of the ARTEF does not involve a choice as between long and short plays, or as between artistic and crude presentations. On the contrary, the problem is to coordinate and cultivate both types of activity, always bearing in mind that ideologically there is no essential quarrel between these two manners of presenting a revolutionary play. The fact of the matter is that in the Jewish field there is an urgent need for both revolutionary agit-prop groups and a more or less stable revolutionary theatre. The only way to solve the problem is to extend the activity of the ARTEF rather than limit it in favor of one type of work or the other. The extension naturally must be in the direction of mobile agit-prop groups, in the direction of simplification of the theatrical presentation, in the direction of reducing the stage paraphernalia to a minimum and adapting the play to the technical limitations of a bare platform or a hall without a platform.

This extension involves first of all an increase in the number of players. Long plays generally engage the time and energy of a large number of players, with the result that little player material is left available for the simultaneous production of short plays. One of the problems of the ARTEF is to increase its player membership which now counts close to 50 workers. It is not enough to organize a new studio as the ARTEF is now doing, the number of players must be doubled or tripled, if the proletarian theatre among the Jewish workers is to discharge its prime obligation of supplying effective agit-prop troupes.

A way out of the difficult situation may be found in the closer cooperation between the ARTEF and the dram-section in the workers' clubs and other Jewish mass organizations. There are about 20 such groups in the Jewish field, all of them nominally engaged in producing proletarian plays. The condition of these groups is, however, far below par, both in point of ideological clearness, suitable repertory and directing and performing personels. It is clear that the ARTEF can and must exert its influence to raise the standard of these Jewish player-groups. Without in any way infringing upon the autonomy of these groups, the ARTEF proposes to assume responsibility for their guidance both political and technical. The Art Council of the ARTEF can easily care for the repertory needs of these workers groups and select or create short scripts upon timely revolutionary themes. From among the ARTEF players a half dozen directors can be train-

ed especially for club work and by efficiently organizing the apparatus, these directors can take care of all Jewish dram-sections now in existence as well as help in building up new ones.

In this manner a number of effective agit-prop groups may be developed and thus release some of the energies of the ARTEF proper for the continued production of full-length plays. It does not mean, of course, that the dram-sections are to assume the entire burden of agit-prop work in the Jewish field, for the ARTEF has been producing agit-prop plays and will continue to do so. It merely means a better balancing of forces in the entire Jewish field and a planned scheme of proletarian theatrical activities rather than sporadic performances by individual groups.

The idea of unifying and in some measure federating all proletarian player groups in the Jewish field is in no sense an attempt to isolate the Jewish field from the larger realm of international workers' theatres. On the contrary, the necessity for closer contact with workers' theatres of other nationalities is being realized more and more both in the ARTEF and in the dram-sections. In this respect the dram-council of New York has performed an important task. There is now more understanding and appreciation of the aims and functions of the workers' theatre than there was before the dram-council came into existence. The frequent appearance of such workers' groups as the Workers' Laboratory Theatre and the Prolet-Bühne (particularly the latter) at mass celebrations has done a good deal by way of bringing to the Jewish workers and the Jewish theatrical groups the true meaning of agit-prop work and an appreciation of its importance and effectiveness. The national conference of the workers' theatres and the theatrical Spartakiade will undoubtedly bring about even more of this understanding and appreciation. The very diversity of forms and modes of presentation of revolutionary plays will dispel among the Jewish player-groups the erroneous notion that agit-prop theatre means artless theatre and also the equally erroneous idea that no play can be effective unless it is framed in a fully equipped stage.

On behalf of the ARTEF and the Jewish workers, the writer appreciates the opportunity given him by the editors of the WORKERS' THEATRE to bring to the attention of other workers' theatres the peculiarities, the problems, the specific environment, the needs and the hopeful outlook of the ARTEF. It is the writer's hope that in this way a better understanding will be brought about among the various sectors of the proletarian theatrical front. On behalf of the ARTEF the writer invites criticism and earnest discussion of the problems here presented.

THE WORKERS' THEATRE AND THE UNITED COUNCILS OF WORKING WOMEN

T. Littinsky

For more than eight years the United Councils of Working Women have been an integral part of the revolutionary working-class movement, mobilizing hundreds and thousands of house-women for the class struggle. We began our work with relief for strikers, relief-- not as charity, but as class solidarity. Gradually, as our membership grew, as the class struggle in all its phases became more clearly defined thru lectures and discussions in our local councils, we threw our forces into helping in the industrial struggle, by picketing, visiting homes of scabs, helping the Unemployed Councils, etc. Very recently, with the crisis playing havoc among millions of workers, we have participated in rent strikes, in demonstrations at relief buros, etc.

Several consumers' strikes-- bread, fish, meat-- have been ably led by our Councils. These issues became the rallying point for drawing more women into the ranks of revolutionary labor movement.

Here, then, is a fertile field of graded activity for the Workers' Theatre to dramatize into many short, effective plays which would find a warm response in any sector of our movement because of their realness.

To take the average house-woman, long isolated within the four walls of her home (with the consequent "kitchen" psychology) and mold her into a devoted soldier of the revolutionary army is no mean task, and is fraught with invaluable dramatic possibilities.

Unless the Workers' Theatre underestimates work among working women, as too often manifested elsewhere, it should reflect these manifold activities of the U.C. of W.W., who have thrown in their lot with all workers-- white, yellow and black. Only then would the Workers' Theatre really deserve its name.

THE WORKERS'S THEATRE AND THE I.L.D.

J. North

Few more powerful forms are available to present the problems of the class struggle before the working class than the medium of the theatre. In other countries, in the Soviet Union, in Germany and Japan, this means of agitation and education has gained considerable headway. The Blue Blouses of the USSR are known from the borders of Poland to Vladivostok. In Germany a powerful workers' drama flourishes. The history of the Japanese Workers' Theatre is well known to proletarian cultural workers. To my

mind, the American proletariat is ready to support a proletarian theatre. The job now is organization. The problem is how best to render effectively the problems of the class struggle in America. The I.L.D. in its fight against police and governmental terror would gladly support such a movement. In fact, hundreds of branches of the I.L.D. thruout the country have repeatedly asked for aid in organizing workers' drama-groups. There is no doubt that the Workers' Theatre will find its program endorsed and carried forward by the rank and file workers in the I.L.D. Performances in workers' neighborhoods, at branch meetings, before factory gates, will be a very valuable method in bringing the program of the I.L.D. before the masses.

COUNTER-OLYMPIC CAMPAIGN

With the approach of the Workers' Theatre Spartakiade we hear that we have many dramatic groups in New York City. As far as I know, the Nature Friends Propaganda group is the only such group in the sports movement. Sport and culture belong always together and it is our duty to help out this movement which is still small.

The bosses' sport is holding a big Olympiade July 1932 in Los Angeles, in the same state where Tom Mooney is held in prison for 16 years. He called upon all workers sportsmen, and the Labor Sports Union answered the call by starting a counter-campaign. Several Sport and Culture organizations are now together in the Counter-Olympic Committee to fight the bosses' Olympiade, for the release of Tom Mooney and for a bigger and stronger workers' sports movement.

