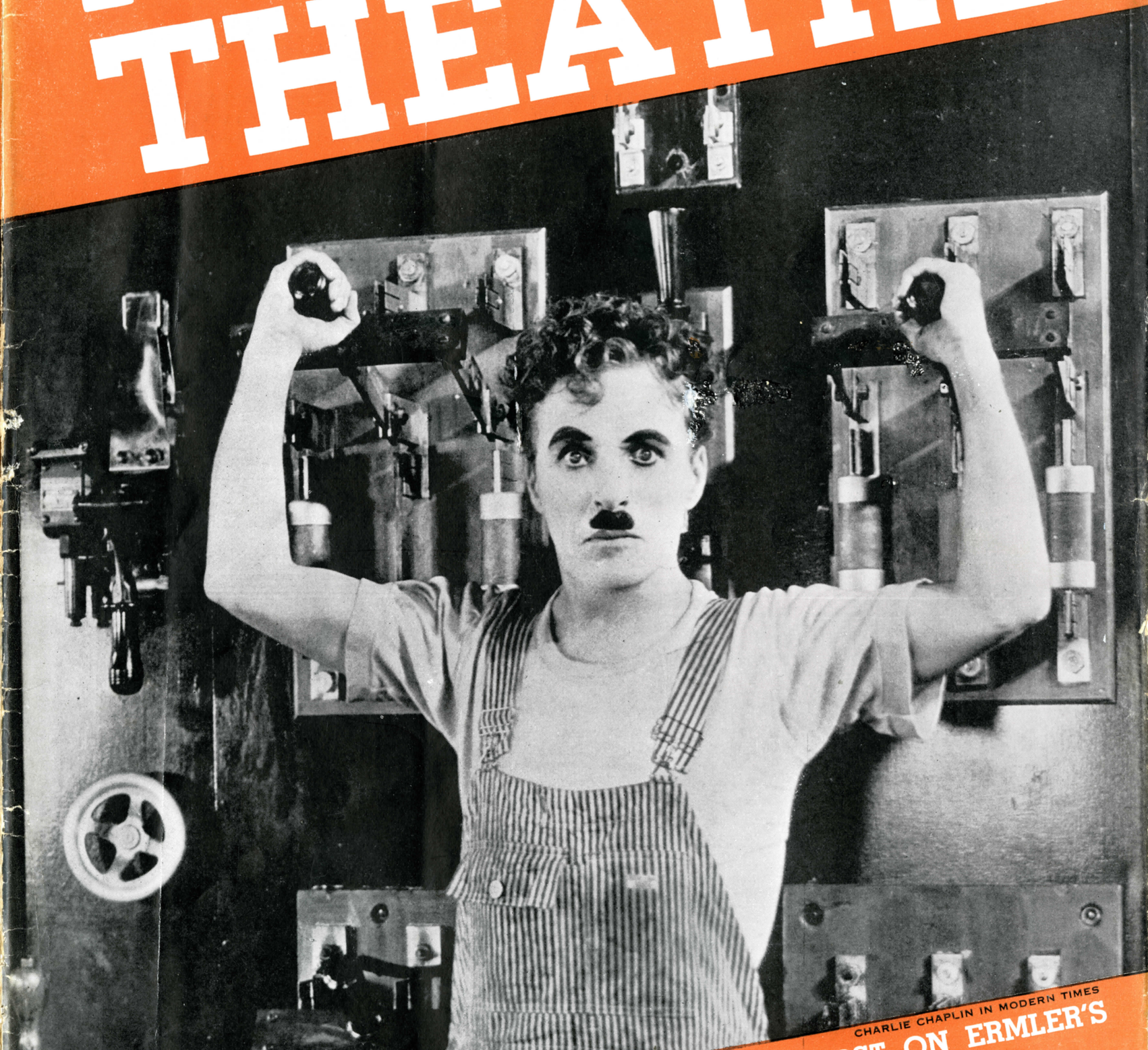
NEW THEATRE



CHARLIE CHAPLIN IN MODERN TIMES

"LET FREEDOM RING" BY ALBERT BEIN · G. W. PABST ON ERMLER'S "PEASANTS" · HOLLYWOOD'S "RIFF RAFF" BY JOEL FAITH AND LOUIS NORDEN · MUSIC IN THE THEATRE, FILM AND DANCE

OCTOBER, 1935 15c

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2—Peace Quartet
3—Chaco Wrestling Match
4—Mountain Song
5—Peace Conference
6—Men Awake
7—Room for One

ACT 2

WESTERN SONGS AND SKETCHES

by Will Ghere, Hollywood Director of "Waiting for Lefty."

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NEW THEATRE

OCTOBER, 1935

Mr Alfredo Salmaggi, impressario of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, pulled an old, old gag out of the files last month and tried it on the striking cast of *Aida*. The cast wanted to be paid. They had stopped after the second act and refused to go on until they were. Mr. Salmaggi cajoled and abused: singers, he told them, are artists, they ought not—should not—must not—behave like "manual laborers — like barbers!" The singers were not impressed. They held out. They got their salaries.

More artists are learning every day that they are, in all dignity—and because of the indignities of their position under capitalism—in precisely the position of other workers. And they are learning that the only way workers can protect themselves is through organization.

Managers, backers, and above all the movie producers (and the bankers who hold their hands) have known this for a long time. Hence the open announcement in The Hollywood Reporter, trade journal, that studios are employing stool pigeons to hound employees, and the accredited report that expensive private dicks are shadowing screen writers and their families. The camouflage for this high-handed Hitlerism is a "red scare," but what has actually scared the producers into such action is the knowledge of what a strong actors and writers and technicians trade union movement could wring from them in the way of better wages and conditions of work.

The Screen Writers Guild, working closely with the Authors League, already has enrolled a huge membership, has put up a legal fight for existence, sent delegates to Washington on important issues, participated in the Motion Picture Code conferences where it obtained concessions, and thereby frightened the producers into a wary respectfulness, and some tentative efforts to disrupt the morale and the membership. These skirmishes are preliminary to the real fight ahead. Ernest Pascal, President of the Guild, has stated (Mr. Salmaggi please note):

"In common with plumbers and steel workers, screen writers draw weekly pay . . . The Guild is fighting for one thing—GUILD SHOP . . Individuals cannot bargain adequately against organized and concentrated wealth and power."

With a closed shop, the Guild will be able to push more surely for equable conditions, and to open the long and bitter fight for writer's control of their material. This right to cultural integrity is blatantly violated, and social and political rights are nullified as well by the present Hollywood set-up which, with its militarist and anti-labor bias, is free to distort an author's work at will.

On the Broadway front, the Equity administration continues to show fright at the entirely healthy and progressive activity of many of its members in the Actors Forum. Its fall bulletin points with pride to the recent constructive measures: the rehearsal expense account, the limiting of the proportion of junior to senior members in any company, and the limitation of rehearsal hours, but it fails to give credit to the Actors Forum for initiating and pushing through these rulings. At the fall meeting the Council urged a basic agreement with the managers, and the indications are that they intend it to run for a three or five year period. Now in the past Equity has had experience with two basic agreements. Both of them were broken by the managers. The effect of any of such semi-permanent agreement now would be to halt all further attempts to secure concessions for actors, by endorsing the status quo. With constitutional control of Equity vested in the Council, it, and not the membership, would fix the provisions of such an agreement. The membership took the only course open to them

DRAMA

FILM

DANCE

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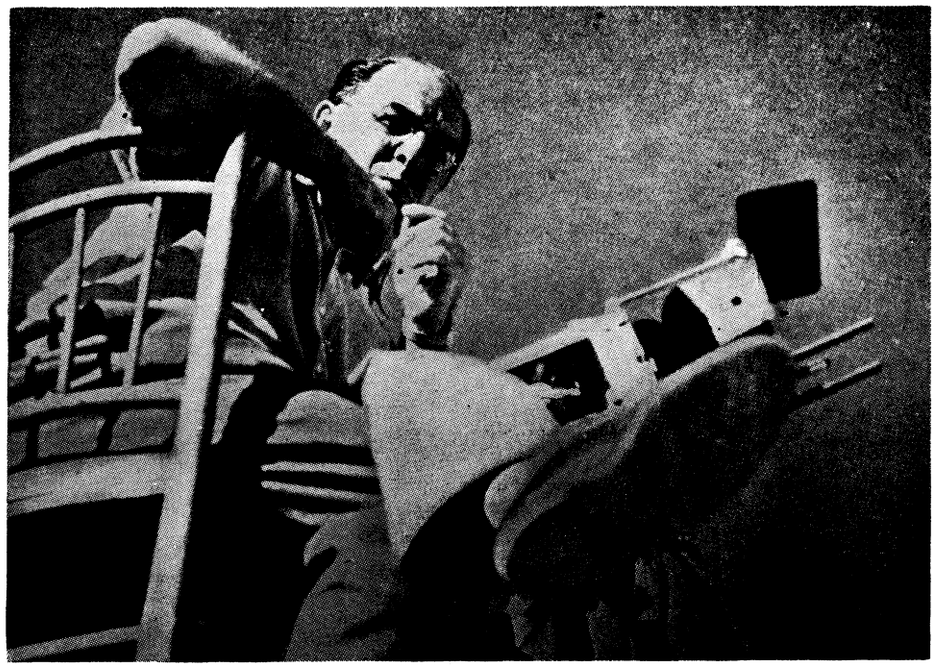
at the meeting and requested — since they could not require—that provisions of the agreement be submitted to them before being signed.

In the dance, the victorious coast-to-coast burlesque strike, described on page 15, climaxed eighteen months of existence of the Burlesque Artists Association.

Still completely without organization, and at the mercy of any exploiter who can use them are three large categories of dancers: those who haunt Hollywood in the hope of bits in the musical movies, the concert dancers, and the taxi-dance hall, ten-cents-a-dance girls.

Although to many young concert dancers performing in professional groups there seems to be little in common between them and the taxi-dancer, lack of organization handicaps them in precisely the same way. They are bulldozed into the notion that the honor of appearing on the stage is enough reward for time and energy put into rehearsals. Sometimes a teacher, sometimes a soloist, uses a hastily assembled group to embellish her own performance. Many times the young professional perfoms gratis for clubs, parties, or associations that could afford to pay her, and would not dream of using non-union musicians for the same program. These dancers should demand that Chorus Equity enlarge its sphere to include their protection, or, as a temporary measure, they must form a separate association of their own.

WPA inherits a notoriously bad record in work relief dramatic activities: low wages, unjust layoffs, miserable conditions on tours, petty political discriminations, worthless or definitely anti-social productions, and the grantng of reasonable demands only under terrific pressure. Both the Actors Emergency Association and the Dancers Union, which wrung some concessions for workers on the projects are now disbanded. Many former members of the Dancers Union are ready to organize the unemployed dancers on the Drama Project. A separate Dance Project should be established, the Paupers Oath requirement should be abolished, and dance activity should be introduced in many more community houses and centers. These things will not be realized without organized and effective demand. With a strong union like Equity in the field, unemployed actors and those on the project should not be forced to a separate organization. Their problems are of direct concern to every actor who is still a dues-paying, and hence a voting member of Equity. Actors excluded from their rightful union by economic pressure must fight for the right to reinstatement, and Equity members should see to it that the Forum makes their fight its own. As soon as WPA releases all the details, NEW THEATRE will present the promised analysis of the government's $23,000,000 Drama project.



G. W. Pabst, director of *Kameradschaft, Comrades of* 1918, etc.

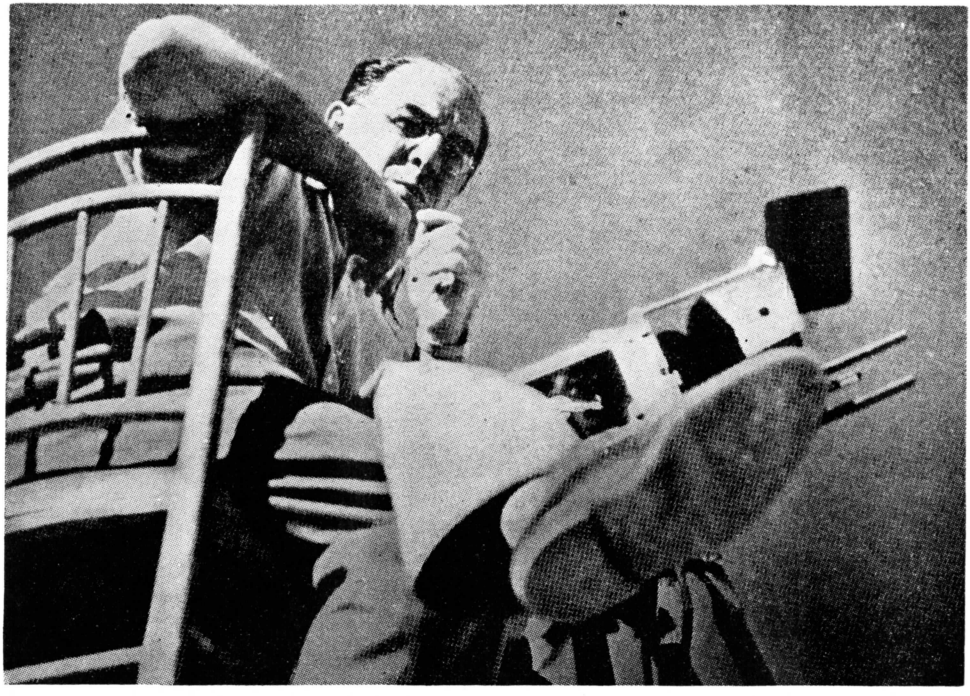
Of the technical unions, the stagehands rest on their established standards, and continue to be the target for every disgruntled manager who wants an alibi for his failure. But actors are beginning to realize that this pretext that high wages to stagehands is a danger to the success of shows is completely false. Stage hands are highly skilled workers whose efficiency is necessary to any production, and while their minimum is high, they take the actor's risk of unemployment between shows, and they have no chance of rising to a higher-bracket salary as every actor hopes to do.

Film operators, whose cross-picketing by the rival unions, Local 306, Allied and Empire confused many movie patrons, and was complicated by the kind of inner politics which is disastrous to healthy unionism, have at last effected a merger. It is up to the straight-forward rank and file elements of both organizations to get control of the amalgamated union and use it solely for the advantage of the operators and the protection of the movie public.

That is the front, as of October. It will change rapidly as the season goes on. Because it is the assumed duty of NEW THEATRE to advance in every possible way the specific economic, and general cultural interests of workers in the theatre, film, and dance, and to campaign for social improvement of the theatre arts, we are establishing with the next issue a department of the magazine devoted to union and working conditions. It will embrace vital problems of all occupations in the field. Contributions and letters are invited from all unions and their members. There is also the question of the unorganized and the unemployed. Their situation and actions must also be reported in the department. The foremost need in the Theatre, Film and Dance is complete unionization of every theatrical occupation, and concerted action of all groups for mutual advancement.

Stronger and better social plays will be heard this year from stages of New Theatre League groups, theatres affiliated with the Socialist Party, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Brookwood Labor College, youth groups like that described by Ben Golden in this issue, and the Young Circle League. Tens of thousands of American workers are beginning to turn regularly to these theatres for enjoyment and for expression of their purposes. The working class is creating a culture which is joyous, militant, and full of zest. As it grows, many workers are beginning to ask, "Why can't all these working class theatres combine their energies?"

The need for unity becomes imperative. To meet it the New Theatre League and NEW THEATRE Magazine offer all their forces for the establishment of a genuine united theatre front. We appeal to all Socialist, Communist, trade union, church, student, and little theatres to rally for common action and effectiveness behind a minimum program against war, fascism and censorship.



G. W. Pabst, director of *Kameradschaft, Comrades of* 1918, etc.

A Letter to F. Ermler on "Peasants"

BY G. W. PABST

My dear Ermler:

At last my wish has been fulfilled: I have seen your *Peasants*. I left the theatre full of gratitude and joy. Joy, because my heart could once more hear its own language, which, for such a long time, it has had to forego. Gratitude, because you gave the only answer possible to the many fruitless words and discussions with which we have been squandering our time—a deed, an accomplishment.

You have created a work of art. You were given a problem of particular importance: the struggle of the revolutionary peasants against the Kulak. This theme was of historic significance because the fate of the Russian revolution depended in such great degree on the triumph of the collective idea over individualism. And this theme has been transformed by your creative hands into vivid facts. What was purely conceptual you have turned into the flesh and blood of your characters. You have opposed the group to the individual, the former Kulak, Gerasim Platonovich, but you have given him so much warmth that he, the villain, gains our sympathy and understanding. By so doing, you have made the victory of the collective idea more noble and real.

The world of the bourgeoisie in which we live and work insists that the film must not be a means of propaganda. Of course, by propaganda, they mean—opposition. Every attempt to use the film as a forum for the discussion of the burning issues of the day runs up against the "morale." Today, every living problem is declared outside the "morale." The world, by this prohibition, proves both its weakness and its knowledge of that weakness. It has dragged down to the level of the peep-show the finest instrument for the cultural advancement of humanity since the invention of the printing press. No regard is ever paid to the vulgarity and barbarousness of the film so long as it maintains the present order—the profit system.

Now, along comes your picture diametrically opposed to our ways of film making. Your film has no "tempo." That is because it has an *idea* to convey. The scenes have an *intellectual* basis. The lengthily cut shots serve to guide the mind of the audience and to permit identification with the action and actors of the film. On the other hand, *our* insane insistence on "tempo" originates in the fear that a slight pause would inevitably reveal the emptiness of both words and scene. Your picture doesn't have a love story and doesn't require one because its subject *is* love. You have more beautiful people than the bourgeois film has ever found. Their bodies are clad in dirty work-perspired rags. No misguided desire to please the senses has obtruded on the grey appropriateness of these clothes. But the eyes of your people are wide-opened windows through which their souls, pregnant with the future, call to us. The humor of your picture grows organically out of the circumstances of the story. It does not consist of laboriously invented gags. But over and above all, the chief beauty of the film, to me, is to see how one great thought flows like a smooth stream through the body of the entire collective: to see that the value of an individual is determined by his value to the whole, and how it is grievous punishment not to be permitted to participate in the activity of the group.

What intensity emerges from the struggle of these men for an idea! It is essentially their unity, and their unity alone, that makes the Kulak the enemy of the muzhiks . . . one may feel pity for his tragic destiny . . . but he is doomed because he struggles to fence his life and goods from the collective.

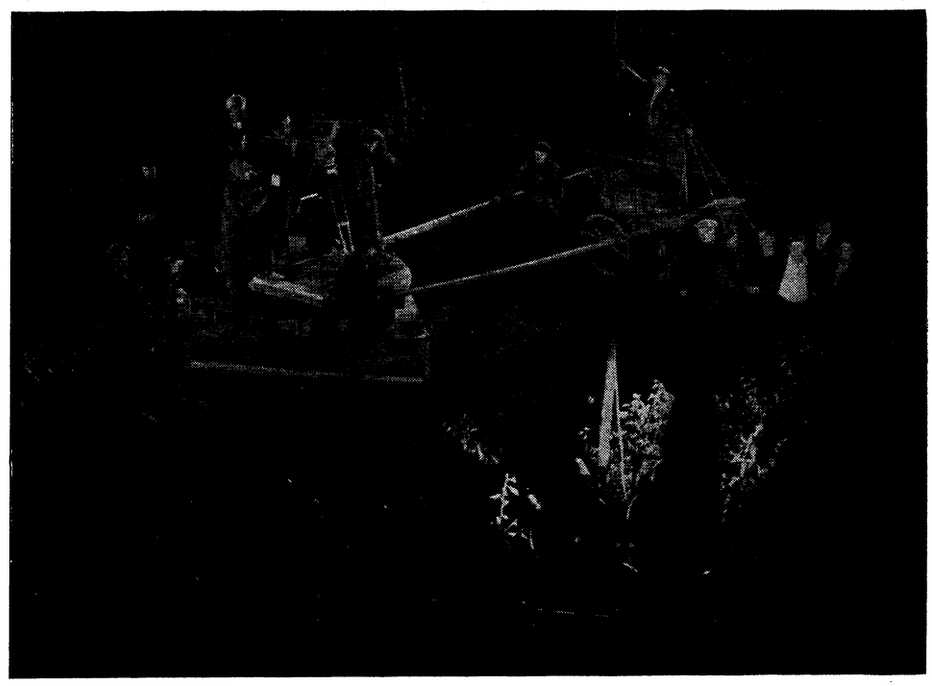
Often the picture achieves the quality of a parable. For example, the old peasants search for the truth by raising their hands in oath, calling on heaven to witness their innocence. Thus they express a belief in an order outside of themselves, while the youth—and how beautiful is the grave face of the young communist—finds law in himself and his party! When the new life, in the form of the community's first bath-house, overcomes the accustomed dirt of centuries, Anisim, the village elder, in consequence of his wager that the village would never see a bath-house in *his* time, must surrender his dearly-fostered tress; in other words, his beard. And that accursed rascal, the head of the local polit-bureau, cuts it off in person. How this manly scene warms the heart! The happiness of this intimate circle of perspiring heads and bodies scatters the old man's anger as the spring sun melts the snow.

As your picture finally fades out on the friendly face of the soldier you have succeeded in proving that the mass is no more than the sum of the millions of these youthful peasants, and you make us believe that their future will be more beautiful than the dreams and songs of a people ever were.

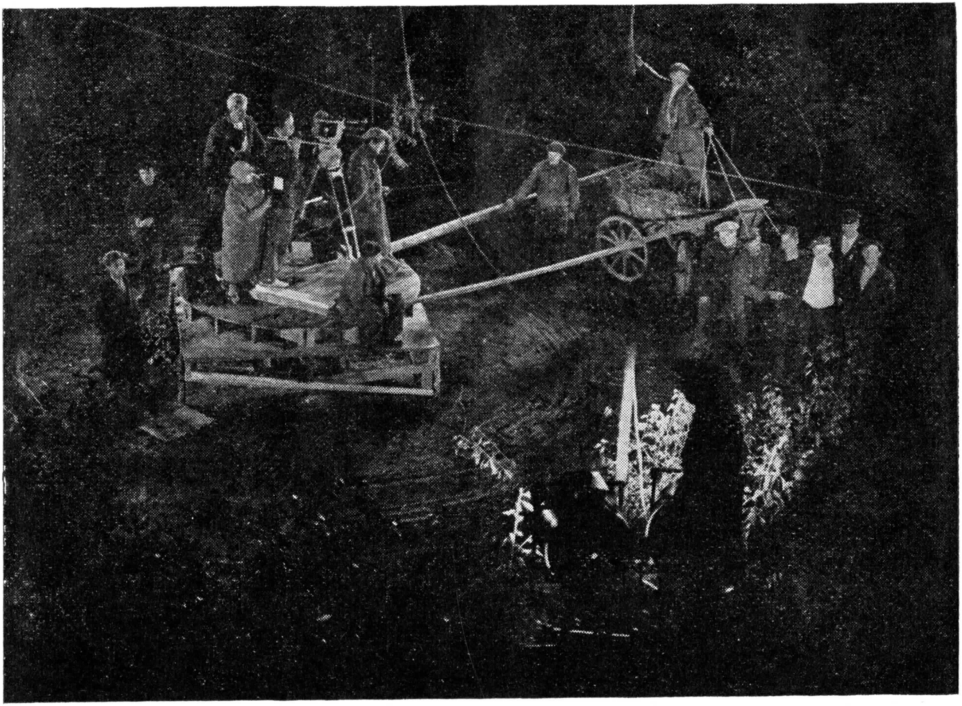
I thank you for the pleasure and the beauty you have given us. If I have failed to mention the many who helped you with the very best they could give, you will understand that my thanks goes to the whole group as much as to you.

I send you my heartfelt greetings.

(*Translated from the German*)



Friedrich Ermler shooting a scene from *Peasants*



Friedrich Ermler shooting a scene from *Peasants*

Hollywood's "Riff Raff"

BY JOEL FAITH AND LOUIS NORDEN

With the entire West Coast, from San Diego to Seattle, facing an industrial crisis in the maritime and allied industries, Hollywood propagandists have already begun the production of two motion pictures to aid in the breaking of a strike that has not yet started. Each of these pictures attacks the militant leadership of the working class, seeks to win the sympathy of the American public for scab labor concealed behind the badge of "loyalty," and attempts again to bolster the fascist ideology implied during the past season in such Warner Brothers' productions as *Black Fury* and *Stranded.*

These new efforts of the Hollywood producers, who still disclaim all propaganda in the production of "entertainment," are Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's *Riff-Raff,* produced by Irving Thalberg, starring Jean Harlow and Spencer Tracy, and Warner Brothers' *The Frisco Kid,* starring James Cagney. The use of Cagney and Miss Harlow, both conceded to be "box-office draws," is Hollywood's protection against "flops," and is designed to draw millions of people into the theatres to absorb the Hearstian viciousness presented on the screen. It must be remembered that Willie Hearst and his girl friend, Marion Davies, are now cosily ensconced at Warner Brothers' studio and that Louis B. Mayer, head of MGM, is one of the fascist publisher's closest co-workers.

Riff-Raff is the more virulent of the two pictures. *The Frisco Kid* attempts to evade the propaganda issue by dating the story in Barbary Coast days and by personalizing a plot in which the action of vigilante mobs in cleaning up grumbling waterfront elements is glorified.

But *Riff-Raff* has an axe to grind and doesn't care who hears the grinding. It deliberately seeks to prove that the waterfront strike with which it deals is part of a "red" conspiracy to delude the workers; it furthermore sets forth, for the first time in American pictures, the role that the American worker may expect to play in the so-called *Corporate State* toward which capitalism is attempting to point this country. Here is the basis of the Fascist state, as shown in Mussolini's legislation, the Italian *Law of Syndicates,* passed April 3, 1926, the only concrete reality in the Corporate State:

> "Employes and laborers who in groups of three or more cease work by agreement, or who work in such a manner as to disturb its continuity or regularity in order to compel the employers to change the existing contracts are punishable by a fine of from one hundred to one thousand lire. *The chiefs,* promoters and organizers of the crimes mentioned above are punishable by imprisonment for not less than one year nor more than two years in addition to the fines prescribed above."

The authors of *Riff-Raff,* Frances Marion and William Hanneman, use all of Hollywood's outworn cliches to misrepresent and slander the motives and actions of the West Coast labor movement's militant leadership. Even the obstacles in Jean Harlow's path toward the hero's brawny arms result from the machinations of a Communist agitator from the San Francisco waterfront. (Bear in mind that the writers of these lies are heavily insulated against the reality of struggle. Frances Marion, once a Hearst newspaper woman, is now the highest paid writer in the world, drawing a salary of $3,000 a week.)

The scene of the picture is a waterfront town, resembling San Pedro. Dutch Miller, the hero, is a fisherman, member of the union. Hattie, the heroine, is a cannery worker. Nick Appopolis, who talks with the "Parkyakarkas" Greek accent which Hollywood finds so amusing amidst all of its own inimitable accents, is the owner of the cannery and the fishing fleet. Pops, Hattie's father, is a broken-down drunkard, apparently typical of all waterfront men. We are also introduced to Hattie's sister, Lil, and Peter, her husband, with their two children, Rosie and Jimmy, a pair of mischievous guttersnipes.

"Red" Belcher, the Communist, is described in the script as "the belligerent, trouble-making, radical type. He is a newcomer to 'Fish Harbor' and uses his dynamic personality to breed discontent among the men." Brains McCall, the union head, opposes the strike, and, in contrast to the script's description of "Red," the union head is described thus: "Though ignorant, a fine type of man, serious, intent and reliable."

Unrest among the men of the fishing fleet apparently exists as the picture opens. Following the precedent set by *Black Fury* and *Stranded,* the picture finds no need to ascribe any reason for the impending strike other than that Belcher has undermined Brains' position through his agitation.

Here is the "communist" agitator's plea for the strike:

"Rise up, men. Take your necks from under the iron heel. The workers shall be free. Strike the fetters from your starved bodies. How long will you sell your souls for their dirty pennies while they take the dollars you make? Those are your dollars. Yours and *Yours* and YOURS."

As Belcher speaks, Brains McCall asks Dutch Miller to keep the men in line. "He's got 'em all worked up," begs Brains, "and they're playing right into Nick's hands. Appopolis wants us to strike—he wants to break that five-year agreement we signed so he can bring in cheap labor. Get 'em back on the boats—make 'em stop listenin' to them Reds."

Dutch, who is described in the script as "a large, thick-set, healthy male animal, not too intelligent yet decidedly sure of himself," agrees.

"Hey, get off that keg and keep your mouth shut!" he shouts at Belcher. "Where do you think you are—Roo-sha?"

"If we was we'd have a chance," Belcher replies, "in Russia the workin' man's got a chance."

"Yeah?" yelps Dutch, pushing Belcher into the Pacific, "well swim over there and see how you like it." Miller reminds the men of their boyhood days together on the waterfront: "If an outside gang came sneakin' down here we stuck together and run 'em out. Well, there's an outside gang sneaked in here right now—and they're makin' you see things wrong. Brains says so."

Belcher tries to "get to" Dutch when he sees the men following his leadership. "You could do a lot for the men," he says, "they look up to you. I don't blame them. You could be a big man if you'd listen. You're a born leader—you have powers to sway the masses . . . to help the people—you could be the biggest man on the waterfront."

