

MAR 4 '12 A

# WORKERS THEATRE

**AUGUST  
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# "WORKERS THEATRE"

Application for entry as second class matter is pending.



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## International Theatrical Olympiade

One of the strongest sectors on the international cultural front of the class struggle, the workers theatres, will have their first review in the year of the 15th anniversary of the October Revolution. This significant event will take place in Moscow, the capital of the country where the workers won their first decisive victory in the class struggle, where the workers opened the way to a new, rapidly progressing proletarian culture, where, under the most favorable conditions, the new theatre, the theatre of the workers, could develop all its artistic, technical and political possibilities.

Agit-prop groups, revolutionary theatre, left wing theatres, theatres of all types and all languages, will appear and perform at the International Theatrical Olympiade in Moscow, on October 15, 1932, arranged by the International Workers Theatrical Association. Delegates from

Japan, and from Germany, from England and from Checho-Slovakia, from France and from Poland, and from many other countries will report on the activities of their sections, on their particular experiences, achievements and problems. Plans for the future work will be discussed and laid out.

According to the call published by the International Theatre Olympiade Committee, the aims and efforts of the Olympiade are the following:

"The International Theatrical Olympiade will make it possible to ascertain the creative forces of the revolutionary theatrical front in all countries, and will help to generalize the experience of the struggle waged by the workers theatre to draw in the toilers and mass revolutionary proletarian organizations. Moreover, the Olympiade will help to define the general line of development of the revolutionary and workers' theatre movement in

order to raise the workers' theatre to a higher political level and help train cadres for the revolutionary theatre front on a Marxist-Leninist basis.

"At the same time, the Olympiade will help to win over individual groups of art workers belonging to the left theatre movement (stage managers, actors, artists, musicians, etc.) among whom during the past few years, under the blows of the deepening economic crisis in the capitalist countries, a considerable process of revolutionization has been taking place. It is to help produce a more pliable and complete reflection in the work of the workers and left theatre of the urgent questions brought up by the day-to-day class struggle in the country, and likewise help to strengthen the activities in popularizing the building up of the classless Socialist society in the U. S. S. R., the growth and cultural standards of the toilers of the Soviet Union.

"The International Olympiade is to serve as the example of how to utilize the means of the theatre and art to demonstrate the differences of the two world systems—Capitalism and Socialism."

The International Theatrical Olympiade concerns every worker, every workers' organization and every person who, dissatisfied with the present decaying and failing system of capitalist terror and exploitation, recognizes the necessity for militant struggle towards a new classless society. The preparation for this event must, therefore, be carried through on the broadest basis, though the main and leading part of the work has to be taken over by the Workers Theatres. Especially we in the United States, where the workers theatre movement during the last two years grew rapidly in numerical power, in political influence and in artistic clarity, should realize the importance of the International Theatrical Olympiade and contribute our share in order to make it a success. The main phase of the preparatory work is to popularize the Olympiade and to raise a fund which will be used to finance a delegation from our country as well as to contribute to the general fund. The Workers Theatre groups because of their activities for the election campaign and for the various mass organizations will be engaged in more work than ever and will not alone be able to raise the necessary funds. It is therefore the duty of all mass organizations, clubs, sympathetic groups to help raise money by arranging special affairs, by making collections, by circulating lists, etc. We call also on the cooperation of the numerous friends of the workers theatre who have now an opportunity to show their sympathy with our movement by donations and other active support.

The League of Workers Theatres is organizing a special Olympiade Committee in which, besides the workers theatres, all sympathetic groups and mass organizations will be represented. All contributions and communications are to be addressed to International Theatre Olympiade Committee, c/o L. O. W. T., 108 E. 14th St., N. Y. C.

**FRIENDS! FELLOW WORKERS! COMRADES!**

Help to strengthen the International Workers Theatre movement.

Help to strengthen the International cultural front of the workers in the class struggle.