In July the Counter-Olympic Committee will hold an International Workers' Athletic Meet in Chicago and this is the best occasion to start in and show that our dramatic movement understands the importance of getting the workers in the movement by interesting them in workers' sports and away from the bosses-- and factory-- sport clubs.-- The Nature Friends Dramatic Group intends to do its best even though we belong to the Luzerne Sport Internationale. Just now we are preparing a short mass recitation which can be played at meetings or thother affairs to spread the campaign among the workers. We are a German-speaking group and therefore our propaganda reaches only German workers, but where are the English-speaking groups to do the same work in English?

NATURE FRIENDS DRAMATIC GROUP

Georg Schmidt

THE W.I.R. CULTURAL WORK IN THE CLASS STRUGGLE

by Alfred Wagenknecht
WIR Nat. Sec'y.

The tie-up of the Workers International Relief cultural activities and the struggles of the workers and the given campaign of the WIR, should be the main determinant in establishing the basis, content, form and organizational aspects of such cultural activities. Thus at the present juncture the WIR cultural work must help reflect, interpret and serve to help mobilize workers and sympathetic elements around the strike relief campaign, unemployed struggles and the campaign to fight the misery of working class children that will soon be launched. The cultural workers of the WIR must set for their objective the maximum results in helping win workers and other for the struggle, and to secure the participation of workers in struggle for cultural activity in the field of struggle (among the striking miners, etc.)

The Workers International Relief cultural base to-day is too narrow. Both in regards to the influence and ability to reach masses of workers and in its inner composition and development. And so we find that there are only one or two performing groups of each cultural category in a city like New York.

What must be done in this direction? An effort must be made to interest the WIR branches in mass cultural activities of all kinds towards the end of establishing a functioning cultural bases in many sections and neighborhoods of the cities. A more effective circulation of the cultural groups among those who are now carrying on campaigns, such as the unemployed, etc. At the same time cultural working groups within the unemployed movement should find its best friend and organizer in the WIR cultural workers. In the campaign against the misery of working class children we must go to the children and organize children's performing groups to serve as a stimulus to many aspects of the campaign. The same method of approach and work should be directed towards the unions and leagues of the Trade Union Unity League.

One thing must be stressed with more emphasis than it received in the past. Cultural activities are not only agitational in function but serve also as a mobilizer and organizer of the workers for struggle - and in our instance the campaigns of the Workers International Relief. Therefore the greater the number of performing groups the larger the mobilization of workers for struggle. A wrong tendency is one that seeks to get technically finished groups in every cultural category (one band, one theatre group, one group of dancers, one chorus, etc.). This does not infer that we are not to develop technically and into higher forms, but we must involve more workers, and create a broader (and if need be simpler) basis. Exclusiveness is to be avoided.

In this connection we can very well profit by the experience of the cultural work of the WIR in Germany and other countries. Two worker-actors compose an agitprop troupe and serve to attract workers to open air meetings, neighborhood meetings, etc. One or two cornet players serve the purpose of such meetings also. Thus instead of waiting to train a highly skilled band before such mass work is undertaken, such methods as outlined above are used and had concrete results in reaching masses of workers.

The leading cultural committees of the Workers International Relief should issue a call for workers willing to aid in the struggles of the workers on the basis of cultural activity and should make possible the assimilation and training of workers willing to take part in such activities.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORKERS THEATRE

by Tom Truesdale, L.S.N.R.

We must not underestimate the importance of the role of the groups of the Workers Theatre and the part that they are playing in taking to the widest numbers of struggles of the workers under capitalism.

They are not only affording entertainment but are dramatising concretely happenings that are current and that would not be thought of as very significant by others than the more advanced, class conscious and militant of the working class.

The Prolet-Buehne and their production of "Scottsboro", the League of Struggle for Negro Rights in producing Langston Hughes play "Scottsboro Limited" will implant idelibly in the minds of all workers the wave of terror that the Negro masses is subjected to, and will by this portrayal be able to link up all assault of the boss class as directed against a rising militancy of the workers.

The theatre under capitalism afford the most vicious agent of the bosses' propoganda and to affect the venom that this injects we have to support the Workers Theatre that will wipe out race and class lines and pave the way for the solidarity of Negro and White workers for the overthrow of capitalism.

THE RATES

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are not higher than they were for the mimeographed addition

Single copy	_____	15 cents
Yearly subs	_____	1.50 Dllr.
Bundle of 10 or more	_____	10 cents a copy

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**"WORKERS THEATRE" AND A NEW CULTURAL MAGAZINE OF THE
WORKERS INTERNATIONAL RELIEF**

When the Workers Laboratory Theatre of the W.I.R. was reorganized in the fall of 1930, one of the tasks of the new organization, was to set up an apparatus for the coordination of the activities of all Workers Theatres in the United States. In order to accomplish this task a bulletin was to be published in the nearest future containing organizational material as well as plays for the use of other groups. The actual creation of this bulletin was delayed till March 1931. At that time a committee was elected to publish such a bulletin. However, one week after the election of the committee a report was presented by the chairman that not only was there a possibility for the establishment of such a bulletin but that a full size magazine could be issued in mimeographed form with the idea of developing it eventually, into a printed magazine. The plans of the committee were approved by the organization and the committee proceeded to work. April 1st 1931 the first issue of "WORKERS THEATRE" appeared.

With the appearance of the magazine, it became the task of the whole organization to draw other groups into active participation. This was not a simple task. Groups had to be approached individually and only after a great deal of persuasion did we get results in the form of articles and other material. It was then decided to approach the more advanced Workers Theatre groups and ask them to undertake joint editorial responsibility in order to broaden the magazine. In August 1931 the Prolet-Buchno joined the Editorial Board of the magazine by supplying 3 out of 7 members of the editorial committee of the magazine. The results were, as might be expected, gratifying. The base of the magazine was broadened and improvement followed in quantity as well as in quality.

After the organization of the Workers Cultural Federation and the Dramatic Bureau as one of its sections, the magazine officially became the publication organ of the Dram. Bureau. Now, that a national Workers Theatre Organization is coming into existence a new arrangement had to be made. The magazine could not remain in the hands of two groups. The new organization needed a Theatre magazine of its own. So it was agreed that "WORKERS THEATRE" be turned over to the new Workers Theatre Organization.

While "Workers Theatre" was published by the Workers Laboratory Theatre of the W.I.R. and the Prolet-Buchno, the Workers International Relief regarded this magazine as its cultural organ at least in part if not in its entirety. From time to time material on W.I.R. cultural work would appear in the magazine, and the W.I.R. did not seek to establish a separate cultural organ. However, at present the W.I.R. cultural activities are growing rapidly in many sections of the country. These activities, being on a large scale and part of the activities of a national mass organization, need special guidance and

direction. The W.I.R. therefore decided to publish its own cultural organ, the "Cultural Front," which makes its appearance with the May issue.

It must be stated here that the two magazines are of an entirely different nature and are not in competition with each other. The WORKERS THEATRE Magazine, as an organ of the national workers theatre organization, will have a tremendous field to cover. Its material must necessarily be of a specialized nature for workers theatre groups. It must give them theoretical as well as artistic guidance and plays. This in itself is a huge task.