On the next Fourth of July, Nick gives a big party for all the men on board an old barge. Hattie, madly in love with Dutch, comes to the party with Nick to make Dutch jealous. In a crap game with Nick, Dutch wins when Hattie spits on the dice. It is the aptitude for "spitting lucky" that brings a proposal of marriage fom Dutch, and after obeying the Hays' office regulations regarding marriage, they move into Hollywood's conception of a worker's bungalow, containing all the latest electrical appliances. Dutch, believe it or not, spends the earlier portions of his bridal night declaiming his ambitions.

"I got big plans for the men," he tells

"I got big plans for the men," Dutch tells Hattie

her. "The men are gonna listen to me and I'm gonna show 'em what to do. Things is goin' to be hummin' around the waterfront in the next couple of weeks."

The walkout has no basis other than the men's allegiance to Dutch, who has been susceptible to Red's flattery. Dutch, ensnared in the red trap of the outside agitator, even turns upon his friend, the union leader. The strike lasts ten weeks during which the men parade with placards bearing Frances Marion's conception of strike slogans. They read: "LET NICK APPOPOLIS SWEAT LIKE WE DONE," "DUTCH MILLER, THE WORKING MAN'S FRIEND." Newspaper headlines shriek: "FISHERMEN ON STRIKE TEN WEEKS FACE STARVATION" and "RED CROSS CALLED UPON."

Dutch and Brains visit Nick to force a showdown. "You're gonna give us two per cent more than we was gettin'," Dutch says.

But Nick's trump card is a telegram from a big "labor leader"—not a strike-breaker by any chance—in San Diego. "Have eighteen fishing boats equipped for tuna," the wire declares. "Will deliver after you assure us men will be protected against violence."

"We ought to tell the men," says Brains who wants to give in, "we can't hold out against him now."

"I'm the boss," Dutch shouts heroically as he refuses. "Nobody's gonna make a heel out of me." But Dutch is worried and reports to Belcher.

Red rejoices. "That's great," he says, a fanatical gleam in his eye. "That's just what we want—a scab fleet! Don't you see, it plays right into our hands! It will give us a chance to use other tactics! This strike is goin' to make you a big man. Why your name will be known from coast to coast when we win. Every union in the country will hold up your name as a byword."

The scab fleet comes in. The men gather on the waterfront. There is no resistance, no picketing. Instead, this note may be found in the script:

"The men are stunned, helpless. They talk among themselves: 'The rotten scabs,' 'He's licked us,' 'Brains was right,' 'Appopolis wasn't fooling' and 'What are we gonna do now?' "

"I'll tell you what we're gonna do," shouts the ingenious Dutch. "Scuttle every fishin' boat. We're gonna blow up Appopolis cannery, we've got the right to do it."

"Just a minute," Brains interposes. "We've had labor difficulties before, but we never resorted to no violence. This union is for justice—justice to everybody—but it ain't a union for criminals. We've never committed a criminal offense and we ain't gonna destroy property. What are we, a lot of crazy Reds—or American citizens? We was in the wrong . . . we walked out on Appopolis and he has every right to carry on his business after we let him down. We can't gain anything by blowing up the cannery. Appopolis is insured and if we scuttle the boats what good will our jobs be if we do get them back? What would we fish with? There's nothin' left for us to do but to meet Nick's terms and go back to work, peaceable."

The men go back to work. Dutch, bitter against Brains, quarrels with Hattie and leaves home. When he comes to blows with Brains, his old friend, the latter refuses to strike back, realizes that the misguided Dutch is but the tool of the outside agitator.

Belcher takes advantage of the situation and insidiously plays upon Dutch's pride. "You're cut out for bigger things than a jerkwater strike," he says persuasively. "There's a big one hangin' fire on the Frisco waterfront, that's where you'd shine. Whaddya say we go up tonight? The gang up there will go for you Dutch, in a big way. They need somebody just like you—with personality."

"Gee, another Huey Long maybe, huh?" one of Belcher's pals says; Frances Marion must be excused for never having heard of Harry Bridges.

"Sure," Red replies, "a little push and Dutch could be a big national figure."

When Dutch leaves with Belcher, Nick goes on the make for Hattie. But when he tells her that Dutch is a bum in a Sacramento "jungle," she promotes money from Nick, and leaves to find Dutch.

Dutch has become a drunkard; Belcher is still trying to get him to go to San Francisco. "I tell you," Belcher says, "this can't go on. Right now all over the world men are uniting for the cause of humanity in a common brotherhood."

Then he reads, so the script alleges, from the *Communist Manifesto*, page 40, ". . . by the actions of modern industry all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder."

Hattie arrives at the jungle and, when Dutch refuses to see her, gives Belcher the money. But Belcher, the Communist, keeps it for himself. Hattie is arrested for stealing Nick's money, has a baby in prison. Dutch visits her, tells her of plans of a jailbreak, in which Hattie refuses to take part. Nick refuses to help Hattie and the union will have nothing more to do with Dutch. Only Brains takes pity upon him, gets him a job guarding a tanker.

Belcher, too, comes back to Fish Harbor with a couple of "comrades" and a package of dynamite. But Dutch refuses to allow them to board the tanker with the explosives, and, in a fight, he forces them to leave though he is injured. Hattie breaks jail to come to his side. Appopolis, formerly the employer of scabs, the persecutor of Hattie, now gives another party with Dutch as guest of honor.

During the festivities, the union presents Dutch with his old union card. Hattie, hunted by the police, meets Dutch at her family's home, shows him his baby. Dutch suggests flight to Mexico, but Hattie wants him to stay in Fish Harbor.

"One of these days," she says, "You'll own that fishing fleet. Everything will be all right now. You've got your union card back. I'll finish my stretch—it won't take long—and we'll be happy together again."

Riff-Raff has the slimy distinction of being the first thoroughly undisguised attack on the maritime unions and labor. *Black*

(*Continued on page* 33)

Children's Theatre on Tour

BY BEN GOLDEN

Slowly the little red truck winds its way up the hollow, carrying its cargo of young actors, who are about to give their first performance after three weeks of intensive training and rehearsal.

We are on our way to the little mining town of Black Hawk, West Virginia. When we arrive, we find some of the audience already waiting for us, while others are coming. A space has been cleared and staked off on the side of a hill. This is to be our stage; the audience is to sit below the hill on a level plot of grass. Gradually the large space is filled with men, women and children, Negro and white. As they find places to sit, one of our group goes up to collect the five cents admission that is used to pay our travelling expenses.

The sun falls behind the hill on which we are to perform, and darkness envelops the entire hollow. We have no spots, nor any other light for that matter, but the miners help us out by lending us some carbide lamps. Two of us station ourselves on each side of this natural stage and focus the lights on the actors.

In the distance we can see miners going to and from work, the carbide lamps stuck in front of their caps glimmering like tiny stars in the darkness.

The anti-war mass recitation is the first thing on the program. The audience is tense as the narrator tells of the horror of war, and actually thrills, when it hears the mass of young people in front of the narrator beginning to whisper at first, and then gradually becoming louder, to shout, "Black and white, unite to fight."

The audience feels that here is something real, that these boys and girls are telling them the truth, that this *is* what war means, "maimed," "crippled," "hunger," "misery," "death," "despair." They wait tensely to the last line, when the actors point their fingers at them and say, with raised fists at the last word, "But the world shall be Ours!" Then the audience rises to its feet, cheering and applauding.

This was the first of nineteen scheduled performances in as many mining towns. These performances had been arranged for by Pioneer Youth, a non-partisan organization that works among the miners, chiefly the youth, of West Virginia, organizing them on a class struggle basis. Realizing the importance of dramatic work, Pioneer Youth had requested New Theatre League to assign one of its members to work on their staff this summer.

Immediately upon arrival, we had been confronted with the Negro question. The problem of course was to get a mixed group of children, Negro and white, to take part in the dramatic work. At first, we were unable to find any white kids who were willing to be in the same group with Negroes; where the children were willing, the parents objected. However, Pioneer Youth was determined that there would be no discrimination, and after a week of going from town to town, and speaking to children and parents, we were able to assemble a group of ten boys and girls, six white and four Negro, ranging from fourteen to eighteen.

Pioneer Youth has a camp on Coal River, to which it sends its members for a two-week stay. It was decided to send the dramatic group out there for three weeks, to give them the necessary training and to rehearse some plays.

The camp was ideal for the work. The group was away from chauvinist influences and we had time for rehearsals and training without interference. It also gave us an opportunity for many discussions on the Negro question, in which the reasons for the prevailing prejudices were pointed out.

The white members of the group soon realized for themselves that working with the Negroes did them no harm. More, they saw that they could learn a great deal from the Negroes, who were much better actors, and who excelled in imaginative interpretation and characterization.

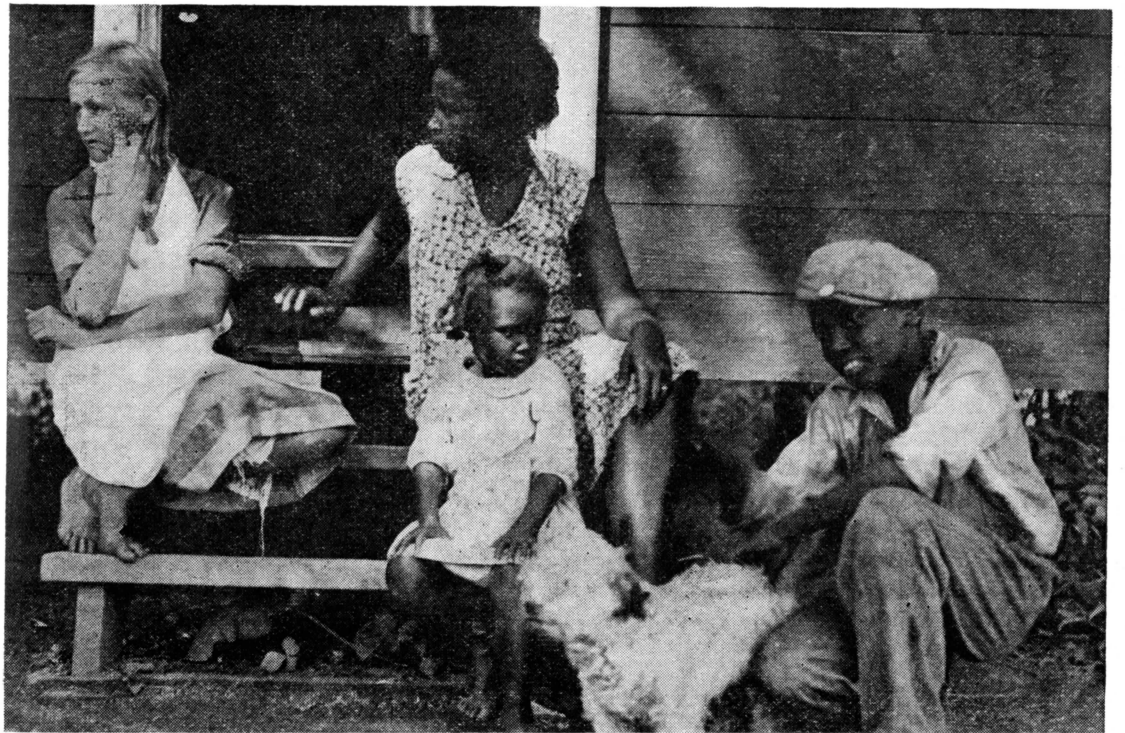
Throughout my work with the group, I tried to get them to tell me what should be done, instead of my telling them what to do. We talked over a long time what kind of plays we should do. Since they were to write the plays themselves, each of them presented what he or she thought would be a good subject. Gaylord, a white boy, told of a large family he knew who were getting only $2.50 a week, and who lived on corn bread, mostly, and berries that they gathered on the hillside. "We ought to make up a play about that," he said, "and maybe show them how to fight for more relief." Roy Lee, a Negro boy, thought that the burning of the tipple at the Eskadale mine would be swell for a play. "We could show what it means to the miners to be thrown out of work through no fault of their own." Louise, white, whose father was crippled for life by a slate fall and who has had to fight constantly for his compensation, wanted to dramatize a compensation case, and show how the company tried to cheat the miners out of what was rightfully theirs.

Out of all the suggestions two were chosen which dealt with the most urgent problems confronting the youth of West Virginia: a play against war, and a play showing how to organize a struggle for free text-books. The latter question is a heated issue in the state: it is almost impossible for miners who are working only one or two days a week to buy school books for their children. This means that many children have been dropping out of school before their work is nearly completed.

For the anti-war play we used a mass recitation, arranged by the group, with my help, from a chant by Ernst Toller that had appeared in the New Masses last winter, and an anti-war poem written by a

"Black and White," West Virginia — Film and Photo League

"Black and White," West Virginia Film and Photo League



member of the Paterson New Theatre League group and published in Printer's Voice, a trade union paper.

The school book play we built through improvisation, memorizing only the statistical material, such as figures on taxes and the cost of providing books for all the children in the state. Working through improvisations proved very fruitful for its training value, and kept the performance fresh and lively—we had many variations in the first few showings.

Our dress rehearsal was shown to an audience of farmers from the surrounding country—the ones from whom we bought our vegetables and supplies. About twenty-five came, some of them walking miles through the woods to get there. It was dark before they arrived to take their places on the benches we had made (planks across logs). The school book play went over big. Here was something the farmers knew and understood. When the scene of the Pioneer Youth was played, with the plans being made for organizing children and parents into a demonstration and going dow to Charleston to demand free books from the Governor, the farmers applauded enthusiastically. During this scene the group draws up a petition and elects a committee to go out among the audience and collect signatures. This was done at every performance, and each time met with an eager response.

During the anti-war play comments were constant: "That's right," "You bet," and one young man, "The only war I'll ever fight in is when the poor fight against the rich!"

After the performance we spoke to the audience about our work, explaining why we had a mixed group, and pointing out the necessity of uniting Negro and white workers and farmers. We tried to involve the audience in this discussion, but none of them would talk. Some of the youngsters in the group took part, however, and told their experiences at camp in a mixed group.

Gaylord said, "In this fight for free textbooks we need the Negro children, because if we went to Charleston without them, they would say, 'The Negro kids aren't asking for books, why should you?' and the same if the Negroes went down there alone." Others showed how the Negroes like other workers were threatened by war, and how unity was needed in the fight against the bosses, that all this prejudice was a trick to keep them from fighting together for their needs.

After this performance we left camp, to begin our nineteen scheduled performances. Many interesting things happened during our travels. There was the town of Galaghar, where we were supposed to get the little Negro school for our performance. At the last minute, those in charge, without giving any explanation, wouldn't open the school. All they said was "We are not allowed to open the school." Where the pressure (if any) came from, we were unable to find out.

But undaunted, we led the audience into a Negro family's back yard and gave our performance there. This Negro town cooperated one hundred percent, many people bringing chairs and other furniture for the audience to sit on.

Just as we were about to start, some of the audience noticed a group of people seated on their porches, ready to see the show. These who had paid their five cents admission, thought this was unfair. So the performance was held up while one woman brought pieces of wire and rope, which were tied across the yard. Another brought some sheets and hung them over the rope enclosing the actors. The people who had thought that they would see the show for nothing, promptly came down, bringing their chairs and admission fees.

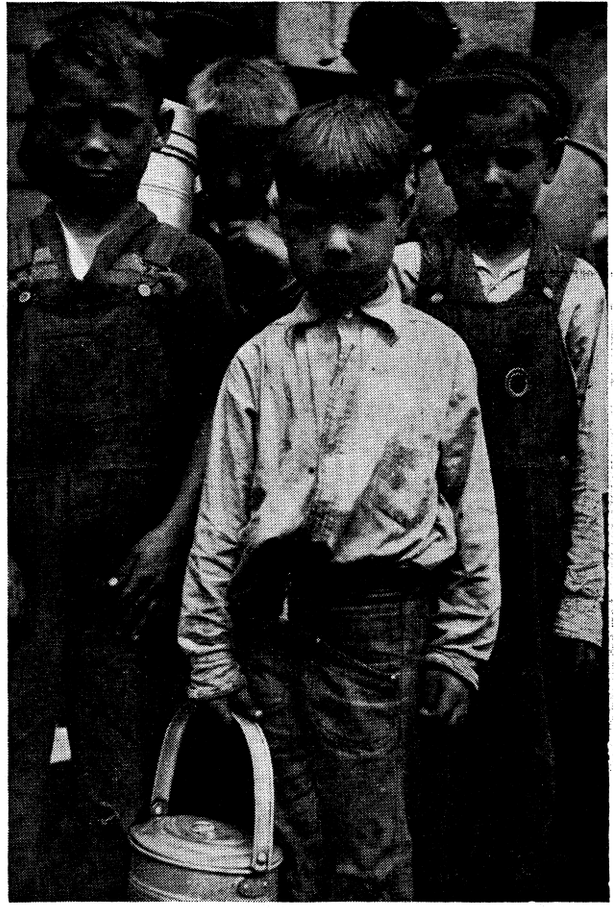
That night also we spoke to the audience, telling them why we gave a play against war, pointing to Italy's attack on Ethiopia, and foretelling what war would mean to the miners and their families. The audience applauded the plays and players, and many told of the need for such plays.

The Negro towns were the ones that received us with open arms. In the town of Whittikar, a Negro village of seventeen families, the audience had not gathered when we got there. The minister, angry at the tardiness of his flock, rang the church bell to call them—the entire town turned out and showed its approval by shouting and stamping feet.

Not all the towns received us in this way. The town of Mammouth resented the fact that we had a mixed group. When I spoke of the need for working class unity of Negro and white, some of the audience walked out. Those who remained received our plays in cold silence. The two Negro girls who always sang some spirituals between the two plays were laughed at, and left the stage without finishing their numbers. A member of the group who lived in this town withdrew the next day, and we had to break someone else into the part.

The summer's work ended with a demonstration of 400 children and parents in Charleston on August 24. When the police refused the children a permit to march, they piled into the trucks that had brought them from the mining camps. After tacking their banners to the trucks, they wended their way slowly through the city, touching every spot through which they had intended to march, shouting their slogans and singing their songs.

At the Capitol, a committee went in to see the governor to speak and to present



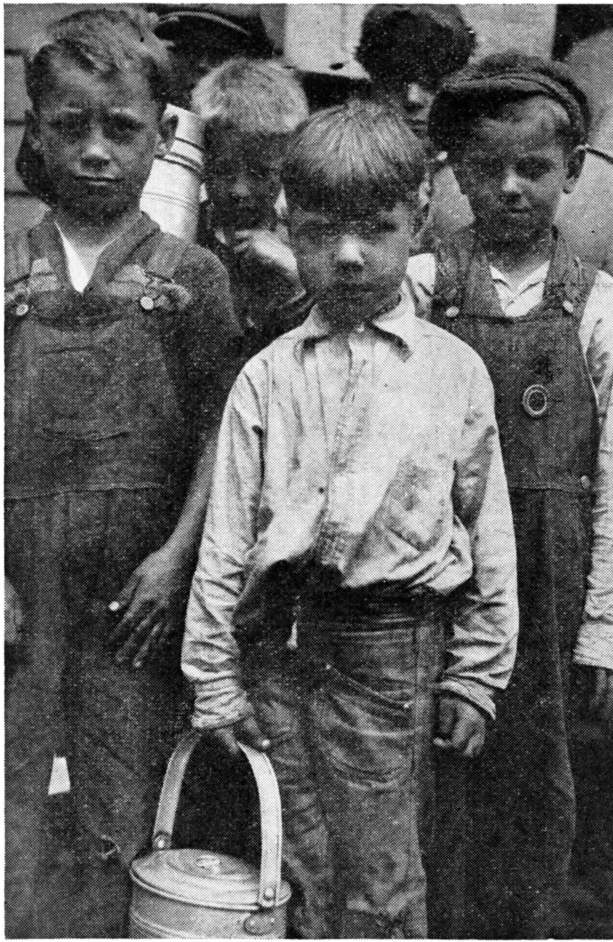
Miners' Children, West Virginia—Film and Photo

him with the nearly ten thousand signatures on the petitions. The rest of the demonstrators stood on the Capitol steps shouting the slogans that were used in the play, "Black and white, unite and fight, for free school books," and, "One, two, three, four, what are we here for? Free text books, Yeah."

The governor sidestepped the committee politely. His secretary explained at length how hard the governor had fought to get books for the children of West Virginia. The committee remained unimpressed. They knew that a previous committee that had gone to the governor to ask that part of a known two million dollar surplus in the State Treasury be used for school books, had been told, "This money must go to the bankers, to cut down the interest on the state debt."

When they came out of the governor's office, they told the rest what had happened. All of them then pledged to carry on the fight for free books. Dramatics was to play an important part in this fight as it did in helping to organize the demonstration.

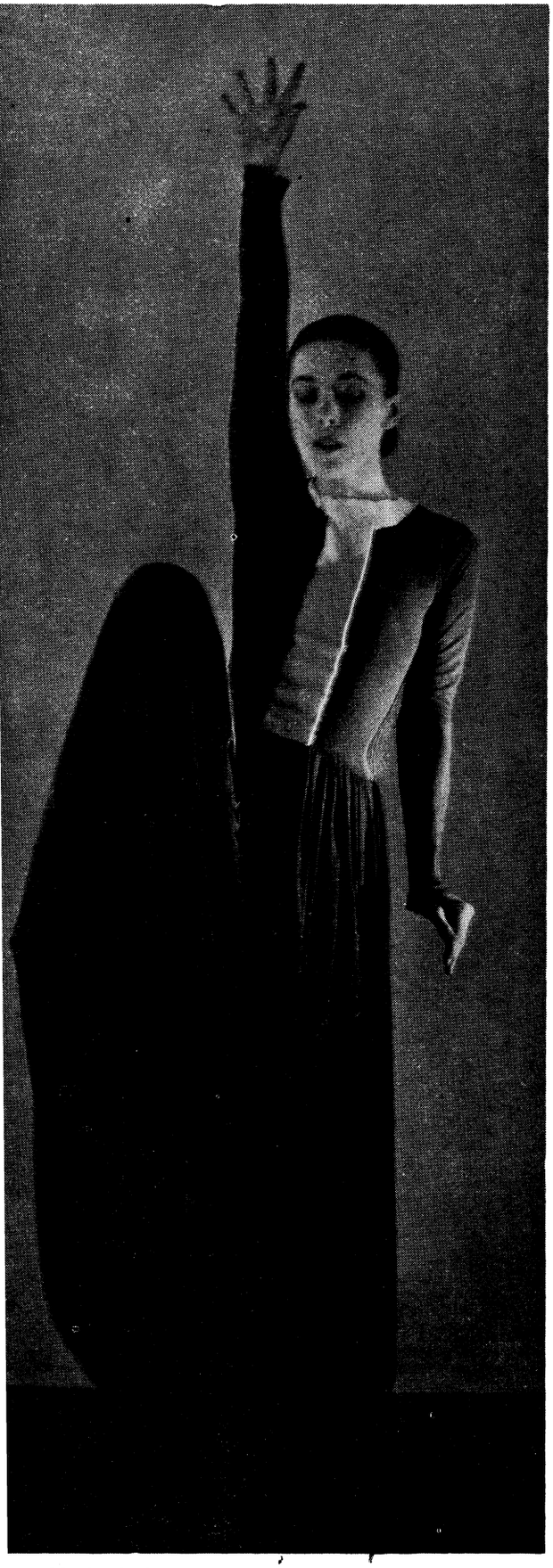
From these sketchy notes, it can readily be seen what a field there is for theatre work among miners, steel workers, etc. Not only can the theatre provide entertainment for these people who, through poverty are denied almost every form of amusement and pleasure, but it can be a powerful force for organizing them to struggle for their own immediate needs.



Miners' Children, West Virginia—Film and Photo

Music for the Dance

BY ELIE SIEGMEISTER



Martha Graham in *American Provincials* Soichi Sunami

What music shall the dancer use? Should the dance or the music come first? Should the relation between the two be that of equal to equal, or should one play a leading, the other an auxiliary role? These questions, long a matter of controversy among modern dancers, have again come to the fore in the work of the new dance groups. The striking advances that have been made in dance technique, the choreographic and ideological maturity of many groups of the New Dance League have only thrown into sharp relief the lack of a corresponding development in the musical end of the dance movement. Beyond question, certain leading dancers have found, or have had written for them, music that furnished a complete and adequate basis for the dance patterns they had in mind.

Unfortunately, this is far from being the rule. Attendance at a number of concerts of the New Dance League during the past season revealed much good dancing marred by inadequate or simply bad music. It was obvious that the creators of these dances either had been unable to find a fitting tonal accompaniment for their compositions and were forced to take anything that came to hand, or simply felt that the music did not necessarily have to be interesting in itself—in fact not interesting at all, lest it attract the attention of the spectator. Here music served simply as an agency to mark the rhythmic pulse and give the counts. Certain dancers, having the eye alone in mind, have not hesitated to cut out of published compositions a measure here, to repeat two measures there, and often to delete or transpose whole sections in order to fit a preconceived dance pattern. Even Hanns Eisler, well-known proletarian composer, was not immune from such treatment. He tells of the dancer, who, in order to strike a position of exuberant triumph at the end of an "interpretation" of the *Comintern*, changed the last chord from minor to major.

This kind of procedure, not to mention time and money, has deterred many leftward-moving composers who would otherwise be only too happy to work in the dance, from working with the leading groups and soloists, thereby furnishing at least a partial solution of the dance-music question. Yet this attitude towards music, namely, that its function in relation to the dance is purely auxiliary, is common to all of the most advanced dancers of our time, and cannot be considered mere egotism or ignorance on their part. It is part of the historic development of the dance, which in recent years has tended to grow more and more independent of the other arts which it formerly relied on for support, and to become more and more self-sufficient. The creation of independent dance compositions, complete as regards line, rhythm, development of themes, form, climax, etc., is a matter of every-day work in the studio.

To prove the case for the "pure dance made of the stuff of the dance" and to show that this art could stand completely on its own feet, certain performers have at one time attempted to dispense with the help of literature and even of music. Although the merits of the abstract dance (sans narrative, in some cases sans title) are still being debated, a few experiments made it clear that the dance sans music was impracticable. The musician, then, had to be called in to compose the accompaniment for an already finished visual pattern. He had to interpret this form note for gesture, measure for measure, rhythm for corresponding rhythm. The dance which was formerly dependent on music has now reduced music to a state of far more rigid subservience, and chained the musician to a lock-step so inflexible that the creation of a tonal pattern posssessing logic in its own terms has become a heroic, if not impossible task.

The question arises, is this absolute domination of the dance over music not a Pyrrhic victory? If music is essential to a complete dance, why not the best music? Does not a perfect whole demand perfection in each of the parts? That the dance can get by with music that is simply a filler-in is not to be doubted. Fine choreography can also overcome the drawback of bad lighting, or indifferent costumes. But how much better when lighting, costuming, music, dance, all measure up to the highest standard.

The new dance groups can afford to set as their goal none but the most complete art form. With the steady growth of New Dance League audiences will come a demand for higher, ever more perfectly developed art, whose social value will be so much the greater, and as part of this demand, a demand for better music and better integration of motions and sound.

What, then, is the way out of the music-dance dilemma? It can only be through the close collaboration of musician and dancer on a status of complete equality, seeking a common objective, based on a pro-labor, anti-war and anti-fascist ideol-

Martha Graham in *American Provincials* Soichi Sunami

ogy. The product can be neither music-for-the-dance nor dance-for-the-music, but an equilibrium in which the best energies of both artists may have room to expand. Modern dance history gives a beautiful instance of music-dance collaboration in the case of Stravinsky and the Ballets Russes. Although much water has flowed under the bridge since Diaghileff's troupe was considered supreme in the dance, a work such as *Petrouchka,* an unusual example of complete unity down to the last detail of counterpoint, was constructed as a collective job, phrase by phrase.

We have other instances of this form of collective work in the Soviet Theatre and in the Artef and the Group Theatre.