**ACT IMMEDIATELY!!!**

**LEAGUE OF WORKERS' THEATRES OF U. S. A.  
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.**

# LOOK! LOOK! LOOK

## A Canary Bird, Don't Shoot,

a speckled wren, don't shoot,—A King Fisher, don't shoot —but Ladies and Gentlemen—We have the only bird that shoots,— Step right inside—Ladies and gentlemen, for the most amazing side show of your life—A side show that backs Barnum and Baily up the alley—and makes Ringling Bros. look like a democratic jackass braying for beer. Look. Look, Look—The Human Hen,—The only Hen of its kind in existence. And It's a political Hen. Cluck, cluck, cluck,— step inside and cast your optics on this marvel of marvels —And that's not all—that's not all—Zip! **WHAT IS IT?** The mysterious zip, what is it—the unknown quantity,—x —He walks on the ceiling, swims on the floor and rides in between.—Gin the Magician—The man who knows nothing, sees nothing, hears nothing.—Answers all questions. The Tin Box Mystery—Oh My Deah—a-a-ah-h-h—The Bearded Lady. She came over in the Mayflower—Look, Look, Look, what have we here,—Shake away the depression with Normie, Normie, the Original shaker—The Hula, Hula Dancer,—Come on, Normie, show the boys those curves —Yeah, Folks, I'm tellin' you. It's a side show extraordinary—It's a political side-show. Come in and see the friends of the boss—Jimmy Walker, Morris Hilquit, Herbie Hoover, The Engineer—Ham Fish,—We finally got them where they belong,—In a side show—. Yes sir. You've never seen anything like it. I tell you Ringling Bros. never thought of it—Barnum never thought of it—But **WE** thought of it and the proof lies in the puttin—Puttin ten cents in the box office and walking in—Yes, sir—It's the chance of a lifetime. An education right with your side show. Look! Look! Look!

## THE POLITICAL SIDE-SHOW—A NEW DEPARTURE

When, on Solidarity Day in Starlight Park, the Workers' Lab. Theatre produced a political side-show they added another page to their history, another successful experiment to their laboratory work.

For the political side-show means a definite departure in the Workers' Theatre, a new form in our theatre of small forms (mass recitations, songs, etc.). They took a native theatre form, a form of entertainment prevalent at our varicous Coney Islands and Fairs, and converted it to a political use—and the results were highly successful.

Besides proving what can be done with the cooperation of a few earnest comrades (who conceived and produced the whole show in one week), the production shows not only a definite grasp of the aims of our theatre (to be expected) but also a familiarity with the technique of the bourgeois side-show. Long before you came near the entrance you could see the barker in his gilt derby, white trousers, cane, gloves and goatee, pacing back and forth on the platform, announcing thru a megaphone, "Come on, ladies and gentlemen, the greatest show on earth and only ten cents." And the chorus of assistant barkers in unison assured the passers-by that they "cannot afford to miss this show of greatest freaks" for "only ten cents."



And the passers-by had to stop. For right before him were the blazing Coney Island posters announcing that inside could be seen Normie, the hula-hula dancer; the Bearded Lady; Ham—the man-eating fish; Zip—what is it; the sword-swallower; the fattest man on earth and how he got that way; the thinnest man on earth; the Siamese twins, the bird that shoots, and more and more. The passers-by recognized it as the real thing. (Several comrades, before inspection within, questioned the advisability of permitting a show of the kind at a Solidarity Day affair). At times the freaks would come out and display themselves, and then the rush inside would begin.

Gandhi; etc., etc., each singing an appropriate ditty, each exchanging political wisecracks with the red-nosed barker, each surrounded by placards explaining the freak.

■ To review this side-show one must disgress for a moment and question the role of political satire in general and how it may be utilized in the side-show, especially as applied to our theatre, which must not only entertain but educate politically at the same time.

Historically, political satire appears in the Theatre at the moment when the governing class, decaying thru its own corruption, begins to weaken. While the oppressed classes, realizing their own growing strength, aim to hasten that decay by attacks thru the medium of the theatre. Political satire aims to expose that corruption by citing definite political scandals; it aims to ridicule the various silly remedies suggested by the government for propping the falling structure; in dramatic form it tries to ridicule the enemy leaders. Initiated usually by "idealistic" writers in the ranks of the governing class themselves (and therefore thoroly conversant with the inner workings and corruption of the class) it starts out in a mild form (witness our current "Of Thee I Sing") not so much to attack the class as to urge it to reform. Soon this satire is taken over by the oppressed classes and becomes direct and bitter (and then suppression begins). In all cases political satire takes scandals, leaders, situations well known to the audience and satirizes them. Were the audience non-conversant with the subject of the satire it would fall flat.