On the other hand, the CULTURAL FRONT in addition to the theatre will include movie material, still pictures, art, humor, dancing, music, as well as literary features. Its aim will be to broaden the cultural work of the W.I.R. and to draw in sympathetic elements into the activities of the W.I.R. This does not mean that the material will be entirely W.I.R. material. From the very nature of the aim of the CULTURAL FRONT of the W.I.R. arises the task of making the magazine as popular as possible and to include as much material as possible that will aid the cultural groups and all workers everywhere to develop their cultural activities. The aim will not be supplied in the form of theoretical articles but in guidance, explanation, and practical material such as songs, plays, chalk talks for workers, the proper use of a camera, and methods of active participation in the class struggle thru the Workers International Relief.

The CULTURAL FRONT will sell at 10 cents a copy, \$1.00 a year. Subscriptions and bundle orders (at reduced rates) should be sent in at once to 16 W. 21st., New York, N.Y.

The cultural movement is growing. The demands for instruction and material can hardly be fulfilled by any one magazine. There is room not only for two, but for dozens of workers cultural magazines, and no doubt more publications will spring up as the movement develops.

PLAYS

SCOTTSBORO:

A mass recitation by the Proletbuehne.

(Translated from the German)

This mass recitation has been arranged for 6 players. The players run from the back of the audience shouting "Attention!" "Attention!" until they are in their positions. The workers stand as follows: 1 and 2 on chairs or boxes, 3 on the ground before 1 and two. 4,5,6, stand in one line before 3.

1 Attention!
1 Attention Workers!
2 Friends!
3 Fellow-workers!
5 Comrades!

All Attention!

1 Hear the story of the nine negro boys in Scottsbor, Alabama.

All In Scottsboro, in Scottsboro
Murder is going on.
In Scottsboro, in Scottsboro,
Death is threatening.

1 Joy in Scottsboro!
3 Thousands of people
2 shouting and singing and laughing and screaming
1 in the streets of Scottsboro.
2 And the sun shines
3 upon the gay Sunday clothes
5 of wives and children,
6 of factory owners, store keepers, town officials and the bankers.

2 Everybody is here
1 on the streets of Scottsboro.
2 The children with flags,
1 and the men with guns,
3 And the badges of the sheriffs gleam in the sun
4 And the brass band plays: Star Spangled Banner!

2 And everyone is shouting
3 And everyone is screaming:
All- Lynch! Lynch! Lynch!

All Joy in Scottsboro!

All In Scottsboro in Scottsboro,
Murder is going on!
In Scottsboro, in Scottsboro
Death is threatening!

3 Upon the market place of Scottsboro
1 stands the courthouse.
2 In it are 9 Negro boys.
5 Nine Negro boys have been caught
1 for a deed they never committed.
2 Nine Negro boys stand before the court
1 No proof of their innocence is wanted here.
3 Nine Negro boys are accused
1 And await a sentence long decided.

6 And the prosecutor on the bench hears the voices from the market place:
All- Lynch! Lynch! Lynch!
3 He does not want to lose his job.

5 And the judge on the bench hears the voices from the market place:
All- Lynch! Lynch! Lynch!
3 He does not want to lose the favor of his electors.

4 And the boys attorney hears the voices from the market place:
All- Lynch! Lynch! Lynch!
3 He does not want to lose his clients.

3 And the jurymen, storekeepers, merchants, employers hear the voices from
the market place:
All- Lynch! Lynch! Lynch!
3 He does not want to lose his customers.

1 In the courthouse of Scottsboro stand nine Negro boys - alone.

All In Scottsboro, in Scottsboro
Murder is going on.
In Scottsboro, in Scottsboro
Death is threatening.

1 In the courthouse of Scottsboro, Alabama, on April 9th, 1931, sentence is
pronounced against the nine Negro boys.

3 (Steps forward in front of 4,5,and 6 and reads, as if pronouncing the sentences in a courthouse)

Eugene Williams, 13 years old, sentence - death
Ozie Powell, 14 years old, sentence - death
Willie Roberson, 17 years old, sentence-death
Haywood Patterson, 17 years old, sentence - death
Olen Montgomery, 17 years old, sentence - death
Andy Wright, 18 years old, sentence - death
Clarence Norris, 19 years old, sentence - death
Charlie Weems, 20 years old, sentence - death
Roy Wright, 14 years old, a mistrial.

The execution shall take place in Scottsboro, Alabama.
The Alabama Supreme Court on March 22, 1932, rejected the appeal for a new trial, filed by the International Labor Defense, and upheld the death verdict against seven of the boys. The day for the execution is now set for May 13th, 1932. (Goes back to former place)

All In Scottboro, in Scottsboro
Murder is going on.
In Scottsboro, in Scottsboro
Death is threatening.

6 In Scottsboro nine Negro boys were sentenced
4 for the rape of two white prostitutes,
5 whom they never saw, never spoke to, never knew.

3 Why?

1 In Scottsboro nine Negro boys were sentenced to death
2 for a deed they never committed.

3 Why?

All Why?

1 Because 12 million Negroes must be kept in slavery
3 by fear, by lack of rights, by violence.
2 For the landlords, bosses and bankers
1 squeeze profits from these 12 million Negroes
3 by long hours, speed up, low wages.

4 If twelve million Negroes are working long hours,
1 also white workers must work long hours.

5 If twelve million Negroes are speeded up,
1 also white workers are speeded up.

6 If twelve million Negroes work for low wages,
1 also white workers must work for low wages.

3 Negro workers

1 White workers

- 4 The same exploitation
- 5 The same fate
- 6 The same class.

- 3 Negro workers
- 1 White workers

- 2 The same power
- 3 The same might
- 1 The same certainty of victory
- 4,5,6 If you unite
- 1,2,3 If you organize
- All IF YOU FIGHT

- 1 In Scottsboro murder is going on.
- 3 In Scottsboro death is threatening.
- All Your death.

- 4 Will you let them murder the nine Negro boys in Scottsboro?
- 5 Will you deliver your fellow workers to the capitalist murderers?
- 6 Will you deliver yourselves to the capitalist murderers?

All NO: NO: NO:

- 1 Organize!
- 2 Demonstrate!
- 1 Protest!
- 3 Raise your voices!
- 1 Raise your fists!
- 4 Gather together your comrades from the factories
- 5 Call the housewives out of their homes
- 6 Get the children out of the schools.
- 3 Shout into the ears of your exploiters: "Murderers"
- 1 Scream into the face of the class judges: "Stop!"

All- STOP: STOP: STOP:

- 1 The fight of the liberation of the nine Negro boys
- 2 is a part of the class struggle,
- 5 led by the workers of all countries;
- 3 against the bosses of all countries.
- All WORKERS, UNITE AND FIGHT!

Here is a chance for the theatre groups to do their share to save the nine Scottsboro boys. The above mass recitation should be in the repertory of all theatre groups and be played on as many affairs as possible, in order to being to the workers the necessity of freeing the Scottsboro boys from the clutches of the bosses' lynch law.

MOVIES

WHO OWNS THE MOVIE?

Harry Alan Potamkin

(Continued from Feb. issue)

Censorship.