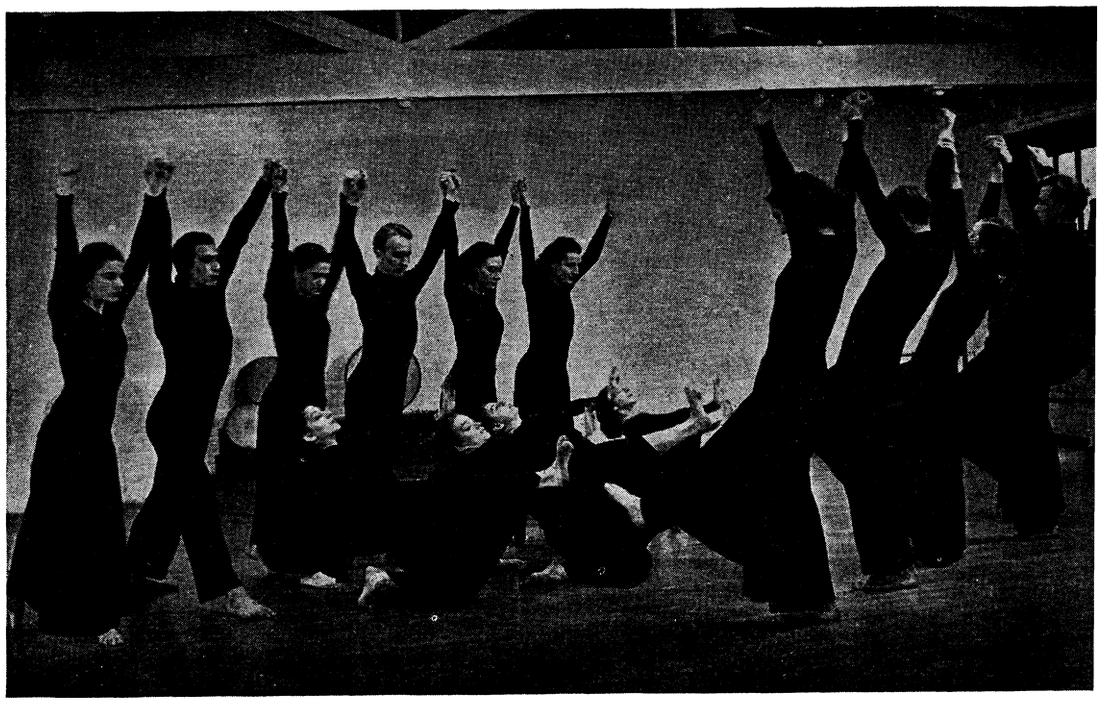
Obviously no such perfect unity of music and dance can be hoped for in the immediate future, yet its basis can be laid down now. Such collaboration would take several forms. One, the permanent attachment of a composer to a given dance group, has already been in operation: North with the Dance Unit, Parnas and Cazden with the New Dance Group, and others. Another type would be collaboration with particular composers on given works. In any case simultaneous work on both music and dance involving not only improvisation but also structural planning, in which musical form and dance form must be equally weighed, can be held up as a goal to work towards. The musician will have to learn more about dance form and technique, and the dancer will have to study musical form, analysis, and at least some elements of harmony. The New Dance League has already formed such a course, "*Music for the Dance,*" to be given this fall.

Now let us turn to the type of music useful to the modern dancer. If the creation of a new composition for each dance is the ideal method of procedure, it is not always practical. Just as there will be some music written after the dance, so there is still room for a large number of dance compositions based on already existing music. The difficulty for the dancer here is that of building a dance embodying a social consciousness upon music that was not written with this in mind. In the field of modern music (to which contemporary dancers have for the most part completely turned, and which they have understood and used even more than performing musicians themselves) there is much that is still to be explored by the dancers, and much to be rejected. At first the social-minded dancers took over uncritically the musical repertoire of leading bourgeois dancers. Much of this music, dating from post-war Vienna and Paris, was either extremely abstract, expressionistic and melancholy (Schoenberg, Toch, Scriabine) or else it was of the cute, whimsical, sarcastic variety (Satie, Poulenc). So long as the dance aimed to express ideas of introversion, nostalgic despair, or bitter and futile sarcasm, reflecting the attitude of the liberal petty bourgeois artist towards the decaying capitalist society surrounding him, the music of the bourgeois modernists above mentioned was ideal. But when dancers began to see the revolutionary way out and wished to express themes of defiance, struggle, positive conviction and healthy building of the future, this music failed them. For example, in Tamiris' *Individual and the Mass,* an admirable study of the isolated bourgeois artist, the music was well-chosen: a cold, metallic remorseless piece in dissonant counterpoint, whose jagged edges and scholastic melancholy aptly portrayed the reasonings of those who stand aloof. By contrast the joyful, athletic theme of *Work and Play* was considerably hampered by a musical setting that was trite and folk-songy in a polly-anna sort of way.

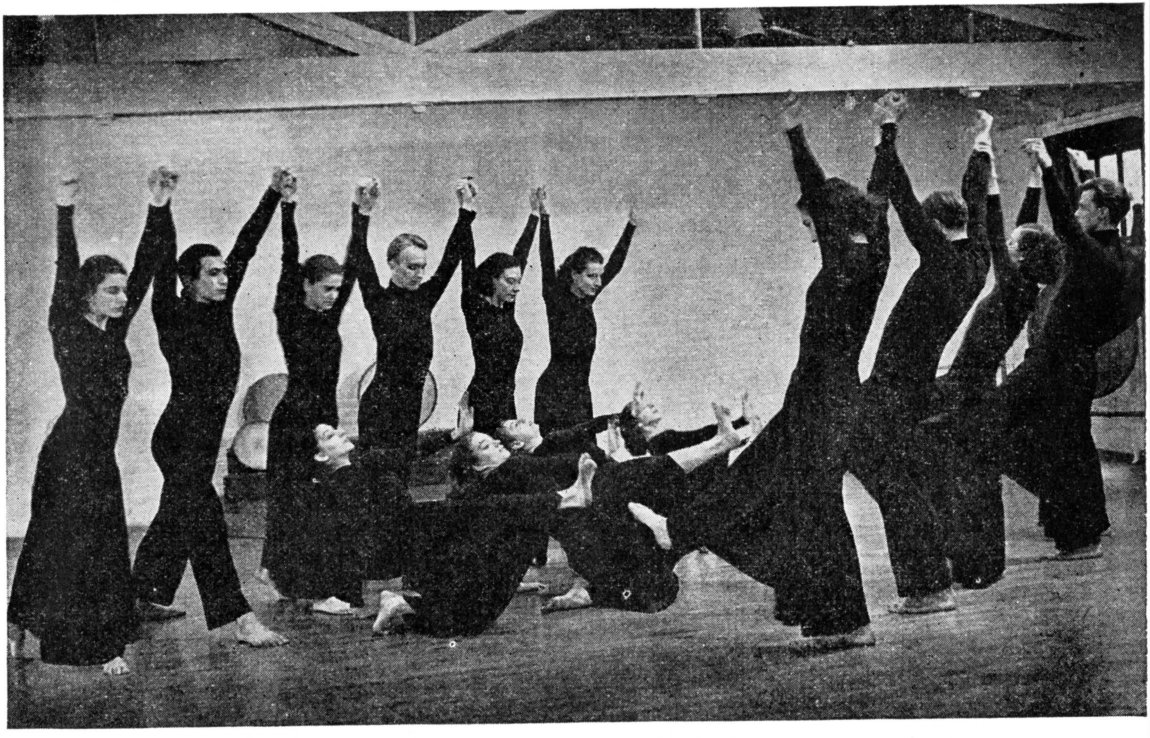
But this does not mean that all modern music is valueless to the revolutionary dancer. Anna Sokolov's Dance Unit showed how dances embodying freshness, vigor and a more forward-looking content can be set to modern music, e. g., her *Pioneer Marches* to music by Prokoviev. Among other moderns who have not been sufficiently exploited are Stravinsky, Bartok, Milhaud, Shostakovich, and the American Copland. Dancers can find much that is healthy, bold and powerful in the work of these men. In particular, there is no reason why music from Stravinsky's *Les Noces, Renard, Story of a Soldier, Rites of Spring* could not be used with a different context; why music like Bartok's vigorous *Tanz-suite,* his Hungarian and Roumanian dances; why even works like Shostakovich's piano *Sonata* or Eisler's music to *Kuhle Wampe* could not be adopted for revolutionary dance use. A glance at the programs of the New Dance League reveal a practically exclusive use of music originally written for piano. Why should not two or four-hand adaptations of orchestral works by modern composers (many of which were written for ballet in the first place) be more often used?

With the vistas of future growth looming up big and wide before them left dance groups should begin to branch out into other forms of music than the solo piano. (The latter has the disadvantage that in most cases the piano is out of tune or has a few notes missing.) The first other form of music that suggests itself is the percussion band. The use of percussion with the dance has until now been limited to an occasional tom-tom, tambourine and cymbal combination. Any book on orchestration will suggest a wide range of percussion instruments, from the xylophone and bell family to the Chinese Block and Ancient Cymbals. Some of these instruments could eventually be played by members of the dance groups themselves, and with a minimum of effort very valuable results could be attained. Dancers should study the amazing rhythmic effects achieved with a percussion-piano combination in Stravinsky's *Les Noces,* as well as the veritable symphonies which are improvised for the dance in the Javanese Gamelan, which is an orchestra composed en-

(*Continued on page* 33)



The Humphrey-Weidman Concert Group



The Humphrey-Weidman Concert Group

New Musical Revues for Old

BY JEROME MOROSS

There is nothing as boring as a bad revue or musical comedy; but I would be hard pressed to decide between a *good* revue and an opera, if I were offered tickets. So far there have been very few musical revues produced for which this adjective holds, and, many of the few were not American, but pre-Hitler German productions (such as *The Threepenny Opera*). Still, with the recurrent promise of the possibilities of a whirlwind combination of song, speech, dance, costume and scenery—and the attendant hope of finding an intelligent concept of American living, I am lured again and again to witness the "latest" shows. If I weren't always thinking of what could be done (and, incidentally, if I didn't usually wangle a free pass), I might be devoting all the time thus squandered to more profitable activity.

I remember—three years ago—seeing a number of exciting operas and shows in Berlin and Vienna, shows in which the combined talents of every force available in the theatre were utilized to their fullest effects. That was before Hitler.

The extent of fascism's annihilation of the musical stage in Germany is almost unbelievable. The popularization of the musical theatre for social purpose had started in 1925 with Krenek's *Jonny Spielt Auf*, the first opera written in jazz idiom. It dealt with the love life of a Negro band leader and his various Aryan amours. (Significantly, the New York Metropolitan Opera's production of the same work, three years later, repigmented Jonny so that he emerged as a white man, preferring to blacken his face for performance, in the best Al Jolson tradition.) Numerous similar tradition-smashing attempts continued to appear, which achieved definite creative form in the librettos of Bert Brecht, whose imaginative genius developed a new opera carrying a pointed comment on the class order of the day. At first this was class-conscious without being revolutionary. Then, with widening left-wing philosophy, Brecht included the musical comedy theatre in his scope and, still growing in thought, went on to collaborate with Kurt Weill and Hans Eisler on a series of frankly "left" productions. Among these were *Mahagonny*, *Kuhle Wampe*, and *Mother*. His creations stimulated the backward German musical theatre to any number of —rather Social-democratic—satires on politics and society: so that Hindemith has his stenographers in *News of the Day* sing an hilarious version of the business letter they are typing, and makes the entire theme of the opera (usually dedicated to the glories of ancient Gods and Rulers) a satire on tabloids and divorce laws. Krenek, carrying on the popular tradition of *Jonny Spielt Auf*, did a burlesque called *The Dictator*. Even Schoenberg came down from his great gray tower to compose an esoteric jazz opera (!) on topics of the day—*Von Heute Auf Morgens*.

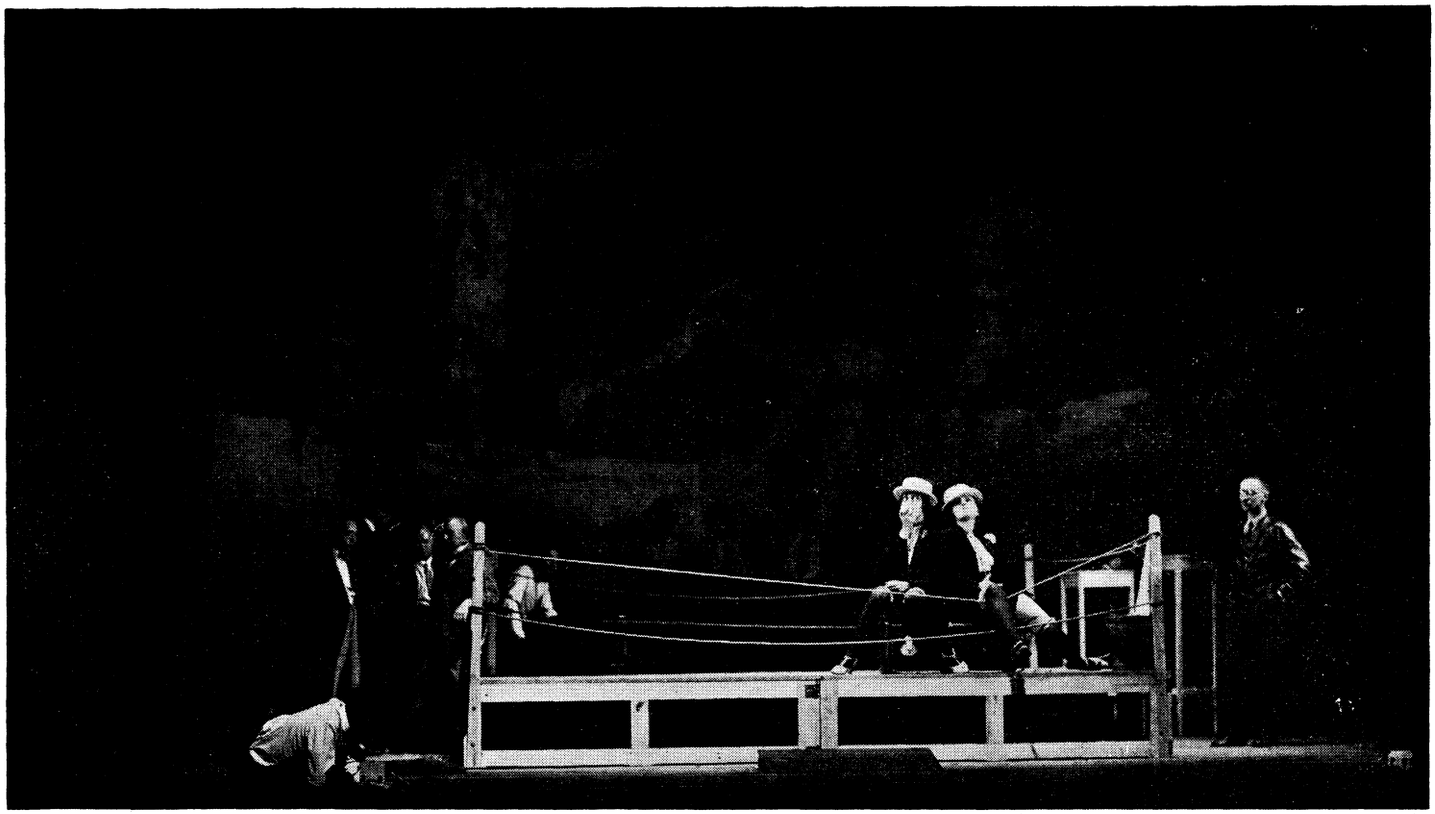
For eight years the theatre in Germany was a joy to behold. The minor opera houses, of which there were sixty to eighty, repeated all the new radical compositions from Berlin: new composers were being encouraged, great technical strides were being made; no idea was too difficult or fantastic for the imaginations of the regisseurs. George Antheil, a young American composer with no prospects of performance in his own country, found a ready audience at the Frankfort Opera House for his *Transatlantic*, an opera of love and graft during a New York election. Darius Milhaud, a French composer of international renown, having written a huge pageant called *Cristophe Colombe* which Paris at first refused to produce, was given a willing reception at the Kroll Opera in Berlin. Berlin had become the musical Mecca of the world.

Very little of this was Communist, and only slightly more was Social-democratic in tone. But all of it was alive; it was growing politically and it had aesthetic and social significance which made our only musical comedy to win the Pulitzer Prize look like the meanderings of a backward child. At the first performance of Bert Brecht and Kurt Weill's *Threepenny Opera* the Hitlerites started a riot of protest which necessitated the calling in of the police. The Nazis saw in the collusion of the highwaymen and police chief of the play a mirrored portrait of the activities of Der Fuehrer. Subsequent performances of other productions increased the howling of the injured bourgeoisie. Now there is practically no theatre, musical or otherwise, in Germany—a cultural achievement of the Third Reich.

The story of what happened in Germany is significant for America, for a number of reasons. The musical theatre attracts far wider audiences than is possible for the drama, consequently enabling a greater diffusion of anti-fascist thought. Secondly, the revue, or musical comedy form, is deeply rooted in this country, since it is a development of our own indigenous minstrel and vaudeville shows. Thirdly, the influence of the German musical theatre was so powerful and widespread that it was one of the first cultural actviities to feel the mailed fist of Nazi rule. Anybody who is so deluded as to think that the menace of fascism has disappeared from America with the mortal body of Huey P. Long need read no further; his soul, such as it is, marches on. The important point to note is that the development of a musical theatre here similar to that which existed in Germany, but enriched and made more powerful by a clear-cut, class-conscious viewpoint, would be an invaluable agitational bulwark against fascism.

The usual Broadway musical show is essentially an economic product, the result of a desire for an investment with greater financial returns than the spoken drama. Providing, on its own Lilliputian mental plane, the completest possible diversity of entertainment, very often violently anti-labor, it can lure a greater portion of the carriage trade.

Broadway musical shows are created during production. The authors write reams of material, mainly disconnected; the producers buy a good deal more. A competent (they hope) dance director is acquired, somebody to stage the spoken portions is found, and the revue is ready for rehearsals. For five tortured and tortuous weeks, the material is pounded and "gagged" and then, after a frantic attempt to hold a dress rehearsal (the hodge-podge is usually four hours long at this time), the show is taken to a nearby city to "try it out" for two weeks. During this period, the material has to be reduced to two-and-a-half hours length, and must be arranged so that one "number" can follow another without pause. Nobody knows how the material is to be proportioned—no song or sketch is more important than another, and the final worth is usually judged by either elaborateness or laugh-getting power. Meanwhile, everybody involved is being paid extra salary. Rehearsal expenses mount. New numbers are inserted daily, and each new number requires new setting, costumes, orchestration, and rehearsals. The authors, who are rewriting the show, trying to inject some humor into it, are living at the expense of the producer; and the mess comes back to town ballyhooed as costing anywhere from $100,000 to $250,000. Fantastic things occur out of town: elaborate stage settings are thrown away and new ones constructed—expensive costumes are discarded. Once, on an opening night, the producer had the house curtain



A scene from the German production of *Mahagonny, by Bert Brecht and Kurt Weill*

lowered and the show ended after the first act curtain because the first act lasted until midnight. The unused second act had cost a mere $75,000.

All of this is typical of the anarchy of capitalist competition in any field. The producers rant about giving the "public" what the "public" wants when the "public" has rarely been given the chance to have anything other than what Broadway is willing to give them, and most of the public can't afford that. *This isolation of a mass entertainment from the masses has been the chief cause of the backward quality of musical theatre in America.* The phenomenal growth of living plays in the last few years has been due largely to the development of a workers theatre movement in this country. The lack of any such factor in the musical field has prevented the revue from becoming anything but sophisticated, smart, and vulgar.

Probably the best writer of show music in America is George Gershwin. His talent for what he does is genuine and sincere; and yet there is nothing of his music that remains alive after a few years. The one song everybody thought would live on, *The Man I Love* from his jingoistic *Strike Up The Band,* has already passed into silence. *I Got Rhythm,* that erstwhile stunning example of a "hot tune" has grown tawdry and banal. In an attempt to achieve lasting qualities, he began to pattern on Gilbert and Sullivan in the late but not lamented *Of Thee I Sing* (upon which was bestowed the dubious honor of the Pulitzer Prize) and the unconsciously-fascist *Let 'Em Eat Cake.* And yet, Gershwin is the best Broadway has to offer. In his position and with his reputation, he could do anything his imagination dictates, but so far he has wanted only the banalities of his last few shows. Since there is no foresight of the possibilities of the musical comedy in the mind of the most important musical-comedy writer in America it remains for the new social theatres to demonstrate (as they did in the field of the drama) what can be done.

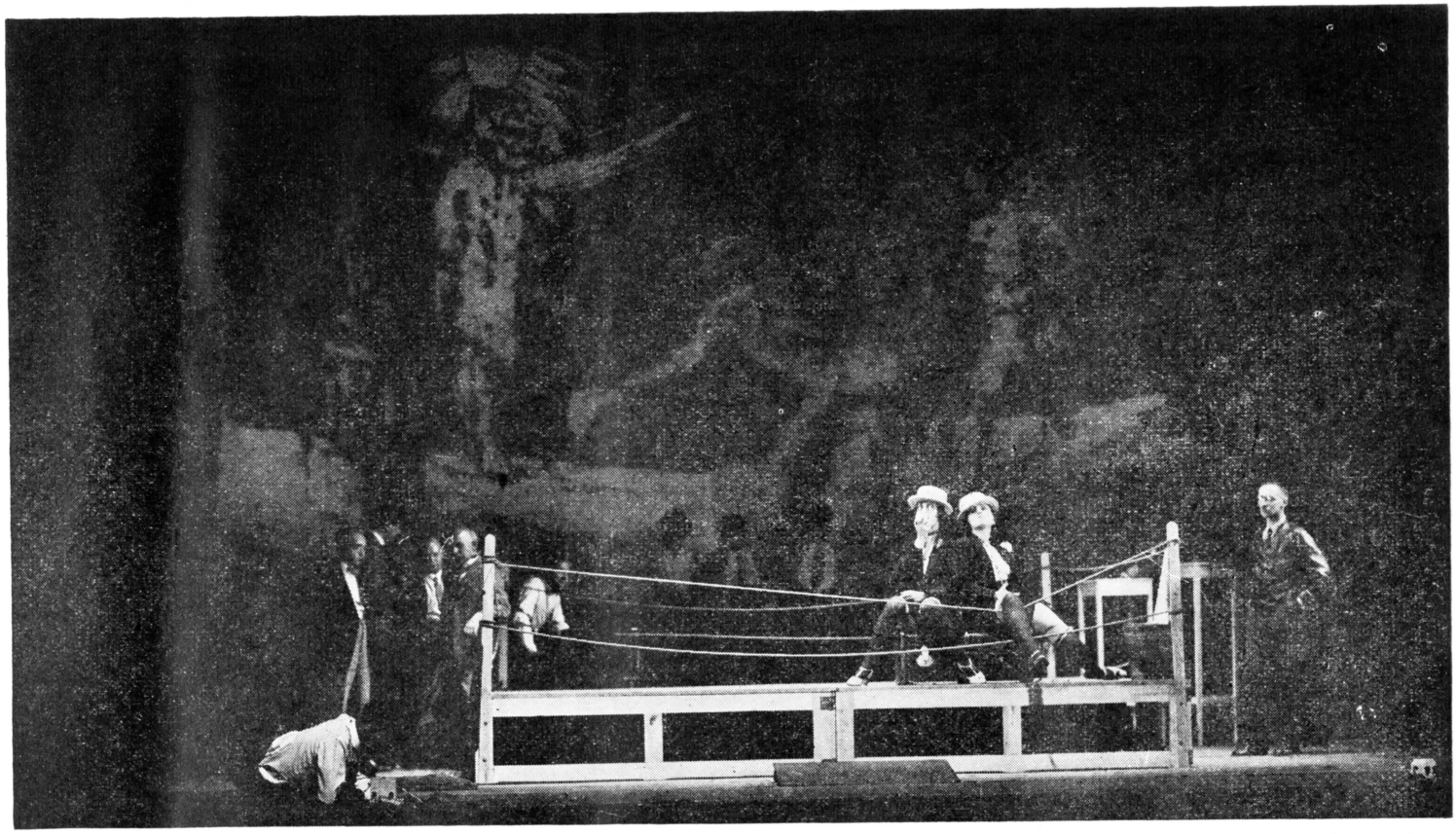
As a matter of record, the new theatres did attempt the revue form a number of years ago, but on a quite immature level. Both *Charity* and *Strike Me Red* (the latter written for and performed by children), were too preoccupied with re-creating a workers' musical theatre to rise above well-worn formulae. This is not said in disparagement, since both attempts blazed a trail for the future development of the musical in the revolutionary theatre.

In *Parade,* produced last year by the Theatre Guild, the authors attempted to raise the revolutionary revue to the formal level of the professional theatre. It succeeded in doing this, but little more. Personally, I think the revue form is swell. I have unbounded faith in it and, as one of the authors of *Parade,* I feel that an examination of its faults will aid immeasurably in future revues of social protest.

These faults were many. In the first place, the elaborateness of dancing and costuming, which are so essential a part of the revue form as presented on Broadway, are unnecessary if the piece has anything to say. The thing which differentiates a revue from a musical comedy is that a musical comedy has a story interspersed with the music and dancing, while a revue uses a set of vaudeville sketches and "acts." The constant interruption of the story to allow for the music and dancing in the one, and the disconnected vaudeville quality of the other, are equally bad for the expression of a unified political and social point of view. The Broadway revue is usually bound together by the style of the production, the constant use of the same people in the various numbers, and, whenever possible, by a shallow device such as the revolving stage in *The Bandwagon,* or the front "newspaper" curtain with changing headlines in *As Thousands Cheer.*

The revolutionary revue should, if possible, combine both musical comedy and revue forms, telling an important story in swift-moving five-minute blackouts, revue fashion. The function of the music and dance would be to carry the audience over wide emotional leaps, and passages of time and space. Very often the two could be integrated in the form of swift mass choruses and chants or any other imaginative

(*Continued on page* 33)



A scene from the German production of *Mahagonny, by Bert Brecht and Kurt Weill*

From the German film, *Threepenny Opera,* directed by G. W. Pabst

Music in the Film

BY GEORGE ANTHEIL

Music has advanced with such breathtaking strides during the past thirty or forty years, and we, the population of this earth, have been so busy with industry and war, that we and music have become widely separated. Emotionally and practically music has no longer the warmth of a common language; the new music fabricated in the closed in laboratories of snobbism are no part of our experience. Publics are disappearing and driving music into little back-eddies of composers, mutual-admiration-and-performing-societies.

Practically every composer of the present day who has been able to talk to us in understandable accents has been a composer who came up through the theater-pit rather than the more pretentious symphony hall. Name, if you can, one composer who has written a great modern symphony comparable to the great abstract works of other days. But when you come to the theater, the ballet, and even the new opera, immediately appear the names of the greatest of present day musicians; Stravinsky, Prokoviev, Shostakovich, Milhaud, Auric, Krenek, Weill, Berg, to mention only a few. The argument is indisputable. These men needed the eye as well as the ear. This complex musical age needs visual clarification.

A lady of my acquaintance who was very conservative in her musical likes and dislikes, hated Berg's "Wozzeck" music when she heard it in the concert version. It was cacaphonous and ugly, she said. A year later she SAW the opera, and loved it. Her eyes had helped her make the music a part of her emotional experience, and a part of her musical language to be used by her from then thenceforth. This is an approximation of what happens in everybody's case.

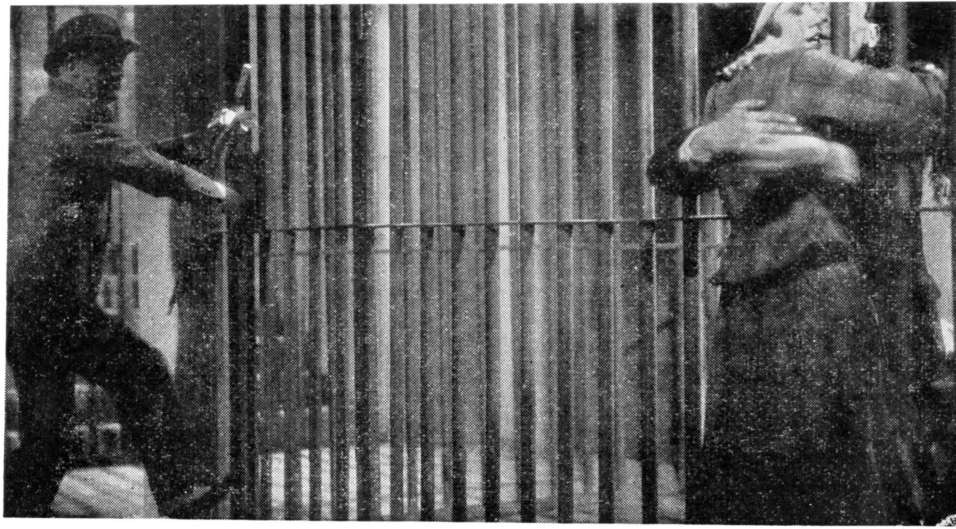
Today, with a world war imminent, composers cannot be expected to concentrate ten minutes of super-Olympian beauty into a string-quartet to be played at most before four hundred people and understood by ten. They seem to realize that their own individual emotions, ambitions, and complexes are unimportant before the world sweep of the life-stream of music that gradually through the dance, theater, and cinema, is undergoing a tremendous and exciting simplification, a thousand times more exciting than the pseudo-simplification of the nevertheless immortal Satie. This is, perhaps, the most exciting phenomena, artistically speaking, of today, and those who are unacquainted with it, or not taking part in it intentionally cut off their writing arm from the only blood stream that can nourish it today.

We find new music at its most exciting phase in the new moving pictures from Russia. Here is a record of real accomplishment, real understanding of the problems involved, and a consummate understanding of the needs of motion-picture music: it is true that their recording and sound technique is still faulty, but that is a technical fault which will soon be erased.

We found music in a most exciting state in the new operatic phase in Germany, which Hitler, in 1933, assassinated. But until then this glamourous movement, with its true renaissance of opera, and the coming to the fore of names like Kurt Weill and Alban Berg, to mention only a few, was the true carrier-of-the-message-of-music-from-the-past. Before that we had the ballet in Paris: Stravinsky, Satie, Auric, Milhaud, Prokoviev, and many others; all eye-ear stuff too. This has been our true musical pathway leading back to the past, and connecting us with it.