■ To utilize political satire for the side-show form we must remember two things—first, that it has only a few minutes to do its work in—second, that it be made to appeal to the worker who does not necessarily read any literature outside of the Daily News or the Mirror. Hence the political side-show must not only aim to attack and expose the slogans, leaders, corruption of the ruling class; not only must it be entertaining; it must also be brief, direct and obvious; it must above all deal with subject matter the audience is likely to be acquainted with and done in a manner likely to appeal to such an audience. Finally it must go a step further—it must also imply our angle of the political situation, what our approach to it is, why we are satirizing this or that—in a word, utilize the side-show as another political weapon.

In line with the above, the side-show, while highly successful as a whole, missed on several cylinders. Thus Gandhi, the Bearded Lady, the Siamese Twins, etc., while definitely subjects for satire are not at the same time comprehensible to the average worker. Hoover, Walker, the Socialists, are. They are much nearer home, he's liable to follow them and they must be exposed. Again, showing characters merely in ludicrous form without exposing their political significance, as in the case of the Bearded Lady, Siamese Twins, etc., is not sufficient. Perhaps more songs and wisecracks, more repartee as in the case of Jimmy Walker and Zip—what is it (the Socialist) would clarify them. Also fewer signs (the audience could not read all of them) except a few large selected ones with pertinent slogans or information.

We said above, that the side-show is a new form in our Workers' Theatre. We hope that our various dramgroups,



Once inside, the visitor would see that "Zip—what is it", when questioned by the red-nosed barker, bowed for "yes, he's in favor of war", and bowed again for "yes, he's against war", "yes, he's for the working class", "yes, he's against the working class"; "yes, he's for the Soviet Union"; "yes, he's against the Soviet Union", and so on. When "Zip—what is it" happened to turn around and display the sign on his back—"THE SOCIALIST PARTY"—a roar went up. Gin—the Magician, turned out to be Jimmy Walker, wisecracking about the contents of tin boxes. The Bearded Lady turned out to be a caged fierce person with red whiskers,—the Daughters of the American Revolution; Normie—Norman Thomas in a hula-hula costume, made of strips of the New Leader and Forward; the Fattest Man—Hoover; the Man-eating Herring—Ham Fish; the Siamese twins—Capital and Labor; the Bird that shoots—the Dove of Peace of the League of Nations; the Thinnest Man—

NO DEPRESSION  
FOR ME

TRUMAN  
HOOVER  
650

NOW VOTE NOW!  
REPUBLICAN

GET FAT  
IN  
60  
DAYS

AS



large or small, will take a hold of this form and make it their own. We hope that once the technique of production will have been acquired, not a picnic, not a bazaar will take place without one or more of the barkers stopping the passers-by with "Come on in, Ringling Bros., ladies and

gentlemen, the greatest side-show on earth, you cannot miss it—the greatest freaks, the greatest monstrosities—for only ten cents."

We are sure that these side-shows will make good entertainment, and a good political weapon, at the same time.



# WE NEED ANTI-WAR PLAYS

By **GEORGE LEWIS**  
Red Players, N. Y.

The slow but sure drift of the capitalist nations to a new world slaughter is reflected in the bourgeois theatre of this country. The smoke screen set up by the League of Nations and Geneva "peace" talks to hide the fact that ammunition factories are speeding up all over the world and that "coalition" war governments are being set up by every big capitalist nation, is spread among the American population through such a moving picture as "The Cry of the World", in which Ramsay MacDonald and other murderous gentlemen are represented as apostles of peace.

Pretending to be against war, motion pictures like "All Quiet on the Western Front" lull the suspicions of their audiences by pretending that war is the result of something bad in human nature and not the result of the capitalist system itself. Audiences are thus given the illusion that by "conscientious objection" or by wearing buttons war can be stopped.

is no peace. The workers' theatre cannot support the illusion, fostered so carefully by the bourgeois "pacifist" theatre, that when war breaks out it can be stopped by "conscientious objection", by "enlightened opinion," by wearing buttons.

The workers' theatre, if its existence is worth anything to the working class, must at once develop plays that do two things. These plays must show the present actual existence of war. And they must clearly show the workers what must be done at this very moment to block the outbreak of open war and to prepare for turning imperialist war into civil war.

Such plays are not very difficult to write. The newspapers, even capitalist newspapers, are full of material. The "disarmament" conference, the Lausanne conference, can be represented, with their sly bargaining. A struggle against wage cuts can be widened into a struggle against war. Strong, heroic scenes can be written about dockers who refuse to transmit ammunition, about the Japanese soldiers who refused to fire on their Chinese brothers, about the heroic 19th Route Army in Shanghai that held off the Japanese military machine for several days despite the order of their generals.