In the control of the movie, the political instrument of censorship is used. There are, broadly speaking, two forms of censorship: censorship at the source, and censorship at the point of distribution. The former operates thru the Hays organization, the latter thru the Board of Censors. In the latter instance, censorship is severer with productions from independent studios than with the films from companies in the Hays organization; severer with foreign films than with domestic; much harder on pictures from Soviet Russia than on pictures from capitalist lands; and very drastic where pictures are submitted by a working-class organization. In the last two categories we have several outstanding examples: the suppression in New York of the Soviet satire, "Bed and Sofa," a charming and wholesome treatment of the "eternal triangle"; the suppression in Philadelphia of "Potemkin" and the brutal deletions from "Seeds of Freedom" which made it impossible to release the picture; the New York censors' vandalistic "suggestions" on "Volga to Gastonia,"* a proletarian production. The instances are manifold, but we need not name more. The routine reasons given-- immoral, inciting to riot, etc.-- are not exercised toward condemning the salacious pictures featuring, let us say, the sex-adventures of a Joan Crawford, nor do they become alert toward the suppression of a counter-revolutionary picture like "The Spy" -- anti-Soviet-- or "The Shanghai Express" -- anti-Chinese. We recall, since this latter film lifted many of its pictorial devices from the Soviet film "China Express", that the Russian picture was looked at by the censors at least twice. After a week at the Cameo, "China Express" was returned to the censors. It happened that March 6, 1930 intervened during the public showing of the film, and the censors, working with the Hays organization, became an immediately active political agent. "China Express" was withdrawn while the sentiments aroused by the unemployed demonstration and the attendant police brutality were acute. This is collaboration between the movie-business itself and the state censor.

The movie-business censors its own films. I have already in-

dictated how the very class-nature of the movie-producers accepts only its own ideas and ideals as movie material. But there is a sharp illustration of such practice in the case of the newsreel. We all know how much news of importance gets into the newsreel. But we all do not know that certain of these news-pictures are suppressed even after filming: this is the movie-barons' way of saying "All the News that's Fit to Print". Now, the censors have no jurisdiction over newsreels, since these are pictorial newspapers in their way-- at least theoretically-- and are current dispatches. But there is still Will Hays. Thru his office the following news-pictures were suppressed, even destroyed:

The Sacco-Vanzetti items;
 The March 6th unemployed demonstration;
 The May 1, 1930 demonstration;
 The Hunger March-- and others.

Fortunately, the Workers' Film and Photo League has records of these.

The movie-bosses comprehend the significance of the newsreel. Therefore Fox orders all house managers to delete all newsreel clips showing "controversial matter, breadlines and anything that might be taken for Bolshevik propaganda". The story goes that this order was stimulated by the mixed reception at a Fox house to a clip showing Mussolini, but Mussolini still parades over the Fox screen.

And when the news value of a clip is so intense that the company hasn't the financial heart to delete it, the company can modify the effect so:

Graham McNamee, the Universal squawking reporter, comments in one newsreel on two labor-capital items: he supplements a clip showing the railroad labor-misleaders signing the wage-cut with a remark as to how beautifully things slide when "men are men...without seeing red"; and to a clip of the Bronx rent-strike he adds this touch: "...and another red riot went the way of all flesh". The same mercenary comments on a scene of Chinese coolies eating rice from a floor with their fingers: "The lowest form of humanity".

We should learn something from this technique. "Pictures dont lie", we are told. This is a platitude: pictures can be made to lie by a re-arrangement, by captions, by oral remarks. Now, it is our business to make them tell the truth: let us show 'Erbert 'Cover handing out the gaff, and comment from the point of view of actual facts on what the President represents. Let us use the common newsreel item and make it speak the truth.

The matter of censorship becomes complicated. Various agencies want to control it. Today there is a three-cornered fight for control: the Hays organization, the Federal Council of Churches of Christ, the Presbyterians. The last desire a federal or national censorship. And they are not alone. With them there

there are such organizations as the Women's Christian Temperance Union, Baptist and Methodist Episcopal missions and the National Grange. The fight for such centralized censorship is not new. On March 20, 1914 Canon Chase appeared before the Committee on Education of the House of Representatives and opposed the unofficial National Board of Censors, now National Board of Review. This organization, founded by the People's Institute in 1909, was against political control of the film, its slogan: Selection not Censorship. In recent years it has been rendered less effectual by the establishment of the Hays organization which appropriated in true demagogic fashion the National Board of Review's slogan. It serves as a decoy or smoke-screen.

As for Canon Chase, only this year he left the pulpit to fight more energetically for "moral reform". Let us understand this term "moral": it is a wedge into political control. Hays, Chase and the others advocating one or another kind of censorship are not fundamentally at odds; each wants the immediate profits of such control. Actually Hays is an elder of the very church, the Presbyterian, opposing both state and studio censorship. But shrewdly he has affiliated with himself on his Committee on Public Relations, the National Catholic Welfare Conference and the International Federation of Catholic Alumnae, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Boy Scouts, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Russell Sage Foundation, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the National Educational Association, the American Library Association, the Y.M.C.A., and the National Recreation Association-- school, church, playground, club, etc. When the coalition was started, labor was "represented" by the A.F. of L. demagogue, Hugh Frayne, lately included by Matthew Woll in his 100 citizens to combat communism. But the A.F. of L. is perfectly content to let Hays do the job of making the worker a "100% American".

Less actively associated with Hays has been the liberal church body, the Federal Council of Churches. Peeved by the disrespect shown to it by Hays, this group has attacked him but not very clearly. Actually speaking, this group serves a social-fascist purpose in the movie which will become more tangible as time goes on.

In the meantime the out-and-out fascist body led by Canon Chase has been able to get itself heard in Congress where the Hudson Bill awaits decision. This Bill, amid the usual decoys of moral supervision, places the real aim of capitalist control-- the suppression of films that "ridicule or deprecate public officials, or other governmental authority, or which tend to weaken the authority of law or offend the religious belief of any person; or which unduly emphasize bloodshed and violence". This is obviously class legislation and really nationalizes the Hays code. The question is solely as to which reactionary agency shall directly benefit from the profits of control.

Our answer to that question is to fight all forms of censorship. We must fight against national censorship-- which has Hearst support-- because it will mean the positive elimination of films from the Soviet Union, films sponsored by revolutionary labor and even films by possible courageous independents. The more split-up censorship is, the better we can fight it. At present some states, like New Jersey, have no Board of Censors. We must encourage such a condition. We know that censorship is inevitable in a class society and that defense of "free speech" is either idealistic or tactical. Idealistic defense betrays itself and betrays the proletariat, but a tactical working-class attack on censorship is part of the very class struggle itself. We must oppose all attempts to extend or concentrate censorship, and we must organize to fight every act of the censor reprehensible to the working class. That should be a major task of the cultural bodies like those of the W.I.R., the Workers' Cultural Federation, the John Reed Club, etc. Don't let the censor get away with it!

* Your picture "Volga to Gastonia"- silent version- has been reviewed. The following eliminations are directed to be made:

REEL 1- Eliminate sub-titles: "I hereby relinquish all rights to factory and property and turn same over to the committee of the Soviets".

"The wealth belongs to the workers and the peasants".

REEL 2- "To young Russia: all the power to the workers and the peasants."

"While capitalism mourns."

"While in Germany-- land of abundance."

Eliminate scenes of bread riots and banners marked "Hunger" and accompanying sub-title: "Solidarity not Charity."

Eliminate sub-title:

REEL 3- "Workers look to yourselves."

Eliminate views of the demonstration of the workers, the word "Hunger" displayed on banners carried by the strikers.

Eliminate sub-titles:

"Workers realize the 5 year plan."

"Outside the Soviet the crisis grows."