When something as un-eye as radio comes along, we find ourselves sitting in lunchwagons in New Jersey listening to Schoenberg without hearing it. You can turn on the radio all day and all night, and nobody listens to it. This is the top-supreme glorification of symphonic music, and nobody lsitens to it. Symphonic music, for the present age, is dead, and you can't pump up interest in it, even by a marvelous almost supernatural invention like radio. The only time we listen to the radio is when we hear somebody speaking over it: it might be that the war has started in Africa, or that another steamer has been caught upon a reef. The radio is only interesting when it presents vital ideas, or word-pictures. Perhaps in such fashion someone will develop a technic of radio opera, but I doubt it. Radio is un-eye. The ideas in the world today are too great to be caught by one human sense unaided. Radio will be a dead poster-like thing, artistically, until it develops television.

Because I believe these things I have, recently, devoted myself to moving pictures. Furthermore, I reasoned that here in America, the country in which I was born and the idiomatic language of which I understand better than that of any other country, we understood better than any other country the technic of moving pictures. Thousands of moving pictures are turned out in Hollywood which say absolutely nothing; still they are executed with such excellent technic that they often seem to say something. With the exception of *Peasants* which is consummate, the Russian technic has often worried me, and made me wonder whether or not our technic and Russian idea may meet to the advantage of both. Russian films are often very slow and technically bad, therefore obscure in international meaning. Our films, on the other hand are inevitably brilliant and nonsensical. No other country seems to me to be saying very much with the cinema. England is shaking new studios and moving picture companies out of her hair, but these stiil seem too much like America's, and I prefer my Hollywood straight, if at all. Of a certain school, one goes to the great masters to learn, not to the second and third masters. For that reason, with the exception of one or two men, France interests me very little also. However one must note that France is putting all of her best composers to work upon her films; so is Russia; so is England. Hollywood still sticks to its composite score system, but it is only a matter of time when it shall have to abandon it; the handwriting is upon the wall; this it realizes. The public, too, is beginning to realize that a film is not quite right unless it has an excellent score-background: if the music is pieced together from Beethoven and other royalty-free composers, the score sounds old, cheap, and patched-work to them, and our Holly-



From the German film, *Threepenny Opera,* directed by G. W. Pabst

wood producer would avoid anything but the public feeling that he is a cheapskate. So scores are being written by better and better, and fewer and fewer, composers to a film until finally we may expect a good score from Hollywood. In all cases there is no excuse for the frantic last minute rush, where a composer has to write his part of the score in three days, and fifteen others write theirs in the same time, and so for every picture ad absurdum. The slightest planning upon the part of the nitwits in charge of the production would insure a good one-man score that wouldn't sound like the Tower of Babel.

But this technic belongs to the Hollywood idea of "Sock-em-per-minutes-with-as-much change-as-possible" so perhaps the various Childs-restaurant Chinese-Spanish-Greek styles in bewildering succession is perfectly homogeneous to the present aesthetic.

In main essence the new movie music should differ most radically from other music, particularly dramatic and theater music, in that (a) it should be a more literal music, more intimately bound up, and in cooperation with, the most intimate medium of theater known to us, (b) it should be more simple, folksongy, more in touch with the least common denominators of sixty million people, but it should try to educate this taste, and not pander to it, (c) it should never forget that one clarinet, stepped up electrically by a turn of a knob can replace a whole symphony orchestra in the old silent theater days, and that every score is written to be electrically recorded. Don't tire your public by turning on your orchestra full orchestral strength all the time. A single voice singing can have as much effect. (d) Your chief sound technician, and synchronization man can give you a great may ideas. A good moving picture score can be a fine work of art, and no gravel-scrunches or door-squeaks should slip past you. You, the composer, are responsible for the sound.

But most of all it is important that the score is an organic, planned piece of work. You can't make an organic piece of work trying to follow the last minute orgies of the cutting department, or trying to musically follow a "sock-em" film that is overjittery, plan as you may. In Russia director, composer, camera-man, scenarist work together in an equal unit. As far as I can see that is still about the only way it can be done. When composers are in the production of a film from the beginning, you may expect a real step forward in moving picture music, and in moving picture music is the future of music. It is the only medium that adequately promises expansion, expression, and emotional liberation to the masses, of the music today.

Burlesque Strike

BY DEL

On Thursday, September 5th, the burlesque emporiums of New York opened as usual. The customary crowd paid their admissions, brass-lunged vendors hawked their wares up and down the aisles of the theatres, lights were dimmed. Tired bandsmen filed into their accustomed places and except for the steady patter of rain outside, nothing seemed amiss.

The predominantly male clientele settled its wet feet on the balcony rails, placed its dripping hats under chairs, leaned back and patiently awaited an end to the preliminary cacophony of pleasant and familiar sounds—the swish of candy paper, the crackle of newspapers and the unabashed tuning of saxes and brass.

On this particular afternoon, the curtain seemed ominously still. For instead of rising to disclose animated rows of effulgent blondes and flashing legs, the houselights went on and a prosaic looking manager came on to convey a message that brought from the audience cat-calls, hisses and boos.

The show would not go on, he said, because the cast had gone on strike. The money, he added ruefully, would be refunded at the box office!

Considerably disgruntled, the audience finally left the theatre. No escape! Inside the theatre or out! The ubiquitous struggle for better living and working conditions had even reached across the footlights to these dames, who were supposed to make you forget your troubles!

Consciously or not, the audience had witnessed labor history in the making. It was the first strike led by the Burlesque Artists Association.

A visit to strike headquarters in Union Church on 48th Street just off Broadway, provided some strange sights indeed. We had to push our way through dense crowds, some listlessly watching the antics of a corner evangelist, others attracted to the brilliantly lighted Strand Theatre which was loudly paging Mr. Hearst's "Glory."

At the strike meeting, some of the performers seemed bewildered by their first experience. We posed a question to a vivid brunette with an amazing hat perched at an amazing angle. "You've got me buddy," she answered, "I've been here eight hours and I still don't know what the hell it's all about!" However, a strikingly beautiful blonde parade girl, in the manner of a veteran trade unionist, did know what it was all about.

"We've been getting $21.50 a week for stock and $23.50 on the road for an eighty hour week. No day off. This isn't show business. It's slavery."

A chorus girl sitting with a male performer, who proudly announced himself an "organizer" told us, "This thing started with almost nothing and it's getting bigger all the time. We didn't have to be convinced that we needed better conditions. We needed leadership and once we got it, we felt that nothing could stop us."

With such splendid spirit it was a foregone conclusion that the strike would be won. Three days later, the strikers returned to their theatres after registering a solid victory. $22.50 for stock, $25.00 on the road and a day off every fourteen days were the demands that were won. Also a minimum of $40.00 a week for principals. Such demands as two weeks' salary guarantee against possible closing through revocations of licenses and police raids are to be arbitrated with an impartial board.

The Minskys, virtual dictators of the industry, indignantly denied that the strikers had won any victory, because as the youngest and loudest Mr. Minsky expressed it, "We were going to give them more money anyway."

In his closing speech to the strikers, Tom Phillips their leader, made a remark that should put the strikers on their guard. "Go back to your theatres," said Mr. Phillips, "not as though you have won a victory, but as if nothing had happened. If the stage hands or musicians ask you how you feel about the strike, just mind your own business and don't discuss it with them." Such an attitude cannot but weaken the burlesque performers in their struggle against the employers for better conditions. For, as labor experience has shown, victory lies in the ability to unite with one's fellow workers so that a strike of one group may greatly multiply its strength with the support of allied groups.

But these fledgling unionists must be congratulated on the splendid manner in which they conducted their first strike. Not only did they prove that burlesque people are capable of conducting a serious struggle to better their conditions, but they proved that there exist whole strata of people in the stage professions for whom there is a crying need for organization.

Producers in every phase of theatrical activity have long nursed the tradition which stated that the "show must go on!" Well, it was a swell slogan for producers for it meant that nothing may interfere with the steady stream of profits into their pockets, but what about the performers? Burlesque has given the classic answer, "The show *WON'T* go on unless we get decent working conditions!"

"LET FREEDOM RING"

A SCENE FROM THE PLAY BY ALBERT BEIN

Receiving office in the Wentworth Mills at Leesville, N. C. Late afternoon. The entrance door is in a wall up left and way down left is a door lettered "Emergency Room."

Back, to right of entrance a door is marked MR. CARMODY, "Vice President." Also back, in a corner right is the "dye room" door. A little further down in the wall mid-right is the "Cashier's" Cage. Tacked on wall on either side of the cage are several printed cardboards reading, "Wentworth Mills—Rules and Regulations"—"To all Spinners, Beam Haulers, Garders, Warp workers, etc." and "Company Store, Information."

Clear down, mid right is the "Superintendent's Office," and, in a small railed enclosure outside of it, the place where the Employment Boss carries on his activities. A printed sign on his desk announces, "Hiring and Firing." In a corner to his right is a water cooler. At his left, nearby, a clerk sits on a high stool, at work over a sloping desk. Above the Superintendent's door hangs a huge clock. It is now about twenty minutes to six.

Electric lights are on and it is rapidly growing dark outside.

Between the railroad enclosure and the cashier's cage is a last door in the corner, down left. It is a swinging door, unmarked and leads to the factory proper, and when this door or the dye room door is thrown open the whir and powerful throbbing of machinery is heard filling the receiving-office.

The long waiting bench is filled with seated mountain folk. There are two tots; four older children, ages ranging from ten to fifteen; a babe in its mother's arms, two very old women and one old man . . . MR. RANDOLPH the Employment Boss is at his desk talking to two tall and rangy mountaineers, the heads of the families that are in the room. MR. PERRY, the clerk sits at his desk, his back to the audience. The shutter of the cashier's window is pulled down . . . Those on benches seem very worn out, dirty and dusty, their belongings for the most part have been brought down with them; they give the impression of having travelled on foot a great distance.

BILL: (*1st mountain man, pointing finger in agitation*) An' the comp'ny agent that was sint up thar t' pass sech news aroun', said what's printed on these posters is the honest t' God truth!

RANDOLPH: (*Returning a large leaflet and several postcards to the mountain man*) I ain't responsible for what another department of this mill says.

GEORGE: (*Second mountain man, beligerently*) But ain't everything here part up the whole shootin' match? (He makes a sweep of his hand)

RANDOLPH: (*Retorting*) I suppose it is —an' this depa'tment's here to hire—

GEORGE: We kem for that awright—but—

(*Both mountain men exchange grim glances as* RANDOLPH *returns to making entries in his ledger*)

GEORGE: (*As they draw a little to one side*) What's it to be, Bill?

BILL: (*Shaken*) I cain't make haid or tail o' it, George. That agent lied all hell about the mill—but I'm afeard we have t' make the best o' it. We cain't go back.

GEORGE: That's hills otherwahrs saw mills ain't got to yet.

SARAH (*The woman with a child in her arms has risen to hasten over to them*) The young uns are t'ard—an' ye'd better quit jawin' so's he kin get ye down on the payroll—'n git us settled for the night.

GEORGE: But we cain't bide under those kenditions Sara. We all of us have t' live in one house, he says—he won't take the old en so those young tots have t' work.

BILL: An' he said plenty more.

SARAH: (*pleading*) I heerd, George,—Yit we're all onsettled 'thout any friends here—an' ye got to git us som'eres for the night. Tomorrow'll just have t' take keer o' hitself.

GEORGE: (*Clenching jaw and turning about*) We'll h'ar.

(*The* WOMAN *sighs relief*)

RANDOLPH (*Presses button on desk—then looks up*) Finally made up your minds?—Well—sign this card right here. (*He places card on the railing and extends a pen.* GEORGE *takes the pen and hesitates a little foolishly*) Just put your X—(*Impatiently*) Here—make a criss-cross right on this line—(GEORGE *laboriously does so, and* RANDOLPH *takes pen, places a second card for other*) You're next.—(BILL *signs —and* RANDOLPH *continues to the* OFFICE BOY *who has come in answer to his ring*) Show them to cottage number 33—it's near Stumpton, Larry, and hurry right back. (*He checks down the house number on cards, the* OFFICE BOY *meanwhile removing a key from board*)

OFFICE BOY: (*Complaining, as he looks at the clock*) I won't have time to make it back before the whistle blows, Mr. Randolph.

SARAH: (*In the meanwhile, has crossed back to inform the others*) Pick up—we kin go. (*They start to gather their belongings. The mountain men have turned away*)

RANDOLPH: (*Calling to regain their attention*) The woman an' those three older kids start at six in the morning—an' you two men rest tonight and tomorrow go on night shift. (GEORGE *nods*)

OFFICE BOY: (*Sharply*) Come on, I ain't got all day.

SARAH: (*Sharply*) Don't mind us young man. Ye jist trot ahead in your own company if yeer so onpatient. (*He steps ahead and they pass out after him shortly like sheep*)

PERRY: (*The cleck, a little timid, grey-haired fellow with spectacles*) I been working in this mill town damn near fifteen years, Mr. Randolph,—but never before did I see such queer wild looking people as these drifting into it.

RANDOLPH: (*Laughing*) It's a regular exodus awright. They's been sticking to their hills like glue for hundreds of years and we've tried to coax them down here from time to time, but it took a lumber company to *finally* shake them out. It's a funny thing, but I'll bet some of these people never heard of the Mayflower, an' would blow your head off if you tried to tell them their ancestors were born in a foreign land. Talk about your hundred percent Americans. I've heard about some other ones, but these can't be beat.

BURNETT: (*The Superintendent opens his door, concluding a discussion with* ALLEN, *a mill foreman*) Well, I can't help it Allen,—if production in Slasher Room doesn't keep with the rest of the departments in this mill, we'll have to get a new foreman to see that it does, that's all.

ALLEN: (*Nervous*) I'll do my best, Mr. Burnett, but those hill-billies never saw a machine before and I'm telling you you've got to give them time.

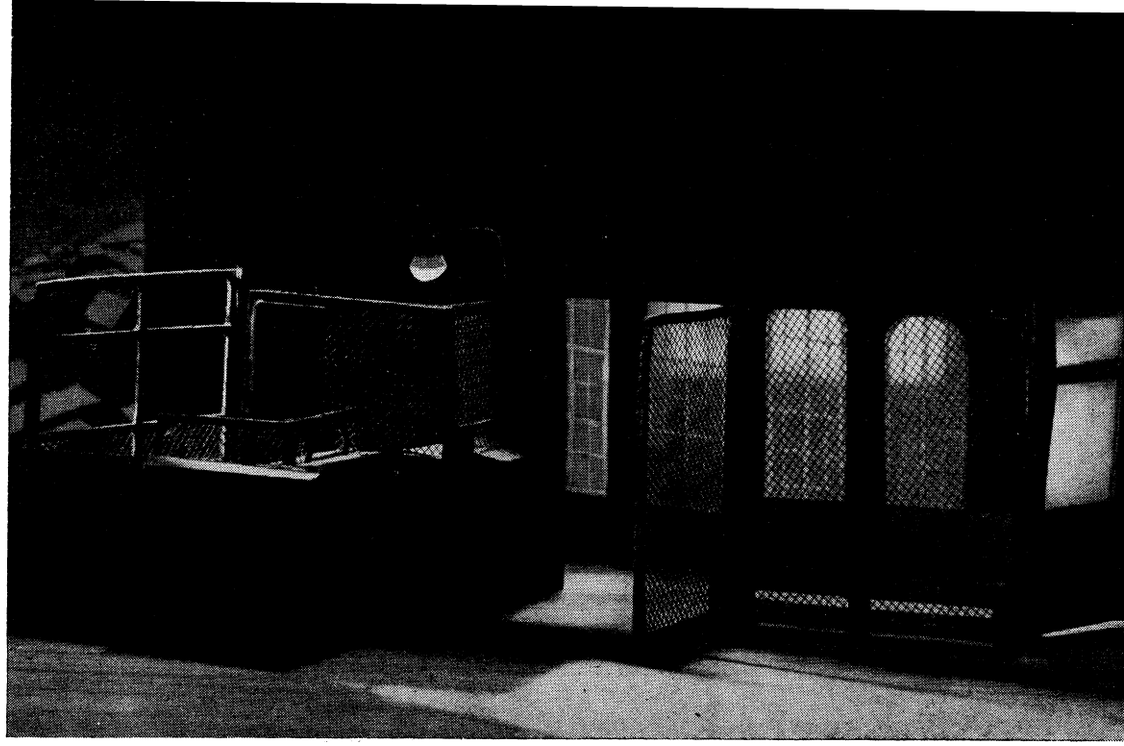
BURNETT: (*Has followed foreman out to take a drink at cooler*) A baby can learn to run those things.

ALLEN: Maybe so, but did you ever take a look at the hands those hill-billies belong to?

BURNETT: What's the matter with them?

ALLEN: Well, they're big and tough and clumsy, an' it's damned hard to break hands like those into running machines right off.

BURNETT: You'd better get some results. We've got plenty of competition from cotton mills in other towns nearby; and there'd be no point in our taking rush



orders to offset that competition if you can't keep production up somehow—that's all.

ALLEN: (*Biting lip and exiting to factory*) Yes sir.

BURNETT: (*To* HENRY BRICKHOUSE, *a giant Negro, who has entered from the dye-room, dustpan and broom in hand*) Git a hustle on, nigger, they need you back in the packing room.

HENRY: Yas suh. (BURNETT *exits to office . . . a* CHILD *of about seven, undersized, thin and pinchfaced, races through entrance door and clamboring onto box under cashier's window, begins rapping frantically at the shutter—it is raised.*)

CASHIER: (*Crisply*) What do you want?

CHILD: A book of scrip for Mrs. Hardy —so's we kin get some food and medicine at the company store.

CASHIER: Mrs. What Hardy?

CHILD: Mrs. Fayette Hardy.

CASHIER: (*Disappearing and returning in a second, the* CHILD *impatiently rising on toes in the meanwhile to follow his movements*) You tell your mother to quit annoying us. Her account shows that she's overdrawn at the store and she hasn't worked in five months. (*Slams down shutter*)

CHILD: (*Pleading in fright as she bangs at it*) But my mother's sick in bed and there ain't a scrap in the house. (*Continues rapping*)

CASHIER: (*Raising shutter*) Get away from here—goddam it!

CHILD: My mother——

CASHIER: I can't help it—you tell your mother to quit sending you here—she knows the company rules. (*He slams down shutter and the* CHILD *begins to sob and bang away at it pitifully*)

RANDOLPH: (*Orders as he passes through enclosure with signed cards and a large order blank in hand, on his way to the dye room*) Take her out of here, nigger. (*He exits—*HENRY *stands broom in hand in indecision*)

CLERK: (*Glaring at him*) Well? (*But the* CHILD *who has stopped pounding to step off box and sit upon it, to sob forlornly for a bare second, suddenly leaps to her feet and without crying any longer dashes out*)

HENRY: (*Commenting as he resumes his sweeping*) Some white folks sho has t' suffer a heap onct dey gets offen dey payroll.

(TOM STEVENS, *an eccentric old mill hand enters from shop, grim, quiet, but more than a little nervous. He is a small emaciated fellow with a wizened face and a limp. He is covered with lint and perspiration and his shirt is open at the collar*)

CLERK: (*Hastily jumping off his seat, as* STEVENS *reaches and starts to open gate of the enclosure*) Wait a second there, mister—where do you think you're going?

STEVENS: (*Challenging*) I want to see the superintendent, I guess.

CLERK: Wait here a second. (*He starts for door and opens it, nervously keeping an eye on the old mill-hand while he announces*) Mr. Burnett—Tom Stevens—that committee of one is out here again to see you.

BURNETT: (*Coming to door*) *Who?* (*Glances toward* STEVENS *as* CLERK *indicates him with a nod*) Yes, what is it, Tom.

STEVENS: Well, I'm the oldest mill hand workin' here, you know Mr. Burnett—and I'd like t' know just where I stand with these mountain folks swarmin' in for jobs every day.

BURNETT: There's plenty of machines, I guess we can take care of them.

STEVENS: (*With heat*) But how about me that's been workin' like mad in that weavin' room since the age of eight?

BURNETT: What are you getting shaky about? We haven't laid off anybody—you're still with us, aren't you?

STEVENS: I ain't complainin' about that. But it's the wage-cut—the second in six weeks. (*Excitedly*) 'Tain't fair Mr. Burnett. Maybe those hill-billies you been hirin' by the carload can live on less—I don't know—but we old mill hands can't—it's hell the way it is now trying to make both ends meet.

BURNETT: You're the only one that's ever heard in this office bellyachin' about a wage cut Tom—Anybody else I would have fired long ago.

STEVENS: (*In alarm*) I know that, Mr. Burnett, an' I ain't ongrateful to you.

BURNETT: Well—then go on back to work and forget about it. Next time you leave your machine on the company's time I'm not going to be so damn patient. (*He turns and exists*).

STEVENS: (*Left standing there in agitation and glaring from* CLERK *to* NEGRO) Go on back to work and forget about it. With a sick woman at home to feed an' take care of, how in hell kin I?

HENRY: (*Sorrowfully as he exists into emergency room*) It's sho mo' 'n I kin tell yo-all, white boy. (STEVENS *stands there another moment in bitterness and then starts to leave the room muttering to himself when*:-)

GRANPAP: (*Worn and weary opens the door and stands in it asking*) Is this the place they do the h'arin'?

STEVENS: (*With venom*) No—you keep right on goin' now, old man, till you hit the mills in the next town. Let them slash the wages of the loom workers there.

GRANPAP: (*In dismay*) Outside they jes' d'rected us t' these uns right here.

RANDOLPH: (*Re-entering just in time to hear the last words*) Step right in. Where's the rest of you? (*He pauses to stop at cashier's cage and hand in cards*)

GRANPAP: Restin' out thar in the yard.

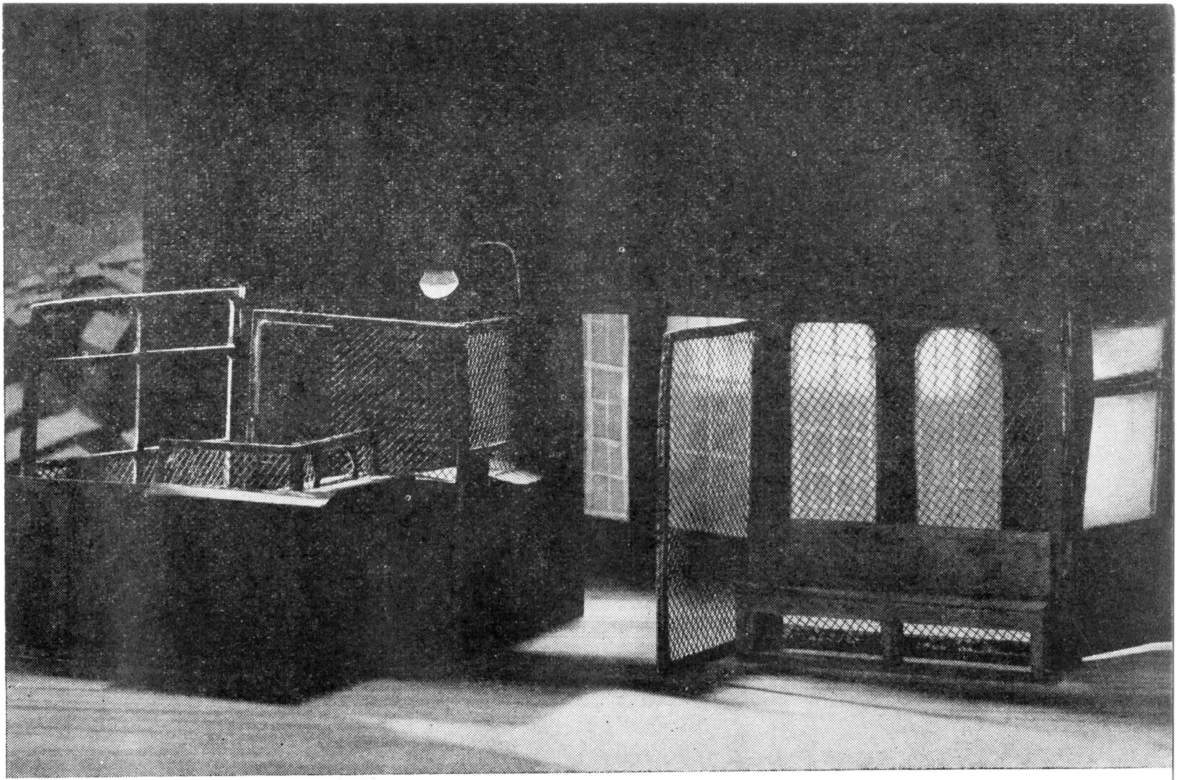
RANDOLPH: Have them come right in.

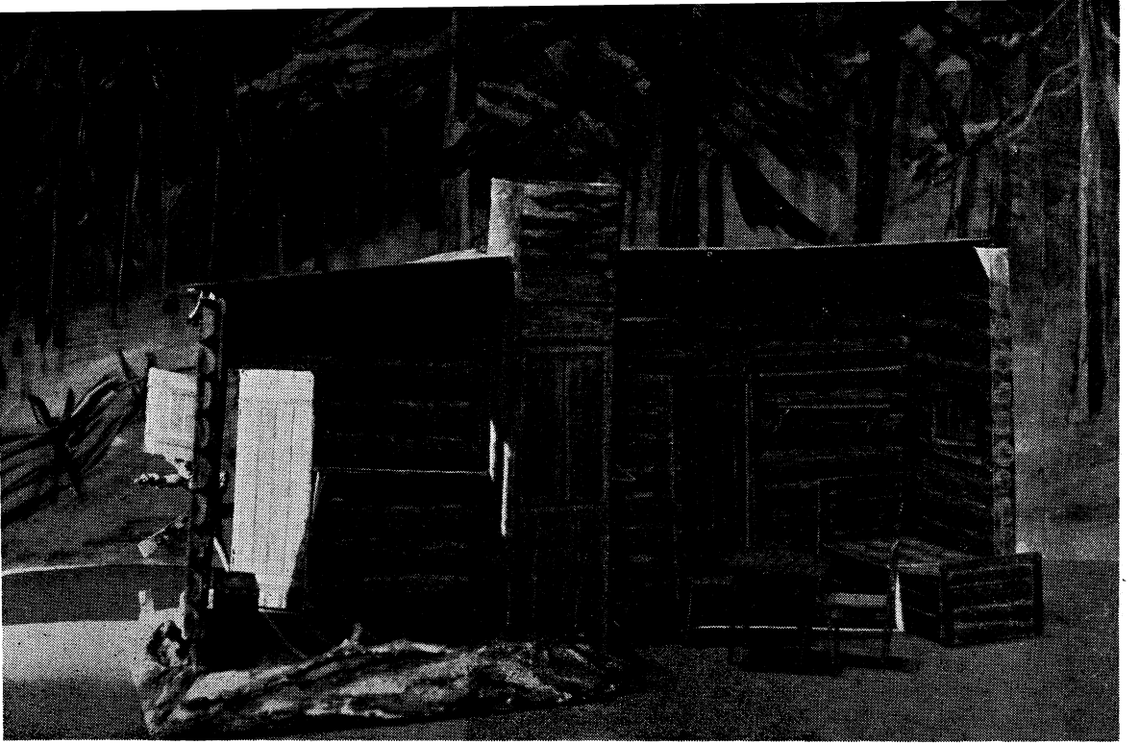
GRANPAP: (*Calls*) Hit's true—they're h'arin'—kem on up Ora—Frank—

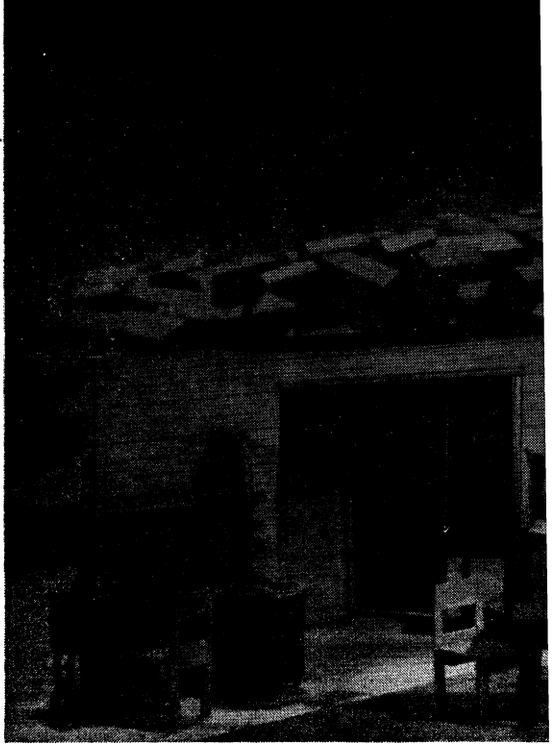
STEVENS: (*Returning to factory*) The goddam hill-billies—they don't know any better. . . .

GRANPAP: Had a long trek a-foot today, an' all day yesterday, friend—had to spend one night on the side of the road—but we got here. (RANDOLPH *pays him little heed, and* GRANPAP, *embarassed and wishing hard to make an impression and break the ground for friendly discourse*) Hard of hearin' friend.—Kem all the way down a'-foot from Swain's Crossin' I said.

RANDOLPH: (*Without interest*) Yeah?







GRANPAP: (*More at ease and friendlier*) Heard the mills were a h'arin' an' thought we'd kem down.

RANDOLPH: (*At his desk*) That's right. (*And now the rest of* GRANPAP'S *following are pulling in. They consist of the* MARTIN *family,* ORA, JOHN *and* BONNIE. *They are loaded down with things, having brought as much as they could salvage from their cabins, to start housekeeping anew with.* GRANPAP'S *fiddle case and bow are seen tied to the outside of one pack—their rifles to the blankets of another, etc. Apart from* EMMA, FRANK *and* SALLY, *in the Martin family, is young* FRANK, *a boy about John's height and two tots of four or five. The entire troop seems to be as worn out and dusty from their trips as the other monutain family we'd seen. But despite their condition they manifest a quiet but eager curiosity in the unfamiliar setting they have been brought into. . . .* RANDOLPH *has been regarding them professionally from their entrance, quietly ordering*)

RANDOLPH: Now find seats everybody for a few minutes. You can place that sack on the floor there if you want to, son—the blankets also—get settled now—and the heads of the family step right up to the desk here. (FRANK *and* GRANPAP *leave the company to do so . . .* ORA, EMMY *and* SALLY *in a fluster and with a few words, get the children settled on the bench near the window and then seat themselves near them. . . .* RANDOLPH *opening the covers of the large ledger*) Are you the heads? (*He looks from* FRANK *to* GRANPAP *and they nod*) Is this all one family? (*Encircles them with his pencil*)

GRANPAP: No — the Martins and the McClures.

RANDOLPH: I see — (*To* GRANPAP) Which one are you head of?

GRANPAP: My name's John Kirkland—an' over yonder sits my two darters, Ora an' Emma. Emma's a Martin now. (*He nods at* FRANK) An Ora married Jim McClure an' he got kilt in a lightnin' storm 'tween Thunderhead and Lone Choah mountains. (*A pause*)

RANDOLPH: McClure, eh? (*The name has caught his ear from the start*) Pass me that 'general information' list a moment please, Mr. Perry. (*Adding, while* CLERK *removes list from a spindle to hand to him*) There may be a little trouble here. (*The mountain folk exchange glances of uneasiness. He looks through the list then pauses to inquire*) Is there a Kirk McClure belongs to this clan? A Kirk McClure that was hired a few years ago in the cotton mills at Sandersville?

ORA: What makes ye ask about him? (*Rises*)

RANDOLPH: Never mind that—I want to know if he's a part of this clan.

ORA: Kirk left the hills afore we did—an' the last we heerd of him he was in Kaintucky—whares he now?

RANDOLPH: (*Impatiently*) How should I know, Missus . . . is he your son?

ORA: Shore—an' he left home a steady 'nough boy. What is hit ye did t' him that made him change?

RANDOLPH: I never saw him, Missus—and I never want to see him around here.

ORA: Then what makes you ask about him?

RANDOLPH: (*Throwing paper aside*) Well, he's an agitator—a trouble maker.

ORA: What is hit made him one?

RANDOLPH: That's something you'll have to take up with him—all that I know—he's on the blacklist an' he won't find work in cotton mills anywhere—so he'd just as well not ever show up in this town asking for work. (A warning) An' the same goes aroun' here for everybody else that thinks to stir up trouble in the mill. (*Silence falls among them all, and* RANDOLPH *getting some inquiry cards ready*) Let's start with you now—what's the name?

FRANK: Frank Martin.

RANDOLPH: (*He questions them rapidly, and during it all* EMMA *and* ORA *stretch forward to hear every word*) *Age?* (FRANK *scratches his head*).

EMMA: He's forty-three, kem November.

RANDOLPH: Methodist or Baptist?

FRANK: Baptist.

RANDOLPHS (*Jots down everything*) We'll have our preacher Tompkins around to greet an' welcome you all to his congregation this Sunday. (EMMA *nods at* ORA)

FRANK: (*Pleased*) Thankye.

RANDOLPH: (*To* EMMA) Have your children stand up a second, please, Miss.

EMMA: (*Flustered*) Kem, young Frank —Sally (*and she stands up with them—the two tots also*).

RANDOLPH: All healthy?

EMMA: (*With pride*) There ain't none to hold a candle with 'em this side o' Swain's Crossin'.

RANDOLPH: (*Smiling and pointing his pencil*) How old are you, boy?

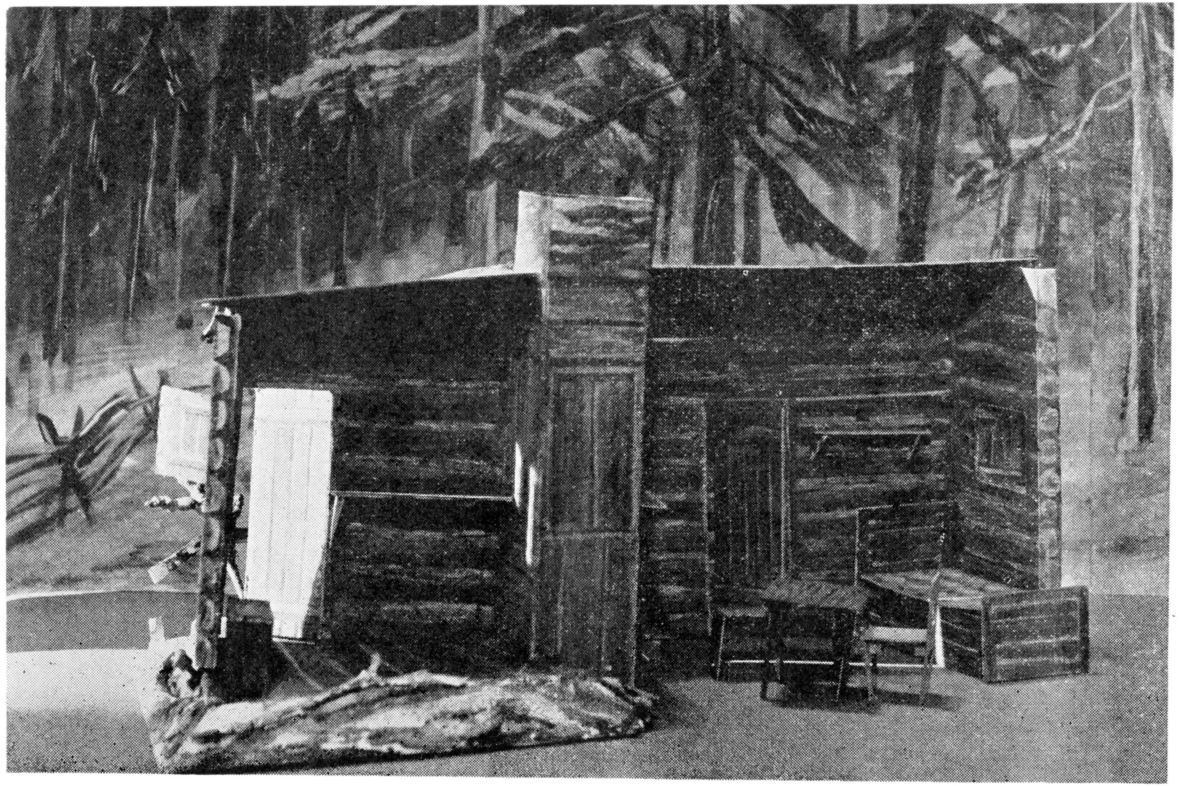
YOUNG FRANK: (*Sheepishly*) Eleven—mom says.

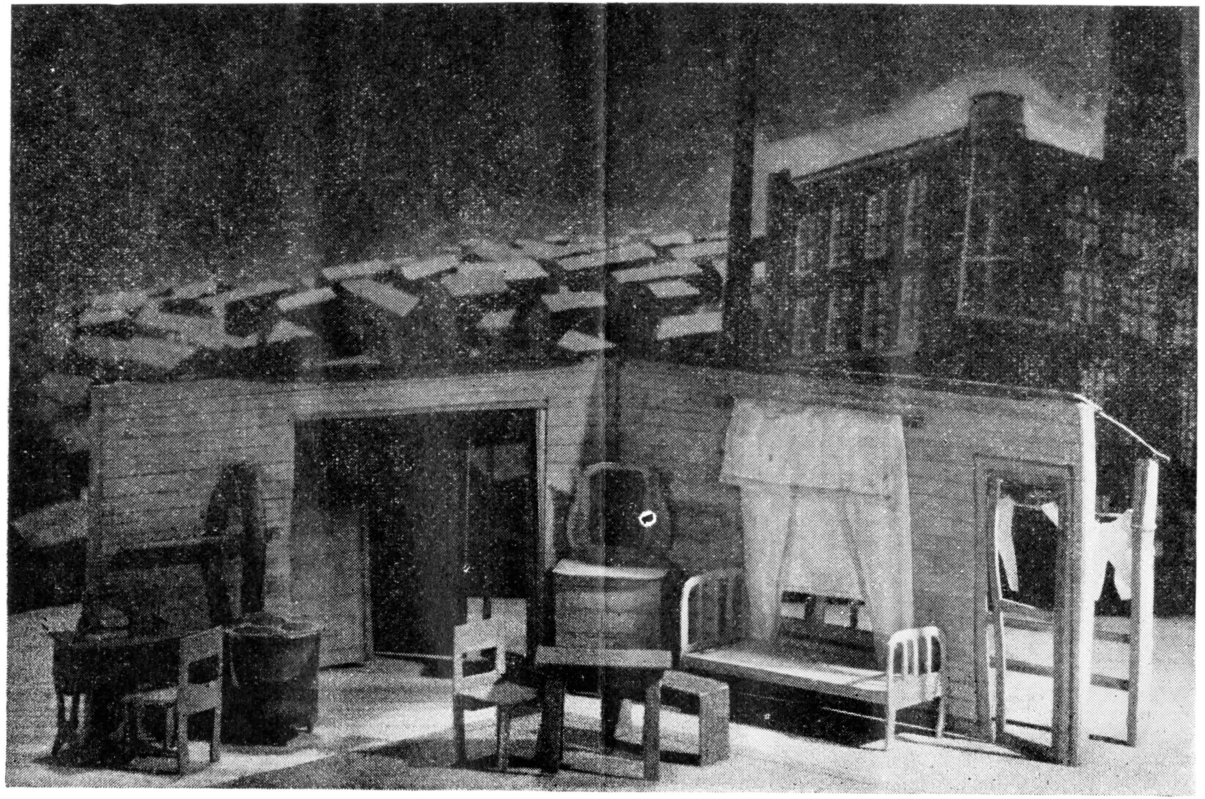
RANDOLPH: (*Jotting down*) And your name?

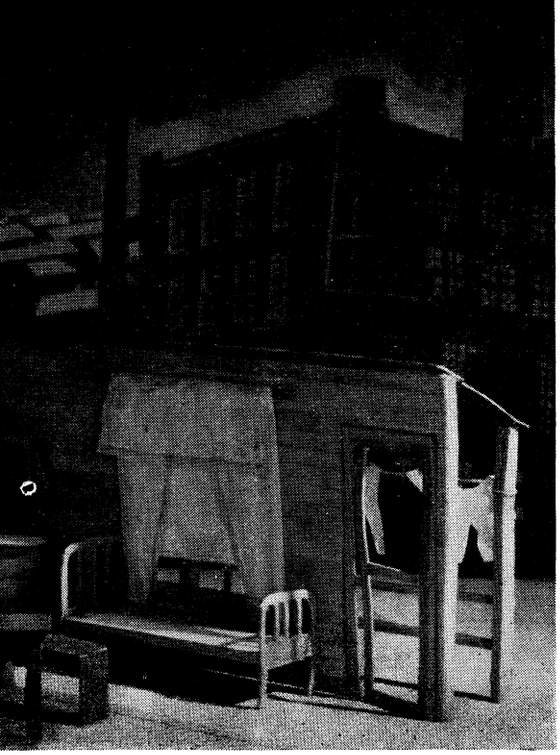
YOUNG FRANK: Young Frank.

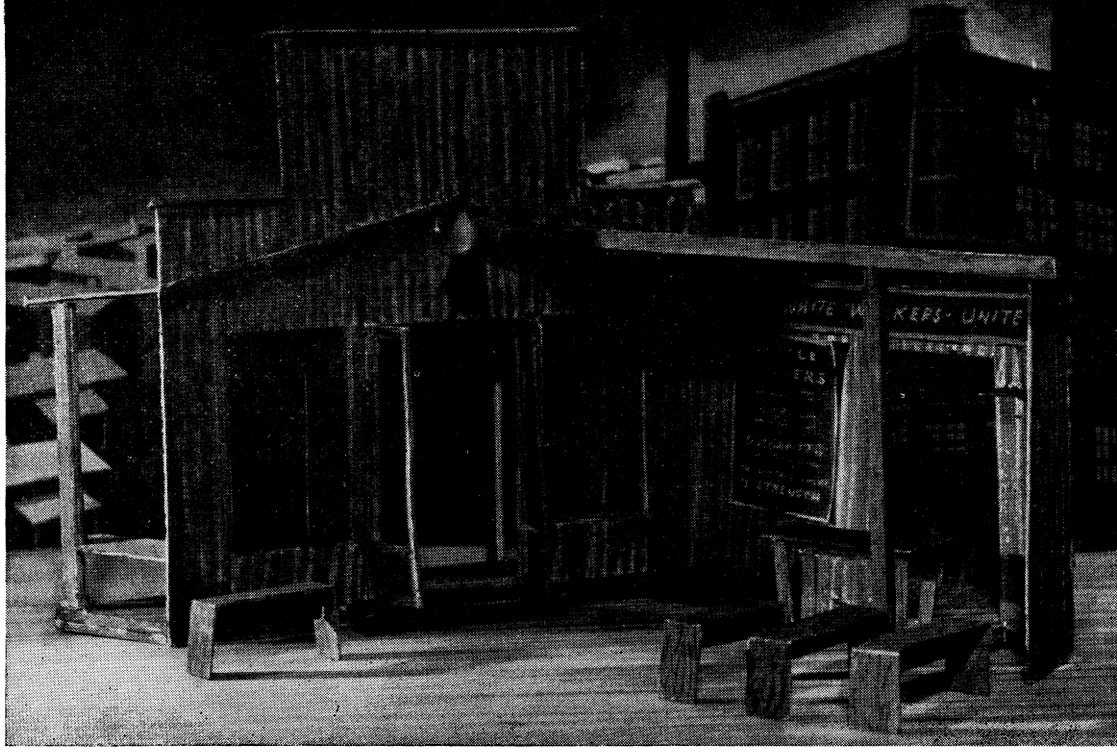
RANDOLPH: (*Writing and laughing*) Junior, eh . . . and what's your name, young lady?

SALLY: (*Flaunting*) Sally Martin, if ye must know—an' I'm sixteen goin' on seventeen. (EMMA *pulls on* SALLY'S *sleeve in alarm*).









RANDOLPH: (*Amused*) Well! (*To* EMMA) They can all sit down; now, Mrs. Martin, your first name, please.

EMMA: Emma—thankye.

RANDOLPH: (*To* ORA) I'll take yours now.

ORA: (*Rising nervously*) Ora McClure—(*She takes* JOHN *and* BONNIE *by the hand to bring them to their feet*). And this is Bonnie, thirteen an' John the youngest, 'leven—

RANDOLPH: (*Appraising the children*) Thank you, that'll do. (*He jots the information down and lays the cards aside. Picks up a large sheet of paper, saying*) Now let's see where we'll place you all.

GRANPAP: (*Has been waiting impatiently to hear his name taken, and now asks uneasily*) Ain't thar somethin' been forgot, my friend?

RANDOLPH: (*Gazes up at him*) What's that?

GRANPAP: Ye failed to take my name along with the others—hits John Kirkland.

RANDOLPH: (*Shaking head*) No, I'm afraid you're too old t' work in the mill, only as night watchman and the places are all filled.

(ORA *jumps to her feet in dismay.* GRANPAP *stands there thunderstruck. Then in great indignation to* RANDOLPH, *who has dropped his gaze to the paper again*)

GRANPAP: Hit's not true. I can walk thirty miles in a day and kill a bear at the end.

RANDOLPH: (*Gazing at him quietly*) I'm sorry, old man—what we need in this mill is speed and nimble fingers. (GRANPAP *is shaken*)

ORA: (*Hastening over*) Oh, hit don't seem right—he kem all the way down with us just t' work an' he kin do it as well as the next.

FRANK: Small Hardy the peddler promised all that keered to could work.

SALLY: (*From bench*) Yes he did, too, I heerd him.

GRANPAP: (*With dignity*) I fought in the Confederacy I'd like t' have ye know, and got three saber cuts acrost my left side.

RANDOLPH: (*Unperturbed by the onslaught*) What's that got to do with it?

GRANPAP: (*Sputtering*) Hit helped saved the South!

RANDOLPH: (*Laughing*) Don't be ridiculous.

GRANPAP: (*In poignant appeal*) Kem, Ora—let's go home—We were told they needed us in the factory. From the way they act hit don't seem so.. (GRANPAP *has started walking out, expecting to be followed, but* ORA *stands in painful quandary*)

EMMA: (*In alarm, hastening over to stop him*) No, we cain't jest pick up 'thout any place to go, Grandpap. Not till we've found a new place we can call home.

ORA: (*Joining them*) Emma's right, Pap—an' ye just bide a few days now, there'll be work.

FRANK: (*Coming over*) Shore there will—must be plenty o' other jobs about in a town like this a man like yerself kin tackle, John Kirkland, 'thout havin' to rely on a mill.

GRANPAP: (*Giving in—somewhat reassured*) I ain't a-feared o' that—but hit's—(*Then he shrugs his shoulders and in resignment*) If ye say so, Ora, we'll stay. (*He turns away, miserably, and walks over to opposite bench than where the others are, to sit alone and in thought*).

ORA: (*Returning, in a quiet but grim appeal to desk*) Can ye get us settled soon for the night?

RANDOLPH: (*Nodding*) Just as soon as the boy returns—the company furnishes the house.

ORA: (*Is relieved—then apprehensively*) Free of charge?

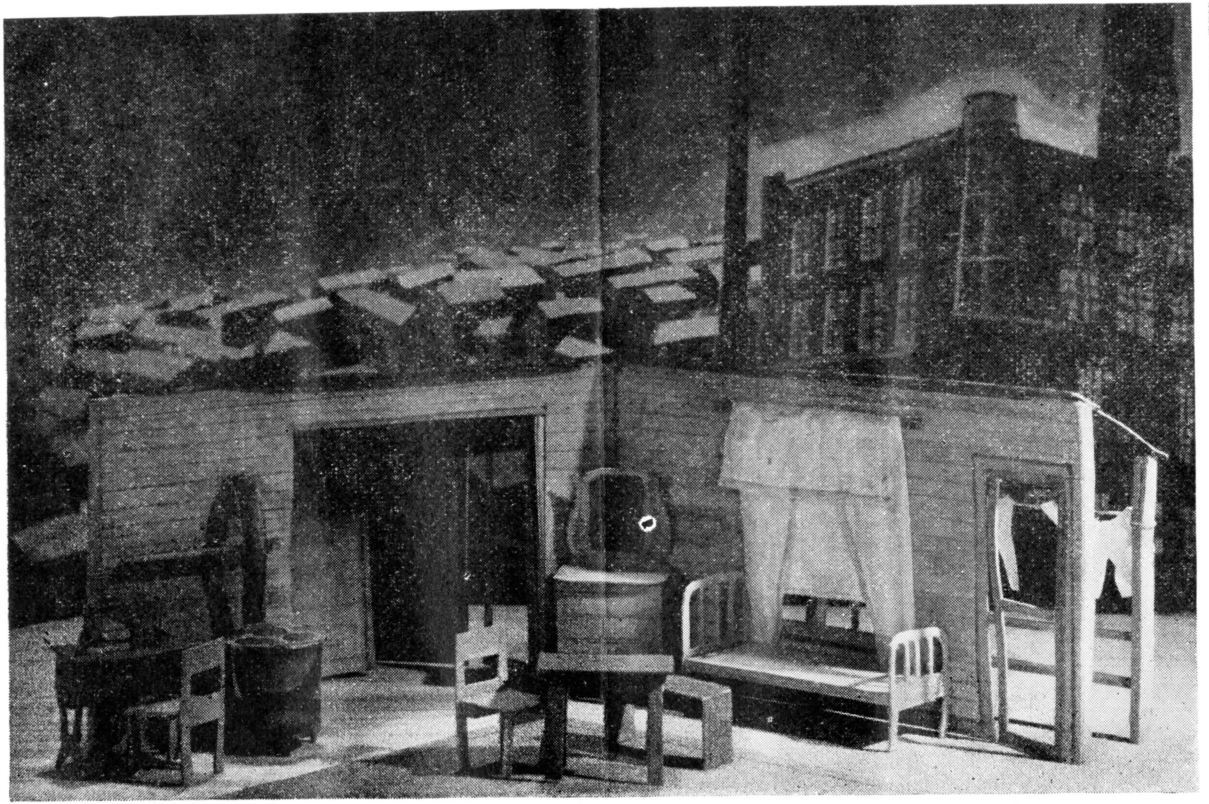
RANDOLPH: Well, not exactly—but it won't cost you much—three dollars a week and a little for lights.

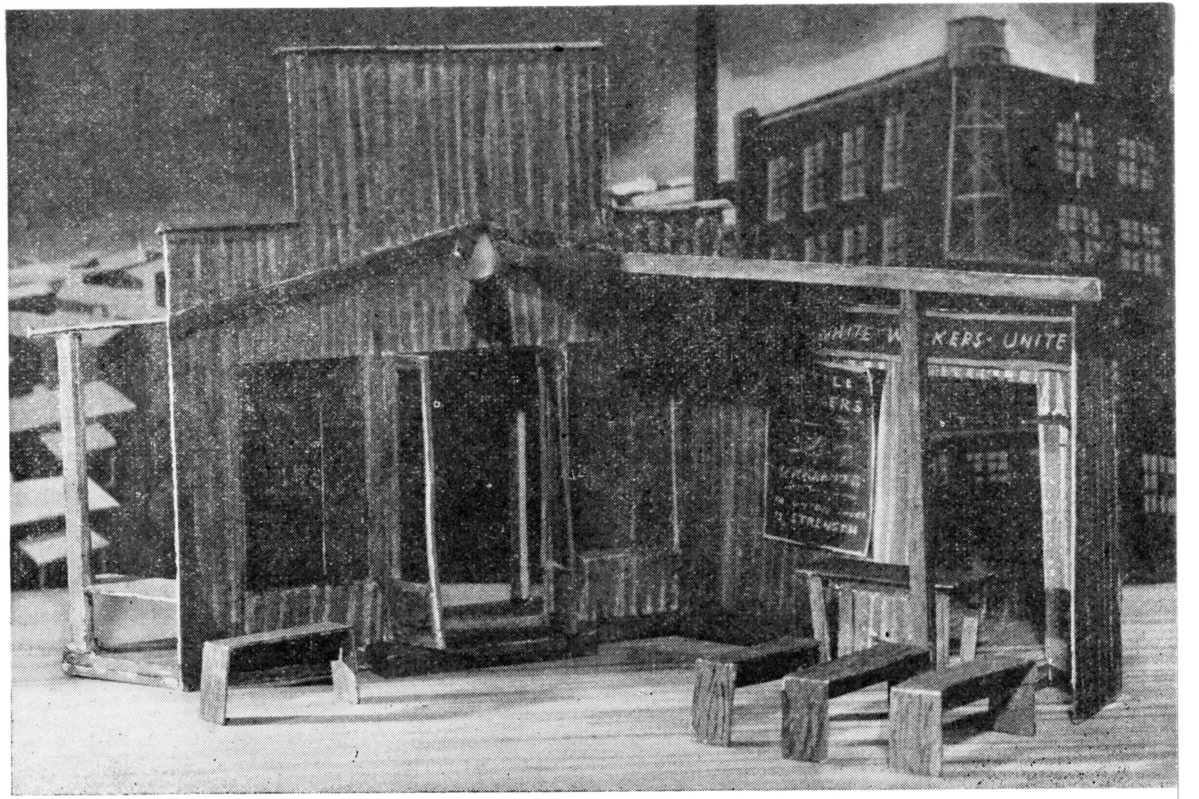
ORA: (*Looking at him incredulously*) Three dollars a week—(*She turns to exchange worried glances with* EMMA *and* FRANK *who have drawn near*) It's a heap of money—(*Then back again questioningly*) But Small Hardy didn't say 'twas so.

RANDOLPH: (*Impatiently*) Who in the devil is Small Hardy—I never heard of him.

FRANK: He's a peddlar that loads up at the comp'ny store an' he said he was sent up t' pass the word along.

Mordecai Gorelik spent a month in North Carolina mill towns before designing the settings for LET FREEDOM RING. Note how they keep before the audience the poverty-stricken village and the overbearing factory. He uses frame structures (mounted on platforms for greater speed in changes) in front of a permanent painted cyclorama. The preceding page shows the employment office. Above, left to right, the mountain home, the mill home, and the union headquarters. Photographs from the designer's models.

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RANDOLPH: (*Shrugs*) Whatever he said was on his own responsibility, not mine. (*Another exchange of glances, then*—)

EMMA: (*Timidly*) What's the pay t' be?

RANDOLPH: (*Impatiently*) I'll come to that in a second now if you'll just leave me finish what I started to do. (*He has been making re-entries from the cards into the big ledger. Blots it and then looks up*) The man—that's you, Martin—starts work on the night shift t'morrow in the finishing room as a beam hauler—five dollars a week while you're learning' and the hours are from six to six.

FRANK: (*In relief*) That'll take care of the rent an' over awright. (*The women seem somewhat more at ease also*)

RANDOLPH: (*Reading*) Sally Martin—Night shift—they'll teach you how to become a spooler in the spinnin' room—two dollars and fifty cents a week while learnin'.

SALLY: (*Eagerly*) An' how much after?

RANDOLPH: Well, it climbs all the way to five.

SALLY: Mercy!

BONNIE: Ye kin buy yerself pretties for Jessie t' see ye in when he kem down as ye said awright Sally.

RANDOLPH: (*Continuing*) Emma Martin and Ora McClure—day shift as spoolers—an' four dollars while learnin'. (ORA *nods*)

EMMA: (*Quietly*) Thankye. (They start to turn away).

RANDOLPH: (*Is not through, however*) The children, John McClure and Frank Martin Junior—Truck pushers in the weaving room at one dollar fifty cents a week and Bonnie McClure as spool girl—

ORA: (*Interrupting quietly*) But they cain't work—they'll be in school.

RANDOLPH: (*A little dazed*) What—who said so?

ORA: (*Quite friendly*) Me an' Emma did, we made up our minds if we kin afford, all the children go to school.

RANDOLPH: (*Squirming in his seat*) But they're needed more in the mill—an' it's a high salary for them and a help to you.

ORA: (*Shaking head and smiling*) Hit may be so but we can afford it.

RANDOLPH: (*Suavely*) I ain't interested in whether you can afford it or not, Mrs. McClure—there's a standing rule here an' we can't make no exceptions to it. They can go to school later on, but right now they ought to go to work.

ORA: (*Unshaken and calmly*) *with a little exaltation*) If it should mean us bein' drivin' about like Kirk is—it's for us to say 'bout the children an' not this mill. We kem most account o' givin' 'em thar chance at an edjication—an' now that we kin afford—they go to school. (*She looks at* EMMA *who nods vigorous affirmation*).

RANDOLPH: (*Stumped*) Mr. Perry, call out the superintendent, will you—(*And as the clerk leaves he turns back to* ORA) He's on the Board of Education of this town and we'll hear what he has to say.

ORA: (*The intended import of this has no effect on her*) He cain't say no more'n what you just did.

CLERK: (*Has knocked at door and now opens it, informing*) Mr. Burnett, you're wanted out here. (*A tension on the part of those waiting until he appears*)

BURNETT: What seems to be the touble? (*Taking scene in at a glance*)

RANDOLPH: Oh, here's some women who think their children are better off wasting their time in school than earning money here.

ORA: (*Looking straight at* BURNETT) It's fer us t'say.

BURNETT: (*Tactfully*) They're paid a high wage for youngsters, you know.

ORA: We'll manage 'thout it.

BURNETT: (*Skeptically*) Maybe—and you can't send them in rags like that.

ORA: We'll provide.

BURNETT: I don't know—there's school books and tablets and pencils and other things of that sort that takes money.

RANDOLPH: (*Adding*) It's gonna cost you a pretty penny to have them go there, Mrs. McClure. I'd have mine bring some money in before I would.

ORA: (*Almost shaken from her position for a moment, then firmly*) We'll p'rvide. (*A pause*)

BURNETT: I wouldn't be so sure if I were you. (Ora remains silent—a gleam in her *eyes*) (*The superintendent deliberates a moment, then with a slight shrug cedes the point*) All right, let her have her way, Paul. They may change their minds about it later on.

RANDOLPH: Yes sir. (*A look of triumph flashes between* ORA *and* EMMA).

EMMA: (Muttering) Thankye—(He nods at her).