Eliminate entire sequence of strikes, strikers and riots in United States - this includes all views of strikers and sympathizers picketing, marching, all demonstrations of marchers with banners reading: "Starvation Wages". "Against High Rents". "Evictions". Newspaper inserts of Pittsburgh coal strikes - Passaic textile strikes and all sub-titles:

"Across the sea in the land of permanent prosperity".

"The Southern workers rise". "In Self-defence". "For better conditions".

Eliminate all views of bundles of pamphlets of "Parity Certificates". "Creeds cant keep them apart" Eliminate views of ex-soldiers with helmets marching - long lines of strikers wagons with relief banners on side. Eliminate sub-titles:

"Strike against wages". "Workers bring their demands to the Cap-

itol". Eliminate views of strikers marching up Capitol steps, and sub-titles:

"They are graciously (in small print) received".

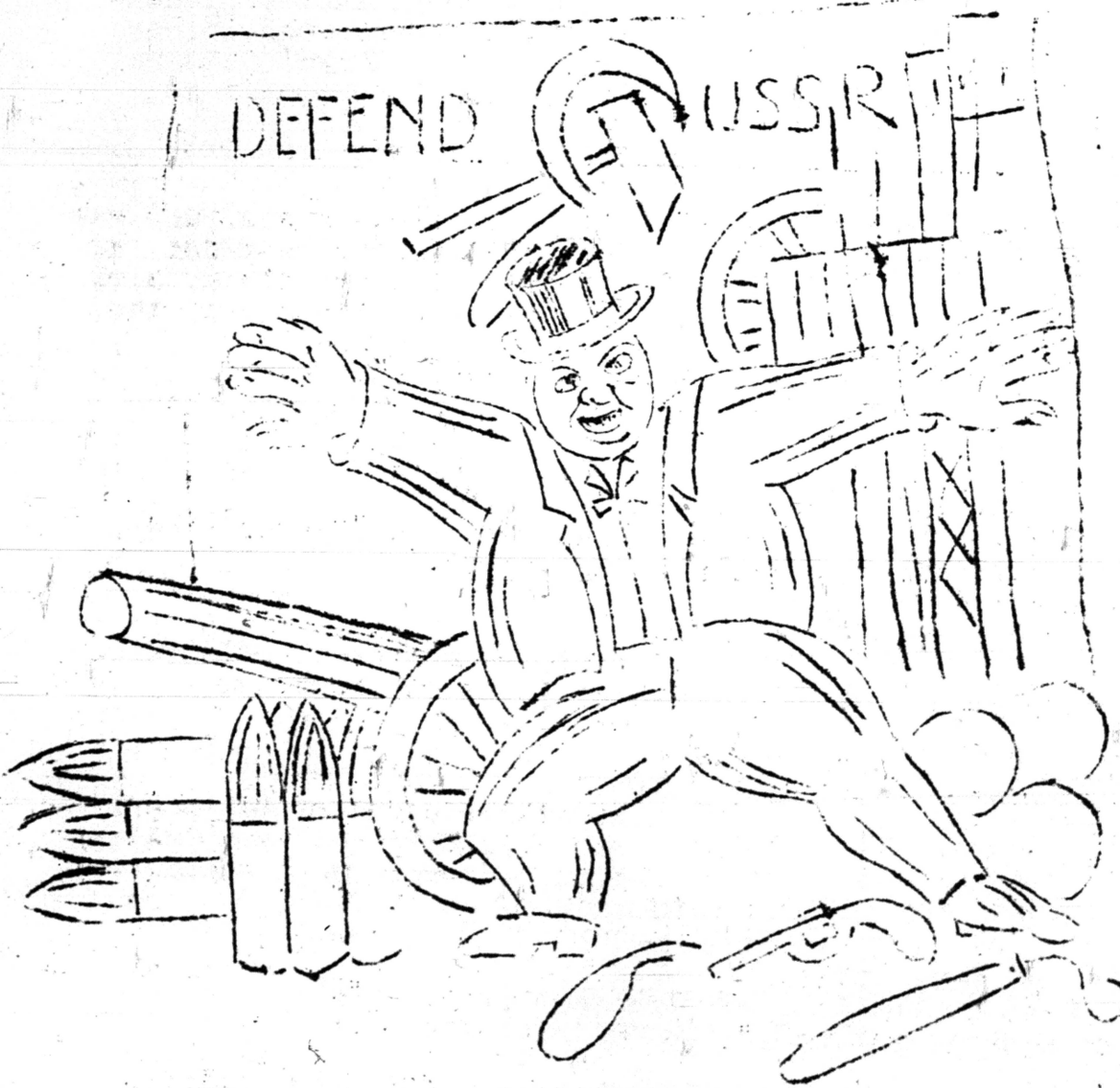
"Their reception is cordial" (in small print)

More scenes of rioting, clashes between strikers and police - and sub-titles:

"Down with oppression"

"All power to the workers and the peasants".

REASON: WILL TEND TO INCITE TO CRIME



DONT LOOK - IT WILL INCITE YOU TO CRIME

GROWTH OF CHILDRENS GROUPS.

T, Littinsky.

A great effort has been made recently in the direction of forming children's groups in every mass organization. We mean of course, to mold the children into devoted Pioneers.

To form these groups is one thing: A children's party arranged in the neighborhood or on a particular block, with an arrangement of recitations, revolutionary songs, games, etc., followed by an appeal by an older comrade and the group is formed.

We now come to the real task: holding the group together. This can be done only by constructive and interesting work, so that the children learn to love their pioneer associates and thru them become bound to the revolutionary movement. From my brief experience in this field certain definite ideas have taken shape. I hope other comrades who take up this work will find my suggestions useful.

Plays depicting the lives and struggles of workers and their families are very good material. We tried "Free Food for Workers Children" from the Oct. Workers Theatre Magazine and the children showed great interest. There is great educational value in such plays, if utilized. As we read the play every term was defined by the children. The words "picket", "scab", "strike" etc. were discussed until a satisfactory definition was arrived at. This will be a great help, so that when the children perform the play it will not be mere lip service, but a part in a living episode.

When parts were handed out, however, it became evident that the children were seeking something. They were looking for a touch of humor as they afterward confided to me. Will those comrades who write children's plays please bear this in mind; also, the need of many "characters" so that many may take part.

We attempted some craft work, with terribly limited facilities; but did our best with some crayons, card-boards, and some cheese-box wood for making tiny aeroplanes. An engrossing feature for the younger set was dancing, offered by an older girl. We ought to have more such offers; they help a good deal. Community singing of revolutionary songs formed a pleasant part of our meetings. An earnest attempt should be made to make song-books available to children's groups. Last, but by far not least, many leaders are needed if these groups are to carry on. We must have workers who have an approach to children volunteer their services.

P.S. When the group gets thru with the play, they may write one of their own. I wonder if the Workers Theatre Magazine would be interested in such a play.

(Editors note--The editor has been breaking his neck trying to get his hands on childrens plays. Plays written collectively by any group are of extreme importance as an example of what can be accomplished thru group work. The Workers Theatre Magazine is not only interested but will willingly assist as much as possible in the development of such work.)

REVIEWS

FIVE WORKERS THEATRES AND ONE DANCE GROUP

at the Miners affair, Feb. 4
arranged by the Dram Council
N.Y.

Reviewed by Esther Porter.

The performances given by the various Workers Theatre Groups on February 4th for the benefit of the Kentucky Miners' Relief Fund illustrated both how much these groups have accomplished dramatically in their few years of existence and how much they still have to do to make their plays as effective as they want them.

In the first place the work of the Workers Dramatic Council of N.Y. in pulling together the five participating groups was worthy of note. It was a really cooperative program and gave the audience a chance to compare the usefulness and development of each of the groups. Besides the brass band of the W.I.R., the groups taking part were the Artef, the Prolet-Buehne, the Workers Laboratory Theatre, a Jewish Dram Section, the Ukrainian Dramatic Circle, and the Red Dancers.

The first play, called "Help the Miners" and presented by the Ukrainian Dramatic Circle was much too long. Even the sincere and convincing acting of the central figures did not keep the first part of the play from seeming like a rather boring debate. The audience was only taken back into the spirit of it when miners came clambering up onto the stage from the back of the house. This new strength and desire to oust the bosses from their position was the climax and should have been played up more. As given it was the most exciting moment of the play. It only needed clarification to make it truly effective.

"I.L.D. Now More Than Ever!" was an impelling play for street corner use given by the Prolet-Buehne, the German group. The actors here, both male and female wore uniform black suits that made the mass movements of their bodies count as much as what they said. They have learned to snap out the words of their recitations in a dynamic manner. The attention of the audience was held every minute this group was on the stage. Other groups should notice this and aim to achieve the technical perfection that the German group already has. During the course of the evening the Prolet-Buehne gave another rapid-fire recitation called "On The Belt". This was made moving and terrible by the same strongly rhythmic coordination of body and voice on the part of the actors. Here in this sort of agitprop work one group has found a way of getting its message across in a really dramatic way. They are in a position to make

both class-conscious and unclass-conscious workers listen to them. They can still make a larger study, however, of the use of stage levels in the few properties they use. Action can be greatly intensified by varying the planes from which people speak and this same process keeps the audience from feeling that the play at any point is monotonous.

The production of the Jewish Workers Theatre Group was a play called "On To Battle!". A discussion of the play involves the whole matter of the place of a finished realistic setting in a Workers Theatre representation. The Jewish Group believes that such a hang-over from the bourgeois theatre still has a part to play in their theatre. They built an interior set simply and well. The acting of their piece was on the same level of workers' art, strong and direct, yet imitative of a realistic play by bourgeois amateurs. Also the Group must watch out for obvious inconsistencies in their plays. The appearance of a Catholic priest speaking Yiddish was ludicrous. The whole point of the play was almost lost.

The Artef production was "Water Boy". In an artistic stage set this song was sung first as a solo by a woman with an unusually fine voice. A chorus of workers in the suggested field with her kept time rhythmically with their farm implements. Later they too joined in the singing. A boss entered and tried to whip them into more active work. The song then continued more slowly and gradually died away as the curtain fell. This whole piece was a carefully conceived and finished presentation. The enthusiasm it aroused in the audience would tend to show that workers do enjoy seeing interpretations of this kind. The Artef contributed that theory to the other attitudes on workers' art.

The Workers Laboratory Theatre presented two mass recitations, one on the Scottsboro Case and one called "Tempo! Tempo!". Both of these showed how this play form can be made effective and moving. In the first one a huddled and compact group gradually spread out over the stage as one member of the group at a time chanted ominous and monotonous lines about the injustice of the situation in Scottsboro. It is the steady onward push of the actors that makes this so moving to the audience. But the whole thing is too long unless the lines can be snapped out more rapidly and bluntly. The whole thing should be sharpened so that every single action and every word means something.

"Tempo! Tempo!" is much better. It goes along rapidly, smoothly, and meaningfully. The persistent rhythmic beat of the chorus "tempo, tempo" is hypnotic in its effect. The perfection and expansion of this idea is what every Workers Theatre should be getting. They should try to do what they can do.

The Red Dancers gave an excellent performance. Here were workers throwing all their energies into expressing in a strong and thrilling way the power of their class. The intensity of concentration on the part of every dancer was one of the outstanding features of the evenings program.

HELP THE MINERS'

Produced by the W.I.R. Dram Group of Berkeley, Cal.

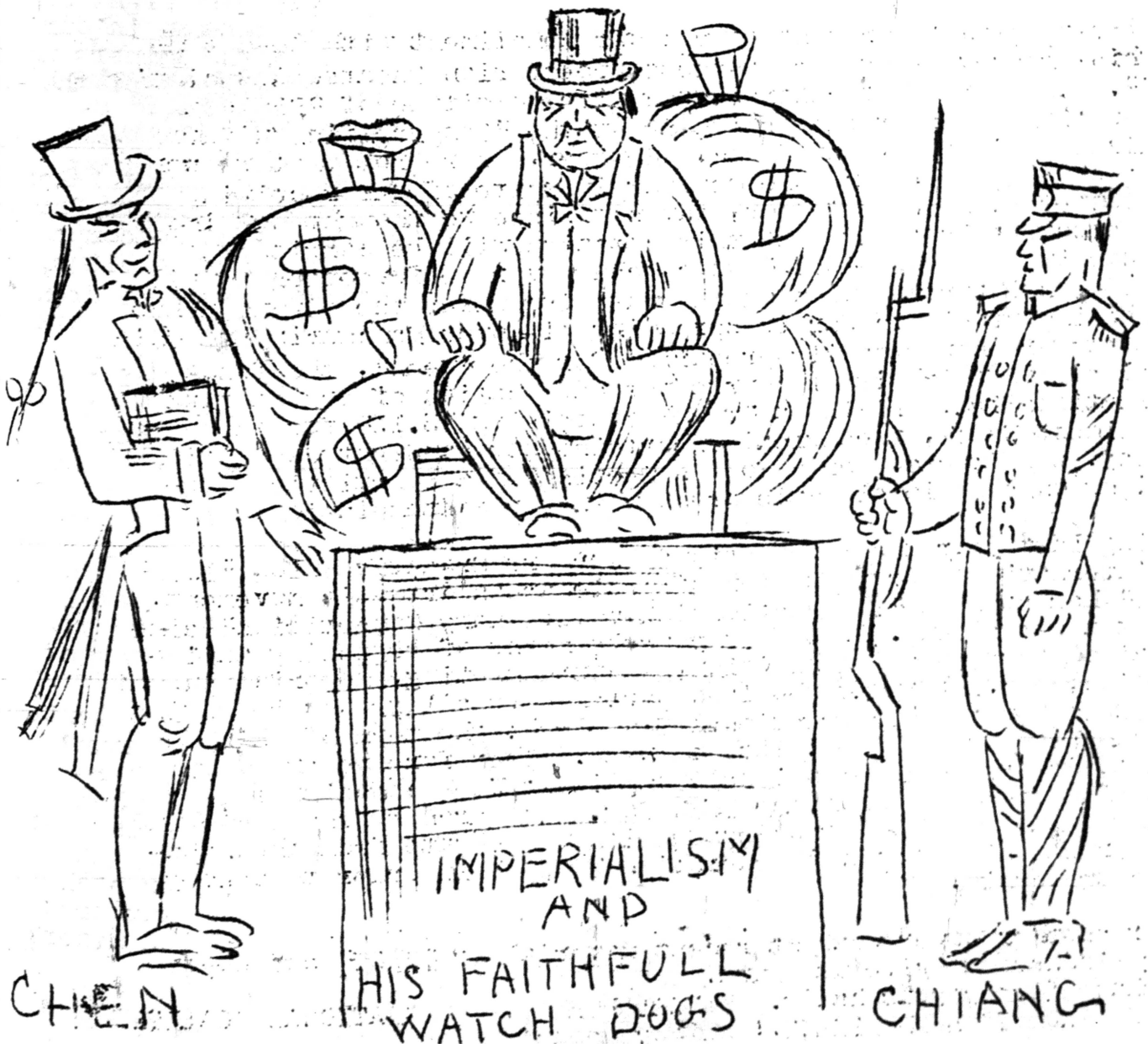
Reviewed by Jane Williams, Oakland, Cal.