RANDOLPH: (To ORA) You can put a criss-cross on this card right here, Miss an' there's one for you, too, Martin. (HENRY BRICKHOUSE *enters from Emergency Room and is on way to clean up superintendent's office.* JOHN, BONNIE *and* YOUNG FRANK *sitting up straight in amazement*)

JOHN: (*When he has found his voice*) Bonnie, lookye yonder—ther's a man that's tarred hisself.

YOUNG FRANK: *Jiminy!*

GRANPAP: (*In scorn*) Hit's a nigger. We saved the South from their kind.

JOHN: (*Talking in* GRANPAP'S *vein, in low voice to* BONNIE) Hit's a nigger—(*They giggle*)

ORA: (*Who has also been gazing at* HENRY *angrily*) Hush an' set still, ye young uns.

RANDOLPH: (*To* ORA, FRANK *and* EMMA, *as he blots signatures*) The boy'll be along any minute now. I'll get you fixed up with a place as soon as he is. (*They start back for seats. The vice president's door opens and he enters with a portly and flashily-dressed man, who has a cigar in his mouth*)

CARMODY: (*The vice-president, a tall, thin, grey haired man, immaculately dressed*) Oh, Mr. Burnett—Just a minute please.

The superintendent, about to enter his door, pauses and comes back) I want you to meet Mr. J. Andrews Phillips—this is our superintendent, Mr. Phillips, and in charge of the entire mill.

PHILLIPS: (*As they shake hands*) Pleased to meet you, I'm sure.

CARMODY: Mr. Phillips is from Cleveland, Ohio, Victor, and he owns quite a bit of stock in the Wentworth Mills. The old man is a personal friend of his.

BURNETT: (*Greatly impressed*) Oh yes, Mr. Phillips, Mr. Wentworth has spoken to me about you many times. You traveled abroad with him on several occasions.

PHILLIPS: (*Laughing*) That's right—he spends money like water on phoney antiques but he's a tough poker player. (*They all laugh*)

CARMODY: Mr. Phillips would like to be shown around a bit, Victor.

BURNETT: Be glad to.

CARMODY: See you later then?

PHILLIPS: (*Genially*) You bet. (CARMODY *leaves for his office*)

BURNETT: (*As he is offered a cigar*) No, thanks. Ever been through a mill before?

PHILLIPS: (*Laughing*) I can't say I have. I've got a controlling interest in a dozen of them down this way and never had a chance to take time out and see what they were all about till now. Been busy with other things.

BURNETT: I see—(*Walking over a few steps with him*) This is Mr. Randolph, our man in charge of employment here.

RANDOLPH: (*Has been gaping at* PHILLIPS:) How do you do? (PHILLIPS *nods, and they shake hands*).

BURNETT: He's being kept mighty busy these days. The mill is swamped with orders and we're hiring day and night—as you see—Breaking in new mill hands as fast as we can.

PHILLIPS: (*Gazing with curiosity at* ORA, GRANPAP *and the others*) Where do these people come from?

BURNETT: The mountains—and this is the first time most of them ever stepped out of the mountains in their lives.

PHILLIPS: That's interesting. (GRANPAP *growls*)

BURNETT: We have no little difficulty teaching them how to run the machines—but they become good workers once they do learn.

PHILLIPS: I see—but what draws them in the first place? I thought that mountain people as a rule—

BURNETT: (*Shrugs*) Oh, high wages—more money than they ever saw before I guess. They come down without a penny—we rent them houses dirt cheap—and give them credit at the company store for food an' whatever they need until they start to learn.

PHILLIPS: That isn't bad at all. (*He observes* HENRY BRICKHOUSE, *who has come out to empty a spittoon into bucket under water cooler and is returning to superintendent's office again*) Looks like a pretty husky fellow to be working around as a porter.

BURNETT: Well, we've gotta keep the whites and the niggers separated or else there'd be trouble. Niggers are only allowed to work in the packing-room and as sweepers. Even the lint heads—poor whites—won't mingle with them—and we don't encourage it.

PHILLIPS: You must know what's best.

BURNETT: Now, if youll step into my office a minute—(*They are exiting*)

EMMA: (*Sitting on a bench beside* ORA, *the children for the most part are dozing off, and* GRANPAP *is standing in doorway in a low conversation with* FRANK) Ora, kin ye feel somethin' a-rumbling?

ORA: I been a-feelin' it too—hit's the factory I think, but it sounds like people a-dancin' away off.

SALLY: (*Has been gazing through window*) Lookye yonder, mom, didja ever see the likes of it—those people pourin' into the mill.

EMMA: Lord a-mercy, look, Ora, where'd they all come from?

ORA: (*Is looking*) I didn't think there war so many people anywhere—I reckon all the houses we passed ain't here fer nothing.

SALLY: It's a wonder.

BURNETT: (*Re-entering with* PHILLIPS) That just about gives you an idea. We'll start with the warping-room now and go on through till we hit the dye-room, and by that time you'll have seen every spot that I showed you on the chart.

(*He is leading him to the factory proper exit, when suddenly that door is thrown open and an excited* MILL HAND *comes running for emergency room,* BURNETT *calling after him*) Say—what's up?

MILL HAND: (*Already opening emergency door*) One of those hill-billies had an accident in the slasher-room!

BURNETT: (*Leaving* PHILLIPS) Just a minute, please. (*He exits toward scene,* PHILLIPS *at a loss coming back toward desk, getting out of path of* MILL HAND *and a* NURSE, *who are speedily wheeling a stretcher across and out of room, leaving emergency door open behind them. The mountain folk sit tense, the tots still asleep*)

RANDOLPH: (*Near whom* PHILLIPS *is standing*) Nothing to be alarmed about—it happens now and then—even with the old mill-hands.

PHILLIPS: (*Feeling fishily, for want of something to say*) Do these people carry insurance?

RANDOLPH: Naw, they don't need it.

(HENRY *in the meanwhile has stepped out in haste to hold open the factory door, the whir of machines filling the room. The* OFFICE BOY *is just returning and crossing over and an instant later the stretcher is again in view, with a groaning and twisting form upon it, his left arm mangled and clothes bespattered with blood*)

MILL HAND: (*Pushing stretcher and at same time informing* SUPERINTENDENT *behind them*) He got his arm caught in the machine an' he got his arm mangled.

ORA: (*In a low, heart-rending voice at sight of stretcher*) Ain't it a pity?

(*The stretcher is passing through the room between* PHILLIPS *on one side and the mountain folks—most of whom had risen upon its entrance—on the other side —and now a moment after* ORA'S *comment*)

GRANPAP: (*Recognizing the injured man as he comes closer, adds ringingly*) Hit's Sam MacEachern—an' nary a better rifle shot than he ever tramped the mountains.

FRANK: Pore Sam. (*The rest of the mountain people look thunderstruck at each other—cannot find voices*)

ALLEN: (*As stretcher is passing into room and out of sight*) There's a man with the nimblest fingers we had, Mr. Burnett. God, I told you we've got t' give 'em time t' get the hang of the machines.

BURNETT: Yes, yes.

(*They enter into emergency room and the door closes behind them*).

PHILLIPS: (*Under whose very nose the stretcher had passed, is in a cold sweat, wiping his brow with kerchief and remarking to* RANDOLPH) Tell Mr. Burnett I'll have to go through the mill some other day.

(*He crosses to re-enter the vice-president's office, feeling sick to the pit of his stomach*)

SALLY: It was Minnie's husband an' they got two young uns.

ORA: Pore Minnie—she must be a-workin' here too, an' don't know what's happened yit.

RANDOLPH: (*Seeing their agitation—calls to office boy in anger*) Take them down to cottage No. 31 near Stumptown.

(*He has taken key from board to thrust into* OFFICE BOY'S *hand*)

OFFICE BOY: (*Looking at clock*) But—

RANDOLPH: Never mind—beat it home from there.

OFFICE BOY: (*Starts across, saying nastily*) Come on—I ain't got all night. (*The factory whistle blows, a terrible, ear splitting shriek, as though many people cried out in sorrow just once—and it brings those children that have been asleep to their feet, clapping their hands to ears in fright*)

JOHN: Jiminy! (*The elders have been slightly startled by the thing also*)

OFFICE BOY: (*Laughing*) What're you afraid of, it's only the six o'clock factory whistle.

GRANPAP: (*Almost completely demoralized, in a hoarse whisper*) Hit sounds unhuman. (*They then start gathering their things for an exit*)

CURTAIN

Announcement

The Theatre Union will open its third season at the Civic Repertory on 14th Street with *Mother,* adapted from Maxim Gorki's stirring novel. At the same time it announces an important reduction in the price of tickets, a step which follows the policy it proclaimed in 1932 "to produce plays of social content that compete with the movies in price and compete with Broadway in competence of production and entertainment." Its low price scale of 30c to $1.50 enabled thousands of workers who could not afford the high prices of uptown plays to see *Peace on Earth, Stevedore, Sailors of Cattaro,* and *Black Pit.* Realizing that the rise in the cost of living and general lowering of wage standards under the New Deal has made further inroads into the pockets of its audience, the Theatre Union announces a new price plan. For the first four nights of the week, the top price will be $1.00 instead of $1.50, and 167 orchestra seats will sell for only 75c. The balconies will scale as they do now, from 30c to 60c.

Other professional theatres and producers of plays that appeal to workers audiences are considering this primary factor of price. Albert Bein and Jack Goldsmith, producers of *Let Freedom Ring,* announce that their price scale will run from 50c to $2.00. On the road, in Philadelphia and other cities, the Group Theatre will present a double bill of *Waiting for Lefty* and *Awake and Sing* at popular prices. The "New Theatre Nights" that proved so popular last season will be continued at the usual low prices. The first of these will take place October 12th at the Civic Repertory Theatre; the second, late in October, when Tamaris and her Group will give a benefit recital for the New Theatre and New Dance Leagues.

We urge our readers to support those theatres and New Theatre and New Dance League groups which are presenting significant work at popular prices.

Films of the Month

BY ROBERT STEBBINS

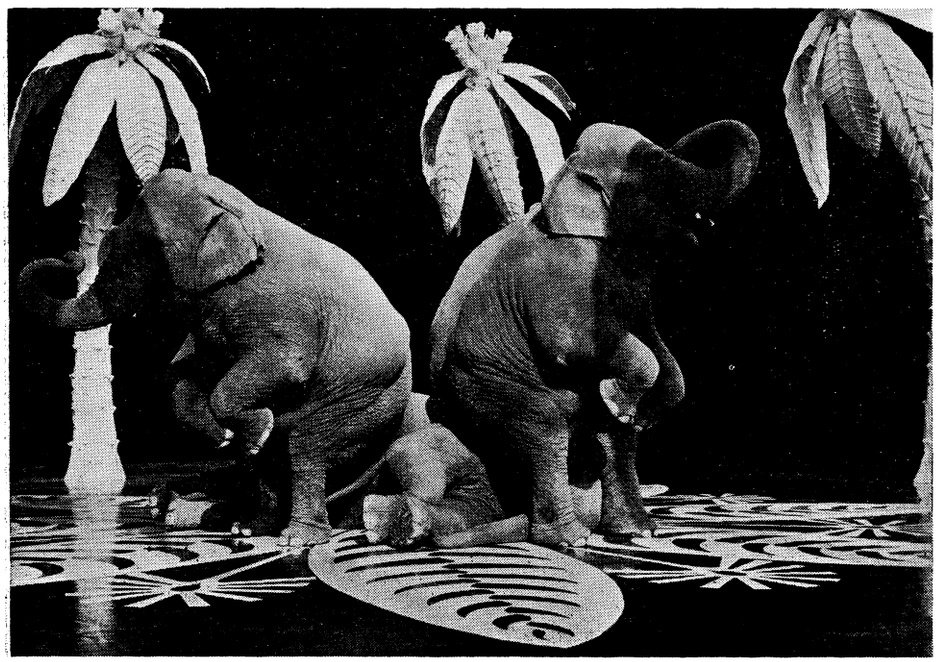
There comes a time in every movie critic's career when he seriously considers dropping his calling and assuming the duties of the mortician. Most of the pictures he sees offer him nothing but the grisly opportunity of stirring a few spadesfull of earth and murmuring "Hic iacet." An occasional timeless work like *The Youth of Maxim, Kameradschaft,* or *Peasants* only serves to emphasize the mortality of most movie stuff. This month's offerings, it is true, have been received with such lusty cries of approval as would argue some degree of permanence, but it is my melancholy conviction that the death is already upon them.

Anna Karenina, MGM, for all the seeming pains taken with its production, remains a strangely placid and unaffecting piece. Throughout the film's progress major emphasis is on Garbo; Garbo at her baby's bedside, Garbo under the Venetian moonlight, Garbo patching up a lover's quarrel; but nowhere does Garbo assume with any degree of fulness the realities of the title role. As a consequence, Anna's death under the wheels of the train appears far from inevitable, if not silly. Certainly Frederic March, as Vronsky, doesn't help matters along. His unfortunate propensity for mangling the sounds of spoken English is given full play. For that matter, the utter anarchy of diction in the film is intolerable, what with March's "from way down east or whatever it is, Reginald's Owen's music-hall intonation, Miss Garbo's melancholy chest tones, and Freddy Bartholomew's prize-recitation style! Basil Rathbone alone emerges from the linguistic fracas without having committed violence on the long abused hearing of his audience.

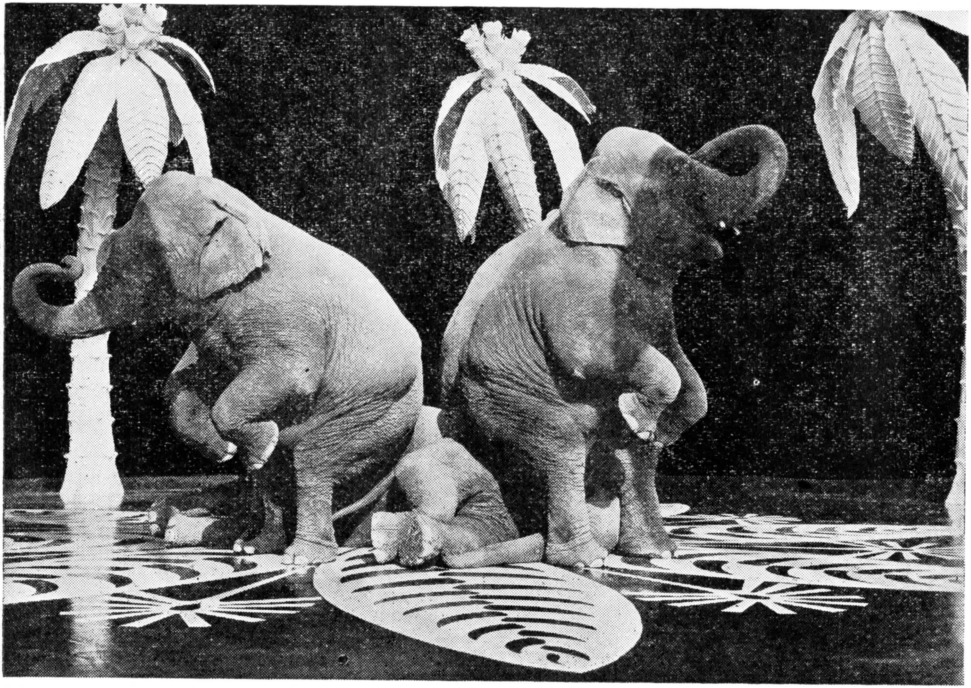
Structurally, the film suffers from jerkiness, a fault consequent upon the unavoidable telescoping of the novel to program length. After the death of Anna, Clarence Brown, director, has seen fit to tack on a sequence wherein Frederic March broods over Anna's death, and expresses his conviction that somewhere she is looking down upon him, an obvious capitulation to the myth that moving picture audiences cannot accept an unhappy ending without palliatives. Perhaps it was this infusion of mysticism, in addition to the polite innocuousness of the picture, that caught the eyes of the Italian film critics who awarded *Anna Karenina* the Mussolini cup for the best foreign film of the year. One cannot help but notice that this peculiarly ghoulish type of sentimentality is especially rife in countries whose history is in the imperialist phase. Novels, like *Peter Ibbetson,* and *Trilby,* for instance, were commonplaces of the Victorian England that witnessed the creation of the British Empire.

United Artists has obviously been thinking and the extraordinary conclusion they have reached is that not every concern in Hollywood can make *Peter Ibbetson* and *Smiling Thru.* Consequently they choose the only remaining alternative and produce *The Dark Angel.* True, the latter differs widely in its externals from Du Maurier's edifice of tears and sighs but for all intents and purposes it might have come from the same hand. Here again we find the eerie *rapport* that exists between two soul-mates. At the very moment moment Frederic March (what, again?) loses his eye-sight during a heavy shelling of his dugout at the front, Merle Oberon, back in England, most unpremeditatedly rends the air with her shriek. She knows some disaster has befallen her beloved. Later she is informed that her lover is dead. But she knows it's not so. Something, somewhere a little voice undoubtedly, keeps telling her he is not dead, he can't be dead. Lillian Hellman, author of *The Children's Hour,* has been credited with the script but it is hard to hold her responsible for the inane literary quality of the sequence wherein Merle Oberon and Herbert Marshall outdo one another in assuming the blame for March's supposed death. The film concludes with Merle's discovery of her hero's whereabouts. She leaves Marshall, whose cinema destiny, incidentally, seems to be one of endless and tedious renunciation, and joins the sightless March (shades of *Jane Eyre!*), who has become a successful author of childrens' books.

The film boasts only one episode of any reality. The scene is the lecture-hall of a hospital for the blind. A well-meaning but rather pompous speaker has been enlarging upon the patriotism and sacrifice of these poor blind. "Henceforth," he says, "you must forget the material world of the eyes. Fix your minds on the beautiful things of the spirit." This proves too much for one of the inmates who hysterically renounces the spirit with the only convincing lines of the picture: "Give me my eyes back again. I want to see the good things of the earth. I want to see the blue sky and the green grass. I want these eyes to see my girl again." But March, also blind, heroically shuts him up with "Sit down, sit down! God, don't we suffer enough without having to hear about it?" Evidently it is bad manners for the victimized to remind the world of its wounds. Let the maimed, let the blind creep away to the dark corners of the earth and there slowly and unnoticed fumble through the remaining years.



The Ballet of Elephants in *The Big Broadcast of* 1936



The Ballet of Elephants in *The Big Broadcast of* 1936

Mr. Wendell Goodwin's New York Enquirer column, The New York Beat, has favored us with inclusion in his *Little Spiral Notebook*:

"Phooey on the New Masses and NEW THEATRE (both leftwing magazines) for their vicious attack on Director of Public Relations Wilkie of Paramount pictures. I suppose that both of them are sore that their passes were revoked because in their reviews they attacked Paramount pictures instead of criticising them."

In defense of New Masses we need only state that Mr. Goodwin's presumably "vicious" attack consisted in printing *without comment* Mr. Wilkie's letter denying pass privileges to New Masses.

As for NEW THEATRE, we merely remarked that Mr. Wilkie's ultimatum, either you like our picture or else—! made reviewing pictures a difficult, if not impossible, task. Fortunately for us, NEW THEATRE has never enjoyed the privilege of a Paramount pass and may therefore speak its mind of Paramount's *Two For Tonight* and *The Big Broadcast of* 1936, the latter, probably the year's worst film. *Two for Tonight* need not concern us, so characterless was its make-up. Not a single film critic (critics beware Mr. Wilkie!) had any word of commendation for the film. But the *Big Broadcast of* 1936 represents Hollywood at its lowest ebb. The mere catalogue of its ingredients makes fantastic and incredulous reading: Jack Oakie, Burns and Allen, Lyda Roberti, Bennie Baker, Bing Crosby, Amos and Andy, Sir Guy Standing, Mary Boland, Charles Ruggles, the Vienna Saengerknaben, Bill Robinson, Ethel Merman, a shamelessly indecent scene in which a child, David Holt, acts as a blood-donor to save the life of his sister, and to top it all, a ballet of elephants photographed in the Busby Berkely manner.

When, in his *Letter to American Intelletcuals*, Maxim Gorky, that discriminating citizen of the world, assailed our movies for their corrupting influence and cited as an example the picture *Freaks* wherein Hollywood "having exhausted all sentimental themes had now proceeded to exploit physical monstrosities," I was inclined to think that Gorky was presuming too much on one picture. *The Big Broadcast of* 1936 makes me fear that perhaps Gorky was right after all.

Top Hat is no ballet of elephants but neither is it *The Gay Divorcee* although it tries very hard to be even to the extent of duplicating the plot and characterizations. Fred Astaire accomplishes everything asked of him with surprising skill but what has been asked is already thrice-told. There is great danger of formularizing Astaire's undeniable charm and skill to the point where all delight in him shall have departed. In the light of Hollywood box-office practice it is extremely doubtful whether this danger will be successfully circumvented.

The Students' May Day Demonstration in *Red Salute*

Since *Page Miss Glory*, featuring Marion Davies, was rather thoroughly gone over in the *Louella Parsons: Hearst's Hollywood Stooge* article no further comment is necessary beyond remarking that Joel Faith's analysis was well-founded.

Diamond Jim Brady might easily have proved the vehicle for trenchant comment on the swollen banalities of American industry in its boom period at the turn of the century. Instead, we are regaled with Brady's unsuccessful attempts to soften the hearts of the fair sex and his blatant faith in the future of American buying power. Edward Arnold performs the title role with great authority.

The predilection of the English for espionage romances again comes to the fore in 39 *Steps*, Gaumont British. It is an excellent, though over-long work that generates considerable excitement despite heavy gleanings from *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and *It Happened One Night*.

The remainder of this survey is concerned with *Red Salute*, a United-Artists feature, the first in a contemplated series of frontal attacks on academic freedom of opinion. It tells the story of a general's daughter, (Barbara Stanwyck) who falls in love with an "alien agitator" (Hardie Albright) on the campus of a university at Washington, D.C. Her father has her kidnapped and taken to Juarez, whence she returns in the company of an enlisted man (Robert Young). They get back in time for May Day, and the General-father sends the enlisted man as a provocateur to start a riot, so that the "alien" organizer of the "Liberty League of International Students" can be deported, and the daughter can marry the soldier whom she calls "Uncle Sam."

The picture is peppered through with such delightful realistic dialogue as:

General to "alien agitator," whom he is refusing to entertain for dinner: "We have squab, and you must know that squab is purely a capitalistic dish."

"Uncle Sam" to the girl, whom he calls "Red.": "You ought to be shot." (This is repeated as a refrain throughout the picture.)

The girl, "Red": "I don't admit bosses exist."

"Uncle Sam": "May Day is the day you dreamers drive the cops screwy.'

Red Salute openly advocates cracking skulls at student rallies if the trend of discussion is even slightly radical. The picture will undoubtedly get the full support of the Hearst press and every agency that prides itself on its alleged Americanism while grinding a little private axe for profit. A Mr. Joe Blair of the Showman's Trade Review suggests, among other novel ideas on showmanship, that exhibitors "arrange, as a gag, to have a radical speaker address groups or street crowds ending his speech with a plug for the picture." In the face, therefore, of Hollywood's evident determination to aid in the suppression of any force in America that makes for a clearer and better life, all liberal organizations and, in particular, the colleges, must manifest *immediately* their opposition to showings of *Red Salute* both by boycott and mailed protests to the United Artists Company.

The Students' May Day Demonstration in *Red Salute*

I Dance for Moscow

BY DHIMAH

A modern dancer coming to the Soviet Union to concertize, faces an unusual task as well as a distinct problem. The task I shall refer to later, for the problem presents itself, in embryo, at the moment the Soviet border is reached. You have arrived in a land where the dance, where all the arts and the sciences, have become not only the property but to a great degree the concern of the entire population of workers, farmers and Red Army men.

You are faced with an enormous audience and so you try to make a cross-section of it. Underground, thousands of young men and women are battling for the completion of the world's most luxurious Metro subway. From the busy factories, hundreds of thousands of men and women, plain workers, who only a short number of years ago were freed from the miseries of Tsarist oppression, are now greedily studying, figuratively swallowing gigantic numbers of books in a cultural advance that is in itself a revolution.

Look in at the theatres. All of them are crowded every night with those same subway workers, those factory workers, and Red Army men. So it is with the museums, symphony orchestras, the ballet and concert performances. From Aristophanes to Sidney Kingsley, from Palestrina to Shostakovitch—whatever this newly arisen and eager audience suggests, it can have. The theatre, like the Metro, is "ours," you are reminded. And when once you have heard a Soviet citizen proudly say "nasha" (ours), you are face to face with the question of what to say to such an audience. Can Carnegie Hall or the Civic Repertory Theatre give you the answer? That is the problem.

The Soviet Union is a busy country; Moscow, the hub of it all, growing busier and more beautiful every day. You are a dancer? Then you must certainly dance for Moscow, you are told. In Leningrad too, and later in Kharkov, Kiev, Odessa—everywhere you must dance. You are sent a pianist for a tryout. The Philharmonic may loan you a drummer, the Masters of Arts' Club gives its stage for rehearsals. In a flash you see it all. There are no vacant studios, no unemployed pianists, no roving drummers in this country. "How soon will you be ready to dance?" you are asked.

The review of the work of many Moscow dancers and groups held here recently revealed the task of the modern dancer in a country where by long tradition, the classic ballet, in all its lavishness, is still the all powerful influence. These independent dancers who are unconsciously trying to overcome their ballet environment cannot help moving towards a more modern technique, but cannot, as yet, accept our conception of modern dance. Therein lies the task of a modern dancer in the Soviet Union.

Subsequently, during the open conference held in connection with this dance review, I learned of the methods by which the struggle for a new Soviet dance form is being waged. These conferences, which went on for three days, were nothing short of thrilling to an American dancer, though perhaps a common occurrence in Soviet society. Not merely did a picked jury criticise each presentation individually, but the dancers, about thirty of them, one by one, took the floor, some of them talking for almost half an hour.

The critics did not have it all their own way; the dancers voiced their ideas and voiced them emphatically. They wanted to know why the critics said this and that, why they weren't more constructive and by what standards were they judging. The last question provoked comments on desirable methods of training in which the dancers from abroad participated. One dancer wanted to know why the Commissariat (of Education) was not helping so-and-so who did such good work. Nearly all insisted that the dancers need an experimental theatre for themselves. The last words spoken to me by a prominent member of the jury were, "And you will see—they'll get it too!"

My first open concert took place at the Kamerny Theatre, the new and charming stronghold of Tairov, after the regular performance, at the unusual hour of eleven-thirty p.m. This is customary for dance recitals, because of the crowded calendar of theatrical activities. Nevertheless the house was completely filled. (The Russians are ardent devotees of the dance, and very curious about new forms.) I was by that time involved in my original problem. I knew by then that a serious program of modern dancing would provoke discussion—and it did. Discussions during the entr'acte became heated arguments. The technique was, of course, something of a surprise, as well as the use of percussion accompaniment heard here for the first time. The program left the audience with mixed feelings.

Characterizations, particularly satires, that are realistic in presentation are eagerly received because they bring pictures of foreign lands and how some of their inhabitants live. This naturally includes the folk themes of all nations. My *Lament* which I had so much prized was lost on an audience to whom self-struggle has become an apparently incomprehensible process. A satire on our "night life" was encored and much praised in the press. Gradually I discovered the reasons for applause, an explanation for indifference.

I feel that such audiences can command me and I want to understand them. In the process of doing so, I am already aware of a feeling of depersonalization, and of the necessity really to study in order to be able to interpret artistically this reorienta-

tion. Without compromising on artistic principles, I expect my future concerts here to help me solve this problem.

Soon after the concert the barrage began. I was asked to give lecture demonstrations to mass organizations, and to appear in workers clubs, and during the May celebration. Individuals approached me, telephoned me (one even wrote me), telling me what they liked and what they could not understand. I had to lecture on the background of the modern dance in America. Sometimes I was astounded by the knowledge my questioners had of contemporary American and European dancers.

All this brought me face to face with the task of a modern dancer in the Soviet Union. It is necessary to be prepared to write and to speak on your work. As busy as the Soviet people are in their heavy tasks of building a Socialist system, there is nothing that they will accept, no matter how beautifully costumed, how different or even exotic it may be, without understanding, without, if necessary, thorough and satisfactory explanation. It is a new world.

Recently my Soviet group assembled for the first time. Among them were those powerful young bodies I seemed to have seen wielding heavy picks on the subway construction. There were students and Komsomols. Eager they were indeed! What music do I use? How do I teach? Why do I dance barefoot? They wanted to know, to understand. I felt my years of dancing being bisected for examination. And now that we are at work I feel that something of an operation has been performed. It is not only they, but American dancers coming here, who have to understand in order to meet the problems of this revitalizing idealogy.

The mass dance here is gaining ground rapidly, a phenomenon in city life which demands the attention of a dancer. Soviet themes spring from the factories, from the kolkhozes. In gathering them one has to go into the factories, on the kolkhozes, to work in them, to hear the workers in their meetings. One has to feel what a Government Loan, or the loss of a Maxim Gorki airplane and forty-seven highly qualified workers means to the rank and file of Soviet citizenry. There is a choreography in all this activity that has not yet been recorded, a wealth of possibilities for the modern dance in the Soviet Union.