The play, "Help The Miners" by A. Prentis, was presented at a Workers International Relief entertainment in Berkeley, on Feb. 27th.

The primary purpose of producing this sketch was not the frivolous one of amusing and entertaining the audience, altho the audience was both highly entertained and amused. Neither was it intended that this skit should be launched as a work of art. Our business was a more serious and important one. We wanted to portray vividly and dramatically a phase of the class struggle. We wanted to give a play by workers and for workers. Hence, we selected the fight of the striking miners in Kentucky. Further, we wanted to awaken in our fellow workers audience the need of giving relief to the miners not on the basis of charity but on solidarity. That the fight of the workers in Harlan is the fight of the workers in Berkeley.

"Help the Miners" is a story of a miners' strike. The labor faker and mine owner is exposed. The policy of the National Miners Union with its mass organization, rank and file committees and uncompromising militant struggle for the right to organize is made clear. The misery and starvation of the miners, their wives and children is set forth. The action of the play is divided between the workers who are represented by the audience, and the boss class, on the stage, who are represented by the mine owner, an official of the United Mine Workers of America, a preacher, and a society lady. The climax of the play occurs when the labor faker agrees to betray the miners and says, "By God, I'll.....do.....it". From the rear of the audience one hears a loud, harsh voice; "No you ain't", Three miners, one of them a Negro, walk determinely and steadily from the end of the room, jump on the stage and tell the committee of the boss-class in no uncertain terms, "A committee of the rank and file". Another high spot occurs when Jim, one of the committee of the rank and file, asks the audience "Fellow workers, are you with the strikers or are you against them?" The audience three hundred strong, shouts back "We are with the strikers, we are with you. The miners wife speech is also effective — no cheap sentimentality, but a fighting speech telling a working-class woman's side of the strike. Her closing words are: "Now, as Jim, here said you've got to stand by the miners, give what you can, and then some more for the miners ain't got nothin, the miners are fighting not only their fight but the fight of the whole working class. And if they lose the strike you'll feel it. Give, shell out your pockets to the last cent. Steve and Jim and Hank will pass the hat around fill it up, don't let the mine owners starve us out." The miners then pass among the audience with their hats.

This play is a crude, gripping, intense picture of something which all of us workers have experienced. It has nothing of that finesse of a commercial drama but all the vitality and strength of a working class theme. It promptly wins the attention of the audience and holds it till the final curtain falls. There is an intimacy about the whole performance which is due to the fact that there is no barrier between actor and audience. They are one. We, the W.I.R. of Berkeley, heartily recommend "Help the Miners" as an excellent means of dramatizing and propagandizing the struggles of the miners in Kentucky.



CORRESPONDENCE

TWO INTERNATIONAL MESSAGES

From the JAPANESE PROLETARIAN THEATRE
ASSOCIATION "P R O T":

To all ~~Members~~ of the Workers Theatre
Movement in the U.S.A.

Dear Comrades;

We are very glad to present to you our compliment with deep comradeship, representing our Japanese Proletarian Theatre Association "PROT". The permanent central executive committee of "PROT" accepted unqualifiedly your suggestion about the "Pan-Pacific Cultural Organizations' Compliment Week". However, we regret that we were too late to know it for some reasons in spite of our receiving your letter in Aug. last year, but now since we thought how important matter it is to us that this campaign will be carried out not only in memory of "3.15" which can never be forgotten by all Japanese proletariat and peasant, but also under the circumstances the new imperialistic war is spreading all over Manchuria and China, so we are now steadily preparing for the "week", the fundamental aim of which is of course the adovocation of proletarian internationalism. Fixing a "week" containing "3.15" for the "Compliment Week", theatrical entertainments (a night exhibition of play, a show etc.) or a common meeting of all Artistic Associations on a national scale are now in our contemplation.

Joining last year the International Workers Dramatic Union "IWDU" the international organization of proletarian dramatic movement, "PROT" has started "International Revolutionary Competition" aiming at the goal Aug. 15th this year by means of beginning an internal contest (play, exhibition, lecture meeting, memorial publication, etc.) thruout the land partaken by all groups belonging to "PROT" for the "International Ten Days": the term of the IWDU Day campaign is from Feb. 15th to 24th. Therefore we are very glad to greet the International Compliment Week campaign in March soon after we fought out the IWDU Day. In March we shall without fail send to America our delegate with a delegate from the Japanese Proletarian Cultural Federation "KOPFJ" in order to convey our comradeship.

Under another cover we sent recent material of "PROT" and hope your kindness to give us yours.

We shake firmly your hands. BANZAI FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COALITION
OF THE PROLETICULT MOVEMENT!! Always yours
Secretariate of P.C.E.C. of "PROT".

From
 "WORKERS THEATRE MOVEMENT" in England:

Dear Comrades;

A copy of your January 1932 "WORKERS THEATRE" has come into my hands and the information it contains is of the greatest interest to us here.

I am sending you today the last two numbers of our paper "RED STAGE" and suggest that an exchange of material between us is absolutely essential, in the interests of the movement.

We have quite a large repertoire of sketches, songs, etc. some of which are given in the Feb. number of "RED STAGE" and we are continually issuing new material in duplicated form. I will ask our librarian to send you copies of all this, in case it might be useful to you, and shall be glad to receive from you your material. It is obvious that a very close connection should be built up between the Workers Theatre organisations of our two countries as we both speak the same language, and are living under comparable conditions.

We have in Britain now about 35 groups, and they are all playing "agitprop" material. We are making a very big drive ahead on the basis of our repertoire and also of our paper. It is of a different character from "WORKERS THEATRE" because we aim to sell it to large numbers of workers at our performances. We therefore have to keep the purely internal discussion material down to a minimum. Present circulation about 2000 copies a month.

Perhaps you could publish in a future number of your paper an announcement of the existence of "RED STAGE" in English, as some of your readers might like to take it at the rate of 50 cents for 12 issues. Cheap enough!

I hope to hear from you very soon, with the latest news of developments in the U.S.A. (which of course we want to print) and copies of your material.

With comradely greetings
 Tom Thomas
 Hon. Nat. Organiser.

To our Comrade Players
in Japan and England:

Dear Comrades;

It was with the greatest enthusiasm that we received your message. Your manifestations of solidarity could hardly reach us in a more favorable moment than now when we are organizing and consolidating the Workers Theatre movement of this country in order to make it a strong and effective weapon in the interest of the working class against the terror and exploitation by the capitalist class.

The confirmation that our comrades on the other side of the Oceans are striving in the same direction is a real inspiration for the Workers Theatres of this country which are now preparing for the First National Workers Theatre Conference and Spartakiade in the U.S.A., to be held in New York on April 16th and 17th at which occasion the American Section of the International Workers Dramatic Union will be organized.

We accept your proposal for a close cooperation thru a regular exchange of material, ideas, and news which undoubtedly will be of tremendous advantage for our common cause.

Especially we want to express our sympathy and solidarity with our comrades in the far East, in Japan and China, who are in this moment the immediate victims of that nefarious Imperialist War against the Soviet Union. The Workers Theatres of this country regard it as one of their tasks to raise the solidarity of the American proletariat with their brothers in China and Japan, by explaining the real causes and aims of that war. In the March issue of "WORKERS THEATRE" you will find a play serving **this** purpose.

For a successful international cooperation!
For a militant revolutionary Workers Theatre movement in the interest of the final liberation and victory of the Working Class

we greet you comradely.
For the Workers Theatres in U.S.A.
The Dram Buro.

THE GROUPS IN ACTION

THE GROWTH OF THE DRAMATIC SECTION OF CONEY ISLAND.

by J. Leder.

The Dramatic Section was founded in December 1930 with a membership of ten. The very first performance was "Pressers" by P. Chernov. It was performed three times in the club and five times at various organizations. The same play, slightly modified, won first place at the local 'Preliminary Spartakiade'.

The second sketch was "Aif Yener Velt" by Moshe Nadiz performed five times. Our third appearance was in some of my own mass plays. "The Breadline", a pantomime "Palestine and Biro Bidzan", "The Press", and lastly "The Bread Strike", which was performed during the Coney Island bread strike. Besides these mass performances, the section acted in a group of one-act plays, Bergleson's "By the Telephon", "The Brith", a Soviet one-act, "To Victory", a miner's sketch, played four times, and "Mitt Gott's Hilf", a one-act consisting of three scenes, performed at the opening of the conference of the Central Club Committee, also an anti-religious act "Kosher Le Pesach" which was given four times, and "Der Gefangener", a Soviet one-act sketch performed on the evening of Lenin's Memorial. Finally, the three minor sketches, "Aroif Gearbet Zich", "Freiheit in America", and a "Birthday" in which but two or three comrades participated. At present we are rehearsing a new play of one act, "Unite and Fight", an eviction sketch to be performed at the First National Workers Theatre Spartakiade of the Workers Theatre Groups in the United States on April 16th.

The work of the Section is being regularly performed. We participate in all campaigns of the left wing in acting and all other tasks necessary for the movement. The Dramatic Section is now composed of fifteen members, six male and nine female comrades. The work is being led and directed by a comrade who is greatly interested in dramatics. There is, indeed, much more to be written of the internal work of this section which will follow in a second article. Here, I aimed, merely, to report the actual work that was achieved by the Dramatic Section in its short existence.

APPOINT ONE COMRADE IN YOUR GROUP TO SEND REGULARLY REPORTS, NEWS, REVIEWS, CONTRIBUTIONS TO DISCUSSIONS TO "WORKERS THEATRE"!!!!!!!

A VOICE FROM THE "RED PLAYERS", N.Y.

The "Red Players" gave their first performance on Oct. 31st, 1931, at the Scandinavian Workers Club in Brooklyn. I was not a member of the cast at that time, but happened to be present at the club and was deeply impressed by the type of work done by an agitprop dramatic group. I decided then and there to become a member of the group and lost no time in accosting the director and gaining her permission to come to the next rehearsal. I appeared at the rehearsal and was given the part of a worker in "Step on it", the play then being rehearsed.

In the group things were not going as smoothly as they might. Our greatest difficulty lay in our seeming inability to keep a constant and unified cast. Comrades would volunteer to take parts, appear at rehearsals once or twice and then drop out, sometimes giving rather flimsy, poorly disguised excuse, but very often just disappear with no word of warning whatsoever. This caused much disruption in the group.

We met for rehearsals only once a week, usually Saturday, a few hours before we had to perform. Our time was limited, our work was urgent, and the failure of comrades to put in an expected appearance was a source of great annoyance. But in spite of this, we had to perform our task. Some workers club, some mass organization was expecting us. We, as an agitprop group, had a very definite function which must be carried out.

Thus there were last minute changes, switching members of the cast from one part to another, filling in smaller parts with extras. Invariably this caused a slowing up of the tempo of the work, and it appeared as tho there had been insufficient preparation.

Why did this happen? Wherein lay the fault? What was the remedy? Our director finally placed her problem before the Dram Buro that analyzed the situation very carefully and decided that our group needed a firmer organizational basis. Members of the cast were not made to feel any responsibility aside from knowing their parts. The entire work of caring for props, arranging matters and rehearsals, and getting engagements was left to one person, the director. This was incorrect. As an agitprop group, being an active political organization, and as class conscious revolutionary workers, each member had to be made to feel his responsibility in the group.

Therefore, upon the excellent advice of the Dram Buro, we had a complete reorganization. We called a special meeting, placed our problems clearly before the comrades present, and all together we mapped out a plan for better and more successful action in the future. The result was astounding and our efforts very well rewarded.

Today, the "Red Players" are a well organized, revolutionary agit-prop dramatic group. Each comrade feels that he has a definite responsibility and important place within the group. There is a buro, composed of three members, elected by the entire cast. The buro draws up plans and makes arrangements, but these are not acted upon until we have a general meeting, which occurs every second week. Here a chairman is elected by the entire membership, the floor is thrown open for discussion and every comrade takes part. When the plans finally are agreed upon, it is with the action and consent of the entire rank and file membership.

Also at these meetings, it is our policy to have general criticisms of our previous performances, helpful suggestions from any of the comrades for beetering the following performances, and general discussion on some topic such as "the value of self-criticism".

Finally, in our reorganization, we decided to do away with having one permanent director. Having one permanent director leads comrades in the group to depend too much on this one person and lose a certain amount of confidence in their own capabilities. Thus with each new play that we give, we elect a new director from the rank and file membership. Up to the present it has worked very successfully, and we of the "Red Players" feel confident that it will continue to do so.

Now a word concerning our actual performances. We accept engagements for every Saturday night, and on special occasions for Sunday afternoon or evening. Usually we perform at clubs and organizations which are sympathetic to our movement, and here we are well received. Sometimes, however, we play before groups of workers who are not yet sufficiently developed, who resent any undesirable allusion to the church, or who are definitely reactionary. At such places it is our first duty to gain the confidence of the workers. We approach them on an equal basis; we elucidate to them the exact role of the workers theatre as opposed to the bourgeois theatre, and the value of our propaganda for the workers, against the capitalist, exploiting class.

In conclusion, I would like to say, that altho our special function is to enlighten the masses through agitprop plays, we do not do this to the exclusion of all other functions. The "Red Players" are active in all possible political activities. Recently we took part in the elimination contest for the National Workers Theatre Spartakiade. At present we are preparing a program for the May 1st demonstration, - a series of short recitations, resembling cheers on popular party slogans, to be resorted to whenever traffic lights are against us.

I am sure that I voice the sincerest sentiments of every member in the group of the "Red Players" when I say, "We are all class conscious workers, active members of a revolutionary agitprop dramatic group. Any work we undertake, we do, first and foremost, in the interest of the revolutionary working class movement".