New Dance Season

The New Dance League faces the season of 1935-36 with new strength drawn from its broader program which has brought into its membership progressive artists and students of the dance from all parts of the United States. From a nucleus of young artists in New York, the New Dance League has grown to a nation-wide organization of dancers who are creating a new dance which serves life in that it clarifies the struggle between the forces of progress and reaction and reveals, to an ever widening audience, that only through understanding the conflicts in our present society can we approach the task of creating a better one.

That the American audience demands a dance art which reflects and interprets the contempo scene is demonstrated daily by the requests which the New Dance League receives from all parts of the country. Each mail brings requests for teachers, organizational material, artistic guidance, dance publications, performers and information about classes.

The New Dance League today furnishes artistic and organizational guidance to some twenty-five affiliated groups in and around New York and others in such important centers as Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, Boston, Pittsburg, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Toledo. A West Coast section has been established in Los Angeles and by the first of the year section offices will be opened in other cities. It has become necessary to build sections to carry on the League's work because dancers everywhere, realizing the importance of organization to the development of mass culture, are joining the League.

On October 15th the New Dance League will launch its annual membership campaign. In the past the appeal for membership to strengthen the organization has been to the dancer and student of the dance. In the present drive, which will extend from October 15th to November 15th, we include in our appeal important potential New Dance League members previously unapproached,—the audience,—whose enthusiasm has done so much to encourage the New Dance League's growth.

The New Dance League offers two types of membership; the regular membership at $.25 a year and a sustaining membership at $1.00 a year. Both are open to any one who supports the New Dance League program: For a mass development of the American dance to its highest social and cultural level; for a mass dance movement against war, fascism and censorship.

It is hoped that a membership of sufficient size will be attained so that the recitals, lectures, symposia and schools conducted by the New Dance League may extend beyond the large centers.

The New York season, opening with a dance photograph exhibition, will be an active one for the League. A schedule of recital programs has been arranged to start in November. In addition, the New Dance League will participate in the series, "New Directions in the Dance," at the New School of Social Research.

The school which the New Dance League is opening November 1st, to be conducted jointly with the New Theatre League, is a step forward in creating a closer relationship between the dance and the drama, in developing our leadership and in offering valuable courses to students of the dance.

The extension of these activities over wider areas can be achieved through the individual support of all those who see the value of the dance as a cultural weapon.

LOUISE REDFIELD

THEATRE WORKSHOP

A class in circus make-up at the State Technikum of Circus Art, Moscow

The Art of Make-Up

BY TAMARA DAYKARHANOVA

Leo Tolstoy once observed that it would be perplexing to speculate on how greatly the history of mankind would have been altered if Cleopatra's nose had been a less provoking shape. It is safe to say, however, that the personal success of hundreds and hundreds of Cleopatras depends, to an enormous extent, upon the shape of the nose, on the shadows about the eyes, on the lines around the mouth, on the rouged, moulded outlines of the cheeks.

Actors of the past, as well as those performers who never realized that they were acting—the medicine men, the priests, the warriors dancing the ritual of glory, of conquest, of plunder—understood that, in order to impress their audiencies, to make an illusion come true before these audiencies, they must alter their physical appearance. Hence, they applied paints to the body and face or they wore a mask. In shoes with high heels, they further decorated themselves with such appurtenances as would immediately induce in the spectator the particular mood in which they desired him to be, equally receptive to a comedian's rendition of a phallic song or to a lofty interpretation of a noble tragedy.

The art of make-up is an old one. Excavations, revealing information of the Stone Age, prove beyond a doubt, that an extinct race of human beings covered their bodies with paints. Scientists are uncertain, however, of the underlying motive. It is difficult for them to say whether this was done to beautify the body or to protect it from the pernicious bites of insects. When and how make-up, or the painting and changing of the face, became a practice on the stage is not definitely known. It is generally assumed that the famous inventor of the second actor in Greek tragedy, Thespis, introduced the mask and make-up on the stage in the sixth century B. C. It is possible that the use of make-up originated among the worshippers of Bacchus, who smeared their faces with red wine. The make-up of the medieval actor in the mystery play is impressive for its realistic interpretation of the features of devils and saints, angels and animals, laymen and monks. The innumerable Feasts of Fools, Feasts of Asses and other revels of the lower clergy, were enacted with faces painted strictly according to type. In the French morality play, *Bien Avise et Mal Avise*, for example, Fortune would wear a two-faced mask—one kindly and smiling, the other grim and scowling.

In examining the illustrations of the Commedia dell 'Arte, we find that the faces of the leading characters—Pantalone, Arlecchino, Capitano, Dottore—are made up effectively and convincingly. This is startling when we realize that the materials utilized in these make-ups were of the crudest. The celebrated Gros-Guillaume on the stage of the Hotel de Bourgogne, would cover his face with a thick layer of flour. During the time of Elizabeth, the actor relied almost entirely upon the use of wigs and beards. Even in the days of David Garrick, little attention was paid to the realism of make-up. Garrick himself wore the white court wig of George III in nearly all his parts. Until the middle of the nineteenth century when grease paint was invented, the make-up box consisted only of white chalk, carmine, burnt cork and white lead with lard as a base.

With such meager equipment it is easy to understand why make-up fell into disrepute. The chemistry of paints was undeveloped and many coloring materials were injurious and even poisonous to the user. Little was accomplished in this art at the time of Eleanora Duse's maturity of genius and as a result, she renounced make-up completely. The actor today cannot renounce it. The very nature of the modern theatre and motion pictures, and their powerful lighting systems, make this art a necessity to the actor. He must be grateful to modern industry which has provided him with such an assortment of reliable paints and powders. He must be grateful, too, to the great artists who have evolved a scientific technique of stage make-up, helping him to equip himself to meet one of his major problems in the theatre.

While the actor today may recognize how much has been accomplished in the art of make-up and in the materials and tools of this art, and while he may realize that modern lighting demands some knowledge on his part of the fundamental application of make-up, he has seldom been tempted to master its exacting technique. His own sad experience has taught him that the theatre, as he knows it in this country, operates under a system of type-casting, a system which, by its very nature, discourages the use of the make-up box. He has not learned to master this art because he has been forced to the realization that he will not be called upon to undertake a role unless he himself fulfills the physical qualifications of the character he is to play. It seems to me that theatrical producers are beginning to see the absurdity of casting to type and that this system may be forced to yield to another less pernicious to the growth and development of the actor. As the situation stands today, I feel I can safely say that no more than ten per cent of the American acting profession know very much about make-up.

I find this a highly deplorable condition as make-up, more than costume or setting, visualizes for the spectator the true essence of a great performance—the manifestation of a human soul in a human countenance. The nearer an actor comes to making his outward appearance correspond to the inner design of his part, the more brilliant and unforgettable will be the image he creates and the more surely will this image make the onlooker suffer and rejoice with him on the stage. In the words of a German author, "make-up becomes the visiting card of the actor."

It is not difficult for an actor to apply a nose resembling that of Cyrano de Bergerac. But the problem of convincing an audience that behind this enormous and famous nose is a sensitive and suffering human being, may be solved only by a brilliant actor with an extensive knowledge of make-up.

I should like to emphasize at this point that the conception of make-up for a specific character must be simultaneous with the conception of the inner design of the role. A noted French actor and monologist, M. Signoret, once said to me, "The important thing in giving the full value of a role is to understand that every person—real or imaginary—carries the reflection of his personality in his face, and that the mark of it is contained in the slightest of his movements."

This opinion is shared by the great contemporary Russian actors: Madame Knipper-Tchekova, Ketchaloff, Meskvin.

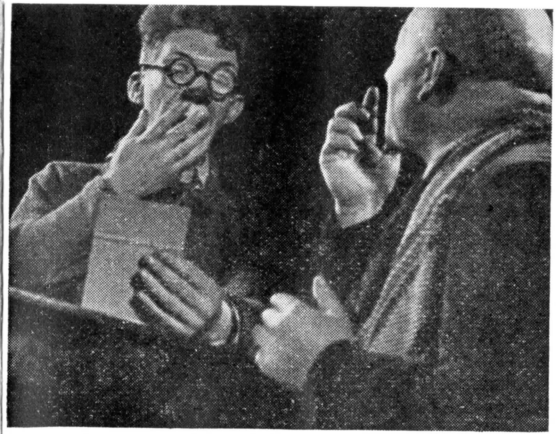
If this is true for the professional theatre, its importance is amplified many times for the actor working in the Little or College theatre. There the actor must be even more meticulous about his make-up than he would be were he to appear in a Broadway playhouse. The majority of community theatres are comparatively small, intimate. The audience sits close to the stage. Obviously, on such a stage, make-up must be applied much more carefully than in a metropolitan theatre. It is impossible, in dealing with a small stage, to use the same methods of applying grease paints, of preparing false, putty noses or chins that might be employed in a large house. The application of wrinkles, the elevation of the frontal bone, all lines, all shadows, all blendings must be finer and less striking. This is as true in make-up as it is in the other plastic arts. Workmanship designed for close observation is fine and delicately made, like the Persian prints or medieval minatures. That which is designed for an audience which will view it from a distance is bolder in design and more daring in execution, like cathedral gargoyles.

Make-Up and Stage Lighting

One must keep in mind that the modern system of stage lighting entirely changes the physical appearance of the actor, fastening the attention of the on-looker on every detail of the performance. It is widely known that there are few, if any, faces that can brave the revealing lights of the modern stage without the assistance of make-up. Nor is it an exaggeration to say that world-celebrated young beauties, under strong stage lights and without proper make-up, look like worn-out, faded women: wan, withered, yellowed. Make-up, therefore, becomes the restorer of beauty, of natural color.

Substantially, straight make-up is similar to the process of restoring paintings of the old masters. The original colors and outlines frequently disappear or are blurred by the pitiless grip of time or the barbarity of succeeding generations and must be retouched and restored. On the stage, the natural colors of the pigment are likewise falsified by the powerful, artificial lights and it becomes the actor's problem to renew his natural colors and emphasize his good features by every means at his command. Thus, the actor's personality becomes distinctly the gainer.

Every actor must remember also the changes produced on his face by different systems of lighting. Consequently, he must alter and adjust his make-up in accordance with the quality and intensity of the light which surround him on the stage. The ideal solution of the problem of lighting has been found in the combination



A class in circus make-up at the State Technikum of Circus Art, Moscow

Sovfoto

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of overhead, foot and horizontal lights. If only overhead lights are available, or if lights from above overbalance the foot and horizontal ones, then only the upper portion of the face and body is illuminated, producing an effect of deep shadows under all the protuding features. The forehead appears to have shiny spots, the eye-sockets become dark holes, the cheek bones grow more prominent and the nose longer. If brilliant foot lights alone are used, then the effect is reversed. Lights from below throw a rather grotesque shadow on the upper part of the face. Light is thus thrown under the eye-brows, the eyes grow dull and the forehead and the upper portion of the nose darker, shadowed, producing in turn, the effect of a fore-shortened head.

A one-sided, horizontal lighting, for instance, may lend the face a convincing Rembrandtian appearance. Nemirovitch-Dantchenko, the famous director of the Moscow Art Theatre, during the "fortune-telling" scene in his production of *Carmencita and the Soldier*, illuminated Carmencita's face from below, thereby giving it a remarkable quality of mystery.

The selection of paints for good make-up and the method of their application, therefore, depends very much upon the coloring and intensity of the stage lights. Colored screens placed in front of the "spots" "kill" some of the paints. White, on the other hand, will always assume the color which illuminates it. Red, under a blue light, will become black or ashy purple. One frequently sees two young lovers on the stage under the blue moonlight. Their faces almost invariably look like those of ghosts come to life. Red light brightens red; yellow light on red will make it pale yellow, while green will darken it. The average blue under red light becomes black. The same is true for orange and yellow. Many blues become green under green light, blue under blue lights. Thus, it becomes obligatory to equip the dressing rooms with lights corresponding to the general lighting scheme of the production. Many mistakes in make-up may therefore be avoided. The right scheme of lighting in addition to the proper application of make-up enhances the beauty of the face of the actor, making his features more or less prominent as they may need to be, adding a spiritual or animated quality to his physiognomy.

Analysis of Make-Up

Make-up is the only means by which an actor can make his outward appearance reflect a character he is creating. The technique of make-up, like every phase of dramatic technique, requires definite preparatory work and definite routine practise. The problem moreover of a particular make-up must be approached in the same manner with the same psychological analysis as the character itself. The actor builds his make-up as he builds his character. If he does not understand and accept this fact, he materially decreases his chances of real success on the stage.

His first step is to establish the nationality of the character he is interpreting. Anthropology teaches us that races have their own characteristics and peculiar colorings. For the most part northern Europeans have fair complexions and broad square faces. We find the Mediterranean people with olive skin, oval faces and well curved lips. The Slavic population of the great Russian and Baltic plains are readily known by the blonde hair and blue eyes, yet they differ enormously from the northern Europeans, although both belong to the Caucasian race. The Mongolian type is immediately brought to mind by the oblique eyes, slightly flat nose and highly prominent cheek bones. In preparing make-up we not only have to follow these generalizations but we must adjust the racial features to the particular national traits. Albums of various races and nationalities are invaluable source books for the actor.

Once national traits are established, the next step is the adjustment of the make-up to the age part. Grey hair, wrinkles, sagging jaw, flabby skin are some of the obvious concomitants of old age. In addition, however, the actor must analyze the lines which life itself leaves on the faces of men and women. An old man who has passed through terrific suffering, will carry the marks of his experiences in his face. Likewise, a man who has attained spiritual contentment will reflect his inner calm in his outward appearance.

The actor must remember that our emotions as well as the external circumstances of our lives, leave their marks upon our faces. A sleepless night, a night of sorrow and tears, misery and distress, will leave dark shadows under the eye sockets, deep lines from the nostrils to the corners of the mouth, making it droop. Add a pale complexion to this weary countenance and the audience will instantly sense the suffering of the character. Just so a night of inebriation will result in inflamed eyes, underlined by reddish pouches. The so-called gay life is typified by an exaggerated redness of nose and cheeks. A life of disappointment will draw dark lines of sorrow at the corners of the mouth and cause heavy vertical lines to appear at the bridge of the nose.

After the actor has established the age and nationality of the role, he must turn his attention to the analysis of the character. The traits, for example, of naivete, trustfulness, and audacity must be indicated on the black face of Othello just as slyness, malice and envy must be reflected on the white face of Iago.

Obviously too, a man will often reflect his profession. A laborer on the highways will boast a face beaten by the sun and winds while the Russian bootmaker's face will be white and swollen, bringing to the audience a conception of his work—six days each week spent in a dark cellar, where sunlight never can penetrate and the seventh, his day of rest, spent in hard drinking.

Then comes the adjustment of the make-up to the particular epoch in which the character is functioning. History teaches us that each epoch has its own conception of beauty. Mona Lisa has no eyebrows, yet a quarter of a century ago, feminine beauty was measured by the abundance of the eyebrows. Today, our leaders of fashion again dictate plucking of eyebrows, returning to the pre-Raphaelite conception of beauty. A fair lady of King Arthur's court cannot resemble a coquette in the time of Moliere. Venus de Milo or the frail, pale Infanta of Velasquez would be ridiculous in a flapper's dress with a cigarette between her lips and a flask in her pocket.

Up to this point the discussion has been chiefly concerned with realistic make-up for realistic productions. Now we must approach a new problem, namely, the relationship of the face, the mask, the make-up, to the tempo and style of the production. The face of Hamlet, for instance, cannot be made until the director's aim in the production is fully understood. Katchaloff's make-up for Hamlet in Gordon Craig's setting at the Moscow Art Theatre differed entirely from the same actor's make-up at the same theatre, when a realistic, historical setting was utilized. These two make-ups differed from each other and from Basil Sidney's in Arthur Hopkin's production of that play in modern, full evening dress. Abbie Putman's face in *Desire Under the Elms* under the direction of Kenneth MacGowan and in settings by Robert Edmond Jones, must differ completely from the face of O'Neill's heroine in Tairov's interpretation in the Kamerny Theatre. An actress playing either Mary of Scotland or Queen Elix in Schiller's thrilling and romantic conception of these rulers must have a vastly different make-up than they would were they portraying either of those ladies in Maxwell Anderson's version of the same theme.

Certain styles of production require the use of expressionistic or futuristic make-up in keeping with the lines of the producton. An excellent example of expressionistic make-up is the method which was employed occasionally by the Second Studio of the Moscow Art Theatre, when wigs were made of oilcloth, or of wool or velvet material; eyebrows were pieces of fabric glued on to the face and red cheeks likewise pieces of round red cloth. Yet the general effect was not absurd because all the details of make-up were in harmony with the setting and dramatic interpretation.

I would like to emphasize the fact that futuristic make-up does not mean a ridiculous make-up. It does not mean that the eyes are placed where the nose should be nor the nose on the back of the head. Futuristic make-up is done along abstract lines, but it is always cognizant of the specific problems of type, color and character interpretation. In feeling, it is exactly the same as modern painting and sculpture.

In examining any human face, one will be able to discover one or two fundamental states or conditions. Either the facial expression will border on that of grief, of sorrow, or it will be that of gaiety, cheerfulness. In analyzing the external factors producing those two major effects, we will discover that the cheerful face finds its expression in facial lines going from down to up, giving it a more or less rounded aspect. In the melancholy face, all lines go down, lengthening it. If we will examine attentively the changes which occur on the face we will notice immediately that when one laughs, one's face begins to grow larger, to approach a circle. Even the nose, the most immobile part of the face, becomes larger and grows rounder. On the other hand when we weep, the muscles of the face, particularly the corners of the mouth and eyes, droop. Old age produces similar changes, due to the fact that the bones protrude, the skin sags and drops, creating hollows in the cheeks. Youth is characterized by the rounded mask, with all the facial lines tending upwards. These two fundamental laws aid us in conceiving a scientific make-up.

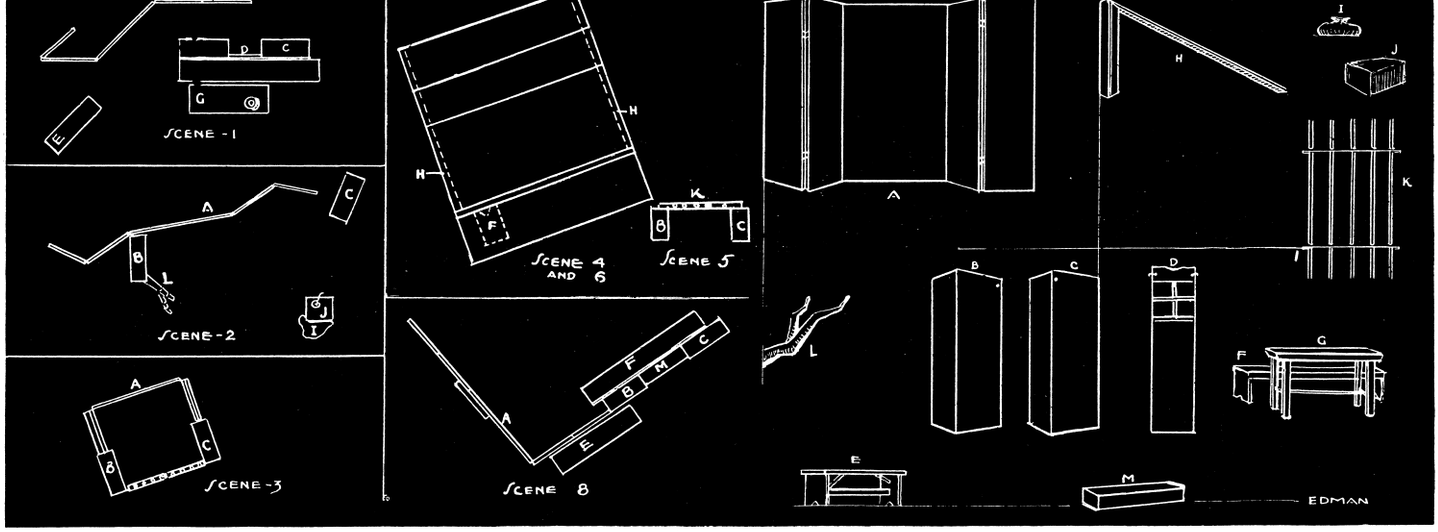
(Next issue: PUTTING ON MAKE-UP.)

When workers theatres and other new theatres began in this country to put real issues on their scanty stages, the sheer fact that they dealt with real problems was enough for them, and for their audiences.

Since those beginnings they have learned that if they are to be effective and convincing, hold the audiences and attract new ones, they must have skill as well as truth in their productions, and that truth itself can be warped and falsified by awkward and halting presentation.

In answer to many requests for information and help, the New Theatre League has set up a Technical Department, which, in turn, will edit this section of NEW THEATRE. It will deal plainly, but as authoritatively as possible, with practical questions of stage writing and production and organization. It will offer material for the directors, actors, technicians, and playwrights of the new theatres.

In order to be of service it must be in touch with these theatres. If you come up against new problems, or problems that are new to your members, write us about your solution for them. Or if there are subjects which you would like to see discussed here, or particular difficulties with which you need assistance, we will take them up in these pages if they are of general interest.



Building a Mobile Stage

BY EDWARD EDMAN

A one-act play in seven scenes and two processions! The Theatre Collective of New York set out to do Walt Anderson's *Hunger Strike* as a mobile theatre production. It is a play for the stage, but it is written with a scenario technique, one sequence tumbling upon another excitedly. Action and movement are what give this script its dramatic power.

Hunger Strike requires six different locations in its single act: a miner's home (interior), a forest near the town of Pecs, a mine elevator shaft, interior of the mine, a gateway leading to the colliery, a miner's home (exterior). The interior of the mine is used twice. Seven scenes in all, with rapid changes from one to the next.

Certainly if the play permits it is advisable for mobile theatre to do without scenery of any kind; light, furniture, hand properties, and the play is set. But obviously where so many different locations must be envisaged, stage setting can help to create them. A mobile theatre plays anywhere: small meeting halls, auditoriums, ex-movie palaces. In one, two windows at the back of the building might look in on the actor, in another a silver screen might be mocking him. The first requisite then, is a simple background. A screen suggested itself: not merely a screen as a mask, but a screen that would at the same time be a

The screen (A) had to be at least 8′ high, because the audience looking up at the actors on the higher level of a stage sees the screen much smaller in relation to the height of the actor in front of it. The central panel of the screen was built 4′ wide, and two 2′ panels were attached on each side. All attachments were made with screen hinges, those that swing both ways. This type of screen makes possible a variety of arrangements, and its twelve feet fold into a flat 4′ x 8′ surface.

Both sides of the screen are used: the muslin covering on one side dyed green, with the forest scene in mind; the other side was sprayed with black dye on the white muslin until an even grey resulted. Why dye instead of paint? Because the screen has to be handled often, and dyed muslin does not crack as does a painted flat.

In setting scene 1, the interior of the house, the grey stippled side of the screen is turned toward the audience. Here it serves as a wall, and also makes an entrance to the home. The other suggestions of walls in this case are made by the two pylons (rectangular boxes B and C) about 7′ high by 2′ wide and 10″ deep. Between them is set a narrow flat (D) containing a window. To complete the interior two benches (E and F), a table (G) and a lamp, were added. The tops and bottoms of the pylons are pin-hinged, so that they are collapsible. When the tops and bottoms are removed, the sides fold together. Two legs and the cross braces of the table used are attached with pin-hinges. The hinge as most people know it is a commonplace device, but take out the central pin that holds it so securely and substitute a nail that fits loosely, and it serves to make quick conversions of scenery possible.

The second scene, the forest, utilizes both pylons, turned sideways to the audience. These sides are painted so as to give the illusion of the cylinders of tree-trunks. A tree limb (L) was inserted into the pylon nearer center stage. The screen, its green side toward the audience, is arranged so as to show as many of its black, vertical, edges, as possible. To suggest forest depth the general line of the screen runs from downstage right sharply towards upstage left. A rock, on which stands a miner's lamp, is downstage left to balance the composition. The rock is a sandbag which leans against and masks the light-box (J). The lighting in this scene was carefully arranged so as not to hit (and thereby emphasize) the horizontal top edge of the screen. The attempt was made rather to create a feeling of depth and verticalness by keeping the light low and in the foreground. It was allowed to strike the limb of the tree so that this cast its characteristic shadows on set and actors.

Scene 3, is lit only by the miners' lamps as they wait for the elevator to come up the mine shaft. The shaft is represented by two low gates (not illustrated) which are pin-hinged to the two pylons. Some one shouts, "Cage!" the miners open the two gates, step grimly into the elevator. The gates are closed—the actors bend at the knees, their lamps go down with them as one. Blackout. The illusion of descent in the elevator shaft is perfect.

Scene 4, the interior of the mine, presented many difficulties. It was solved by laying three sections of the screen (grey side) across two hinged battens (K). The fourth section of the screen comes up at right angles to the first three. It hangs from section five (the uppermost) which is supported horizontally by the 6′ bench (F) which stands endwise in front of the right batten. Battens and bench gave the impression of miner timber used for holding up the mine roof. Lighting again was by the miners' lamps, reenforced by hidden spotlights which threw the shadows of the men up against the low grey roof of the mine.

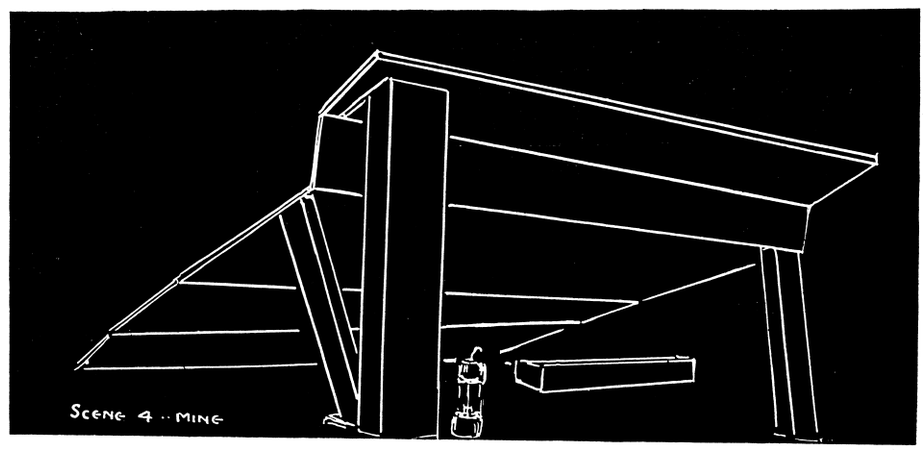
Scene 5, the gateway to the Santa Elizabetha Colliery is simply the large gate (K) hung between the pylons.

Scene 6 returns to the mine—which had remained set in the dark behind the previous

The final scene shows a corner of the exterior of a miner's hut. Four sections of the grey side of the screen form one side of house, and the other wall is made up of the remaining section, next to which we placed the two pylons, with a step (M) between them. The bench is placed behind this to suggest a second step. A window made of corrugated cardboard is hung on the doorless wall. The other bench placed in front of the house, near the door, completes the set.

Between scenes there is a blackout, during which the set must be changed. If the changes took too long, the continuity of the play would be lost. The director, Maurice Clark, was able to work them down to ten seconds each by assigning one simple specific job to each of the numerous actors, at the end of each scene. Also he linked the scenes together ably by sound devices: songs, the rhythmic mass chanting of slogans, a bell sounding the hour.

In designing this set my aim was to make it as versatile, as adaptable as possible so that each of its parts, and perhaps all of them, could be used in other plays for the mobile theatre. It is light in weight, and small in bulk: all the pieces of the set fold into 8′ by 4′ by 7 1/2″, and the properties are few. It is, besides, flexible enough to fit a small or a fairly large stage, or platform or floor.



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PROGRAMS

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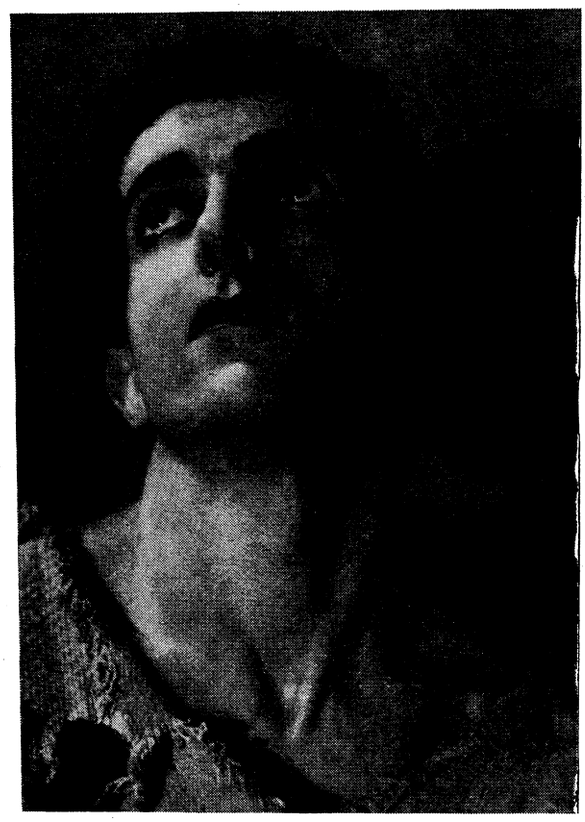

LEONIDE MASSINE

Maitre de ballet, principal dancer and choreographer of "Three-Cornered Hat," "Choreartium" (Brahms' Fourth), "Union Pacific," "Good Humoured Ladies," "Midnight Sun" (from "Snow-Maiden"), and many other ballets of international fame.

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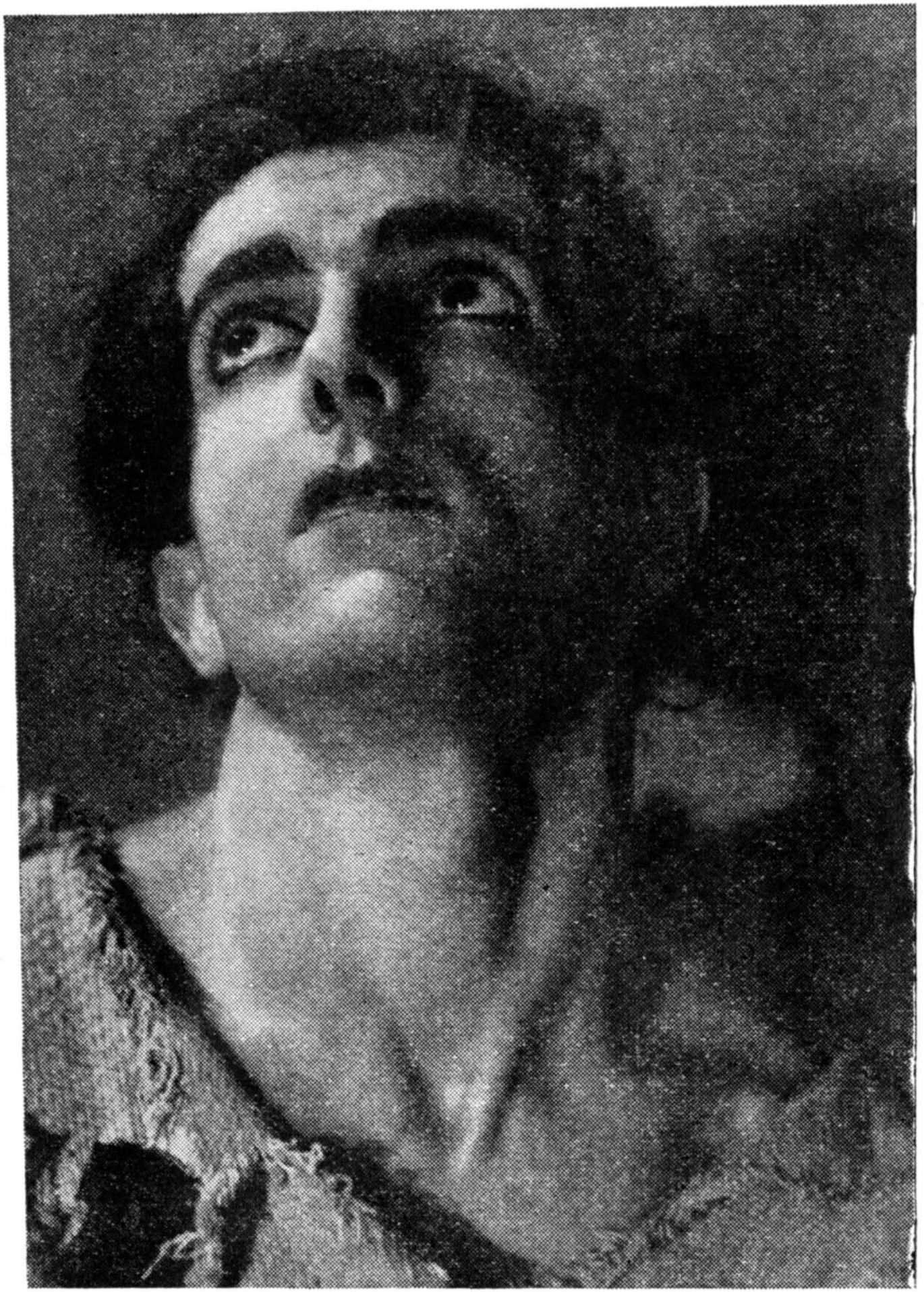

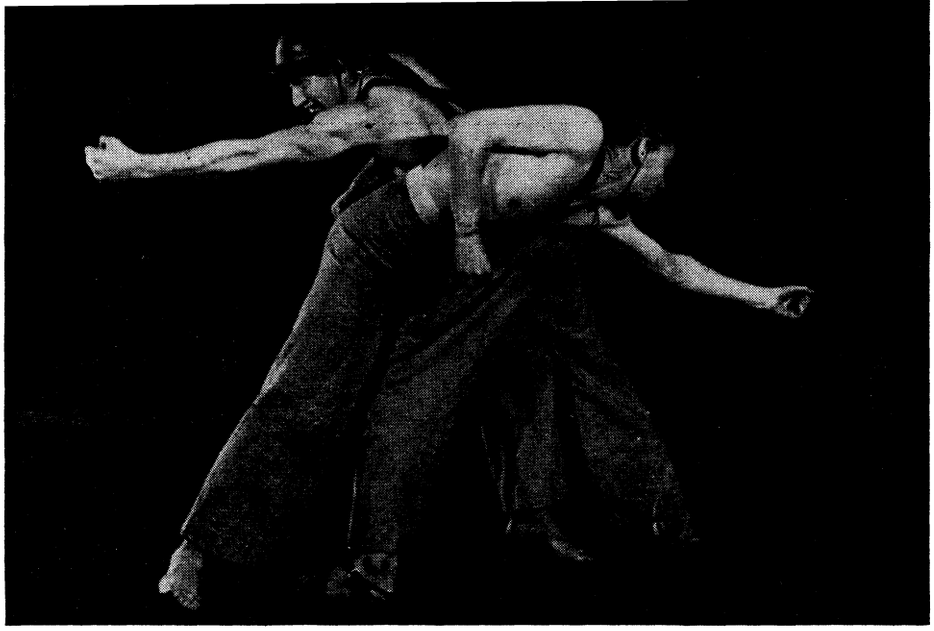

The Experimental Group in *Dance of Death*, directed by Bill Matons.

Shifting Scenes

The New Theatres Meet

In the past year the new theatres have gone through many important stages in their development. The establishment of the minimum program and the united front policy of the New Theatre League and the trend among the leading groups of the League to take major steps along the road to professionalization are outstanding developments. The appearance of such successful new plays as *Waiting For Lefty, Black Pit, Recruits, The Young Go First, Awake and Sing*, and the nation-wide fight led by the National Committee Against Censorship of the Theatre Arts against censorship of the social drama has drawn the attention of tens of thousands to the work of the new theatres. New problems have arisen to meet the demands of the new audiences —urgent creative, organizational, and technical problems—which can only be worked out at a conference such as the New Theatre League has planned in the East for October 25-27 and in the Middle-West for October 11.

The Eastern Conference will open with the reading and discussion of two papers: "Prospects for the New Theatre" and "The Social Drama" in the theatre capital of America on October 25. Saturday, October 26th will be devoted to a discussion of reports from new theatres throughout the East and will feature a New Theatre League night at which the leading groups in the East will present their new plays. Sunday, October 27th will be devoted to special studies in Directing, Training the Actor, Repertory, and Stage Technique. Commissions meeting simultaneously with the general body will examine all the major problems of the new theatres today including professional theatre work. Leading dramatists and actors and directors will address the Conference. Every theatre interested in sending delegates to the Eastern Conference is urged to write to the New Theatre League at once. Inquiries about the Mid-Western Conference should be addressed to the New Theatre League, 20 West Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

On The Road: Alice Evans, National Repertory Department, in Chicago to work with the Midwest Section for a month; Bob Riley, head of the Midwest office planning a tour West as soon as the Midwest Regional Conference is over; Anne Howe, field secretary, reporting in rapid succession from Des Moines, St. Louis, Peoria, Davenport, and Springfield, Illinois, where she has been visiting and assisting member theatres. Her report from one of the cities: A new theatre established in the Negro Community Center, one projected for the Jewish Community Center, six delegates to be sent to the Midwest Conference, 15 new members for the NTL. Inventory of the 15: 2 radio stars, 2 economic professors, 1 night club director, 1 newspaper editor, 2 illustrators of "Class" magazines (not NEW THEATRE), several little theatre members. . . United Front theatre established in New Orleans with the official support of Socialist and Communist Parties, important trade unions, and other labor groups, largely through the efforts of Al Gilman, NTL field secretary who is back from Mexico and the South. . . New York Theatre Collective finally hitting its stride with several short productions ready to take around the city. Theatre of Action concentrating on mobile work for the time being, and taking bookings for a new repertory. . . Theatre Union audiences, and those who remember the Civic Repertory in Le Gallienne's time will mourn the death of Walter Wilson, Negro ticket-taker of the theatre. Friends are taking a collection for his family who are destitute. . . Neue Theatre Gruppe busy in Yorkville on *The Mousetrap*, a synthesis of agitprop and revue techniques. The author is Gustav Wagenheim, German playwright and director. . .

The Season Opens

The New Dance Group, which was well represented at the Bennington Dance courses last summer are back at work on a new repertory. Their second performing troupe which worked together through the summer already has new numbers in line . . . The Dance Guild of young professionals who ran an interesting series of symposiums on the dance last spring will continue as a unit this winter . . . Mary Tarcai of the Dance Players is returning from the USSR . . . The New Theatre League School (catalogue ready October 6th) will be enriched by the addition of classes in the dance, sponsored by the New Dance League. They will include, Dance Composition, Anatomy, Analysis of Movement, and the History of the Dance. Other courses useful to dancers: Voice Training, Group Leadership, Costume, Make-up . . . Dance Technique will also be taught by the N. Y. Dance Unit, which won favorable comment last spring with their performance of *Strange Funeral in Braddock* . . . Nine Marionettes and four actors are the cast of *Battle of the Bugs* with which New Theatre of Plainfield, N. J., won the Plainfield Drama Tournament and the Paramount Publix Trophy. Next production on their schedule: *I'll Stay Back Home*, by Cecil Lindley, a member of the theatre . . . Boston New Theatre Players are the first NTL group to undertake the ambitious but important production of *Stevedore*. It opened September 17th for a two weeks run. They plan two more full-length plays in the home of the Red Squad (and the bean and the cod)—probably *The Young Go First* . . . The Group Theatre is to present six symposiums on the modern theatre, beginning October 19th. The series is approved by the N. Y. C. Board of Education as an Alertness Course for credit towards salary advancement for teachers. Open to the public too. $15. fee includes tickets to *Winterset*, by Maxwell Anderson, *The Taming of the Shrew* with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne, the Theatre Union's *Mother* and three other plays to be chosen from the season's best. Among speakers who have definitely agreed to appear: Leslie Howard, Alexander Kirkland, actors; Paul Green, John Howard Lawson, Clifford Odets, playwrights; Herman Shumlin, Theresa Helburn director-producers, John Mason Brown, critic; Donald Oenslager, designer; Harold Clurman and Lee Strasberg, directors of the Group . . . Teachers at the Yale Graduate School Summer Session in workers' education were an enthusiastic audience at a special performance if *Lefty* by New Haven's Unity Players—the ones who won last year's Drama Tournament and then had to fight the police authorities to repeat the show. Their next appearance will be before a women's group in the local Jewish Temple . . .

A Soviet Play on Broadway

Squaring the Circle, presented by Tri-Art too late for review in this issue, is the first commercial production of a Soviet play since the Guild's version of *Red Dust*, and the first Soviet comedy to reach Broadway. (It was done in Brooklyn last winter by a new theatre group.) Based on an article which appeared in Pravda, Moscow newspaper, in 1926 on the problem of love, Katayev, the author, describes it as a piece of self-criticism "against petty bourgeois ideas—what in America is called 'Babbitt' and 'Main Street'" . . . Katayev points out that Communists "feel and love just as everybody else does, but they are giving their feelings new forms." He wants to teach through laughter, satirizing the marital problems of Soviet Youth at the end of the New Economic Policy." . . . The Philadelphia Nature Friends Dramatic Group, performing scenes from *Florisdorf* at their camp, built an outdoor theatre in three days, gave the best performance in their history . . . The New Theatre Studios there announce classes in acting, playwrighting, and make-up, and a new play on Negro discrimination by Will Hughes of the theatre . . . The A. F. of L. Local of the Everyready Battery Co., have engaged a performance of *Union Label* by the Cleveland People's Theatre. Union Buyers' Club filled four performances of the play, and similar groups in Akron and Kent, as well as unions in Cleveland have made tentative bookings of the production . . . Labor Players, Minneapolis, have played to an average of 2,500 people monthly since they started last January. They are part of the Workers Education Division of the Emergency Education Project. Detroit New Dance Group plans a school . . . The Dance Collective, Chicago, is the first NDL group to issue its own bulletin . . . Los Angeles section of the NDL plans six symposiums involving every dancer of note in the city . . .

Toronto, Canada, Theatre of Action is completing a training course and going to work on productions: *America, America*, and six other social plays. Toronto's Dance Center is presenting *Hunger*, an original and has signified its solidarity with similar groups in this country by joining the NDL . . . England saw *Lefty* in the Manchester Theatre of Action's performance—enthusiastically received. This British theatre, in the midst of the war threat, is driving to reach trade unions and co-operative guilds . . . Moscow Dance Exhibit includes photos, drawings and articles on the modern dance . . . Plans for an International Dance Festival in 1936 are under way, with leading foreign dancers and their groups being invited . . . The NDL expects to send representatives, as well as its current exhibit of dance photos . . . Two conventional plays and two social plays will be presented side by side in a program at the N. Y. Manhattan Opera House, October 19th, the Theatre of Action and the New Theatre Players breaking all precedent by presenting the former type. Negro

The Experimental Group in *Dance of Death*, directed by Bill Matons.

Peoples Theatre, and the Theatre Collective will do the social plays . Police opened their season by attacking demonstrators against war in Chicago . . . Among the manhandled and arrested were many members of local New Theatres, who enlivened their time in jail by singing songs from their last edition of the *Capitalist Follies*. "We were surprised to hear our fellow-prisoners (fellow-demonstrators against against war) join in an even lead the songs. Here was proof that we had been reaching the audiences we wanted! Most of us were released, but a few are still out on bail, awaiting trial. The Chief of Police, Chicago, will be happy to receive your protests!"

Blake Writes Our History

The Awakening of the American Theatre by Ben Blake (64 pages, illustrated, Tomorrow Publishers) is the first complete story of the development of the social drama in America. It goes further, and in a thorough and well-proportioned treatment shows the relationship between the new theatres and their forerunners, the early little and professional theates. Blake, who is a member of the New Theatre National Executive Board and an Associate Editor of NEW THEATRE, has left for the USSR where he will work with the International Union of the Revolutionary Theatre, and secure articles on the theatre, film and dance for NEW THEATRE.

Plays For Children

Twelve Plays for Boys and Girls. Edited by Ben Blake. Illustrated by William Siegel. Published by Federation of Children's Organizations and Junior Section International Workers Order, Box 28, Station D, New York City. Price 25c.

Twelve Plays for Boys and Girls, the first anthology of plays for workers' children is a valuable contribution to the children's movement in the United States. Issued because of the growing demand for "a play about school," "a play about May Day," the book offers dramatic groups a fine method for approaching the 15,000 organized children and the thousands more waiting to be organized.

The material of the book has come from old and popular plays, such as the familiar *Oscar Sapp*, from adaptations of stories in the New Pioneer and in other children's literature and from plays written especially for the volume. The diversity of sources has resulted in a variety of form and subject matter, with plays ranging from the legendary and historical to fantasies and realistic sketches about present day problems, from compact one-acters to mass recitations and tableaux. Casts call from four to sixteen children and many of the plays are suitable for adult as well aschilden's groups.

The majority of the plays are actable, easy to costume and stage. The first play in the book, *A Prisoner of the King*, adapted by Ben Blake from a Robin Hood tale, is colorful, full of drama and excitement; *We Stick Together*, a story of a strike in a school lunchroom, and *The Gang Learns About May Day* are also lively, propped up by action an dstage business as well as dialogue. Some of the others, however, notably *Bread*, a brief scene built around Marie Antoinette's famous speech and *The Rose Bush*, adapted from a fairly tale, are lacking in plot and dramatic situation, more suitable for reading than for production. The faults of the book arise chiefly from the limitations imposed by its nature. All of the plays are short and there s little chance for character development and is little chance for character development and Too, there is a predominating pote of seriousness throughout the book and, although children like tragedy and drama, they like humor too.

On the whole, however, the plays are vivid and topical, with a minimum of didactics and sloganizing. Ben Blake's *Introducton* and *Some Pointers on Staging* should prove helpful to inexperienced directors, while the plays will appeal to children of all age groups.

MARTHA CAMPION

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- ☐ Does your blood pressure go skyrocketing at the ravings of one Hugh S. Johnson, as he goes blatantly about his business of lowering the living standards and trying to break the spirit of American workers?
- ☐ Does it give you a tremendous pain to see the overworked "Red scare" dragged out on each fresh occasion when workers attempt to better their conditions?
- ☐ Does the fanfare of war ring sickeningly in your ears, and make you ache to do your part to prevent it?
- ☐ Are you fed up on a system which sets $14 a week as a family standard of living, and says those who don't like it can starve or go to jail?
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Take My Stand Morris E. Levy

A New Labor Theatre

The Brooklyn Labor Theatre, a new organization in the widening field of social theatres, opened its season on September 9th with two short plays. The opening number, *Until We Turn* by Louis Vittes, devotes itself earnestly to the tribulations of a group of people who are affected by a strike and by the conditions of our social system. Behind a cloud of hortatory passages which substituted platitudes for dramatic action one could detect a glimmer of talent in the dramatist's picture of a worker's home and study of a young striker who is torn between self-respect and hysterical fear. He has seen pickets brutally beaten by strike-breaking troopers and he will have none of it, preferring cowardice and flight to mutilation and possible death. Unfortunately, the play dissipates its effect. It is too superficial to make psychological drama, while it is too passive and diffuse to stand up as effective agit-prop. The total impression is, therefore, disconcertingly inconclusive and innocuous.

E. England's *Take My Stand,* which is in most respects the reverse of the *Until We Turn* picture, is a more impressive contribution to the new season. A young worker in a Southern village, who has mastered book-keeping and married his employer's daughter, is torn between his attachment to his wife and position and his allegiance to his class. The development of a strike situation demonstrates the impossibility of remaining neutral, and the harassed young worker gives up his wife and his job when required to betray the people he grew up with.

Take My Stand achieves dramatic power by dint of forceful description. Not only are its workers and employer brought to life, but they confront each other in a memorable episode which gains momentum from the acting of the principals. In the main, *Take My Stand* is a sound and satisfactorily performed first effort for the Brooklyn Labor Theatre. J.W.G.

Hollywood's "Riff Raff"

(*Continued from page* 7)

Fury and *Stranded* seem subtle by comparison. It seeks to stifle the militant labor union, holding up as an ideal the pure, fascist union, which deprives workers even of the right to strike. It makes trade unionism synonymous with impotency. Thus, *Riff-Raff,* the first step in the current drive against militant labor, is also the first step toward the cinematic expression of a fascist ideology.

But who is to clean out these militant workers—this riff-raff? Hollywood knows the answer, knows that there are paid police, thugs, red squads, national guardsmen who will follow its bidding. But it hopes that it will be spared the expense of hiring its bodyguards and *The Frisco Kid* expresses its hope that new American vigilantes will arise as they did back in 1850 on the Barbary Coast. And Hollywood hopes to draw these vigilantes from the highest sections of the American middle-class, for in *The Frisco Kid* these vigilantes are depicted as gentlemen boy scouts, out for sport and the performance of their good deed in ridding the waterfront of their beloved city of the polluting scum in the workers' quarters.

Both of these pictures are being rushed to completion, and will be released in time to cash in on the impending strike crisis here. All labor unions, liberals, anti-fascists and radicals should wire or post-card vigorous protests to the producers against the release of these films.

Music for the Dance

(*Continued from page* 11)

tirely of percussion instruments.

The second type of music that would bring rich rewards to the dancer is that of the solo song. A number of recent experiments have shown the possibility of adapting a quasi-pantomimic dance form to revolutionary songs, which have the advantage of being able to communicate a direct ideological content to the spectator. Many songs, Soviet, German and American, including a number of indigenous Negro songs of protest, already exist and could form the basis of very interesting dance compositions.

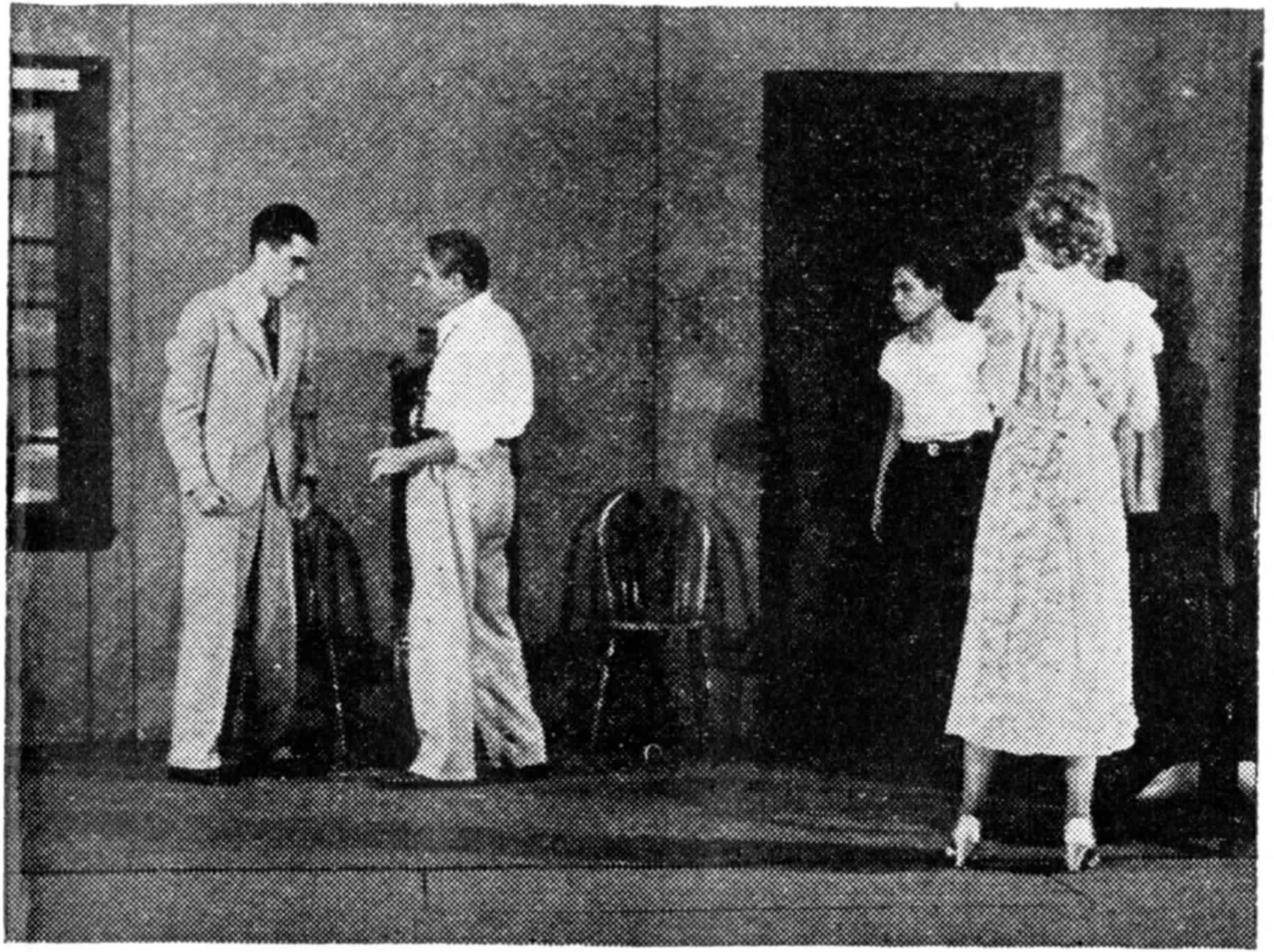
Finally, and most ambitious of all, is the form of dance with choral accompaniment. Existing left choral and dance groups working together could produce, in this writer's opinion, spectacles of immense artistic and social significance, far outstripping anything that has yet been done in the dance or music movements. An abundance of excellent revolutionary choral music by Eisler, Davidenko, Shostakovich, Schaefer, Sands, Adomian and Maynard, to name only a few of the revolutionary composers, exists, and would furnish excellent material for this form of work. Full length performances, combining pantomime, theatre, choral and instrumental music, as well as pure dance, might eventually grow out of such a beginning. In Germany they were well on the way to this sort of thing when the revolutionary cultural movement was cut short by Hitler. Hans Eisler's *Die Massnahme* is a full length oratorio embracing practically all the above mentioned elements. It is in this field, namely, the closest collaboration of all the forces in the music and dance movements for joint performances, that the finest work of the next few seasons, in the writer's opinion, will develop. The forces are at hand to begin right now.

New Musical Revues for Old

(*Continued from page* 13)

device which uses the music against the action. The settings, instead of being very elaborate (so that final production depends on the number of "acts" possible of performance in front of the curtain while shifts are in progress), should be skeletal. Possibly an almost bare construction or an impression would be sufficient, if heightened by exciting lighting. Any number of possibilities exist, depending upon the ingenuity of a clever scene designer working on a low budget. Aesthetically, there is another reason for dispensing with elaborate sets in a class-conscious musical: the speed of the form requires constant attention to achieve its maximum effect. By the time the audience has inspected the setting, the sketch or song is well on its way. Broadway producers may not mind this, but for the revolutionary stage it is disastrous.

I envision a new revue in America, a swift and vital form rising above flippancies, the music being more than the banalties of Tin Pan Alley, the lyrics achieving the worth of a Gilbert or a Brecht, the sketches using the blackout technic not for bathroom humor, but for terse dramatic punches. It is for the poets and playwrights to provide the foundations in the form of necessary librettos and ideas. Robert Forsythe has said, "Down with the novel!" I do not say, "Down with Poetry or Drama!" But here is a new form, untouched as yet. Its possibilities are limitless, as the German pre-Nazi theatre so aptly proved. It is one of the most important types of native culture yet to be developed and it should be restored to the working class, from whose vaudeville and minstrel show entertainments it came.



Take My Stand Morris E. Levy

Backstage

G. W. PABST, the well-known German film director, is now in New York City preparing the film version of *Faust*, which is to be produced in color in Hollywood, ALBERT BEIN's *Let Freedom Ring* will open early in November. BEN GOLDEN is the field organizer of the New Theatre League in New Jersey. GEORGE ANTHEIL's operas *Transatlantic* and *Helen Retires* have contributed to his international reputation. He will compose the music for PABST's *Faust*. ELIE SIEGMEISTER has composed for the dance, written mass songs, and set Michael Gold's *Strange Funeral in Braddock* to music. JEROME MOROSS's recent contributions to the theatre include the *Parade* music and the choruses of *Stevedore*. TAMARA DAYKARHANOVA, once a member of the Moscow Art Theatre, is a recognized authority on make-up. Her article in this issue is to be included in the volume *Our Theatre Today*, to be published shortly by Samuel French. EDWARD EDMAN is the New York Theatre Collective's technician. DEL is the creator of *Little Lefty*, the Daily Workers' comic strip kid. Our cover is a still from Charlie Chaplin's new film, *Modern Times*, which will be released shortly. The article on Mary Wigman, announced for this issue, has been postponed until November.

Censorship Strikes Again!

As we go to press, word comes that the Goodman Theatre in Chicago has withdrawn from an agreement with the New Theatre League, which had scheduled performances at the theatre during the week of the Midwest Conference. Obviously, some reactionary influence forced the management to break the contract with the League.

In Boston, ERA officials threatened eight Negro relief workers, principals in the New Theatre Players' production of *Stevedore*, with the loss of their jobs unless they left *Stevedore* to appear in a hastily arranged ERA show. We call upon our readers to protest these two latest censorship moves.

"Sweet Land of Liberty"

To NEW THEATRE:

The ways of a playwright in quest of material are parlous indeed these days. For two months I was in the drought area of Kansas interviewing farmers and others about conditions. While returning to New York I stopped in Kansas City for a day. Unfortunately, however, I walked the streets for a few minutes alone that night, was seized by two detectives, shoved into their car, accused of being a "dangerous Communist," blackjacked when I denied it, and told I should be deported to Russia "where I came from." (Me, an American citizen, born in Nebraska, living there 10 years, in Washington state the next fourteen years, a graduate of the State College of Washington with one year's graduate work at Harvard, a "dangerous Communist!") At the station my notes, the result of two month's effort, were seized and I was beaten with a hose for some reason or other, no one seemed to know why, not even the detective. I was held for investigation and, legally, 48 hours is the limit. However, playwrights are apparently choice meat and I was held for nearly five days and refused the chance to communicate with the outside world. When released, my notes were not returned and I was given "just two hours" to get out of the city. I wonder: "Is this America we are living in or Germany?" It does not do, it seems, for American citizens, including playwrights, to walk the streets of American cities.

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A sizzling article that demands an answer from Hollywood's leading producers.

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the administrator of the Federal Theatre Project under the WPA.

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