Not Sunday school sermons that violence is bad, delivered by capitalist priests, by strange coincidence almost always to workers, but short dramas that etch in simple outlines how the workers shall prepare for the inevitable fight. This is the most pressing need of the workers' theatre. For this we need the best talent we can get, in acting and in writing. For this we call upon those intellectuals who are with the working class, but who have not yet thought it worth their while to write workers' theatre plays. We call now upon them for help in this critical hour. The material is the most splendid that a talented playwright can want. The issue is clear. The results, if we can write strong emotional plays that shall raise workers to the pitch required to carry through a really effective fight against imperialist war, will be tremendous.

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## EVERY CITY MUST HAVE A REPORTER FOR "WORKERS THEATRE". HAVE YOU ONE?

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A more aggressive step to prepare the bourgeois theatre for herding millions of Americans into the slaughter pen has been taken by the Actor's Equity Association which has initiated a movement to give free performances to the unemployed so as to "make a definite contribution to the social stability of the country". The actors, of course, are to serve without pay. Capitalists always know how to get something for nothing.

So far the stage hands' union has blocked this scheme, since they, at least, want money for their services. The scheme was actually called a "war measure" by Paul Dulzell, an Equity official, who pointed out that the theatre by this plan would be doing just what it did in the last world war.

The capitalist classes are playing for time so they can strengthen their war machinery. That is why pacifist movies and plays are being encouraged now so that war preparations are not interfered with. That is why all agencies of the capitalist class, the League of Nations, the Second (Socialist) International, the liberal parties, talk so loudly of peace.

But the workers' theatre cannot preach peace when there

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## DOES YOUR GROUP SEND IN MONTHLY REPORTS ON ACTIVITIES AND EXPERIENCES?

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# A PLAY WITH PROPAGANDA

## and three without

### REVIEWS

MERRY-GO-ROUND  
OF THEE I SING  
ANOTHER LANGUAGE  
COUNSELLOR-AT-LAW

The Lindberg maid commits suicide driven by the usual third degree methods of the police—a month later the pages of the newspapers are filled with the death of a second victim of the brutal capitalist tactics of our worthy police, Hymen Stark. A judge resigns and the chief politician puts his pinheaded nephew in his place—the Mayor of a certain city plays ping pong with a couple of boy friend racketeers and hide and seek with a trio of dames, 'with liquor,'—AND THE THEATRE WAKES UP—.

Two honest young playwrights, John Maltz and George Sklar, alive to what is happening around them and aching to put it all down on paper, burst forth with a powerful biting play of protest—MERRY-GO-ROUND. Not this year in our rotting bourgeois theatre has anything with the sincerity, vigor, clearheadedness of this dynamo of protest been seen. Our American drama is generally trite, stupid, hollow, dealing with problems whose narrowness does not allow to see beyond one's nose, occasionally, however, someone who is interested in facing facts holds the mirror up to life so that the reflection becomes the genuine reality and we have a play like "MERRY-GO-ROUND."

From the moment the Times Square news reports flash just below the proscenium arch telling of the rejection of the Soviet proposal for complete disarmament, down through a maze of scenes to the triumphant return of the grafting corrupt political party to office,—terse honesty rips the guts out of stiff front audiences. I remember, while watching the play (the house was practically empty) I was distracted by the woman next to me—a fat, be- She kept shifting in her seat, wiping the perspiration from jeweled, triple-chinned mama of the upper middle class. her three chins and growing more and more uncomfortable as the play progressed. Finally, in the midst of the third degree scene, she rose with a horrible OOoohHH-h-h, "I can't stand this." And off she waddled to her bridge and small prattle. And certainly it is plain that there is no room on Broadway for an honest play. Our middle class audiences are used to being entertained—and there is nothing especially entertaining about the cold-blooded butchery of civilized politicians—the grafting, corrupt, insane scheming of these products of capitalism—nothing entertaining about unemployment, starvation and suicide—but our theatre audiences are used to pleasant, witty, cute little plays that do not make them squirm and squelch—and so when something comes along without the charm of that illusion that the stage usually brings to realities, the house is empty and the producer has learnt to stay away from honest plays, the playwrights know better than to write honest plays and the capitalist class is very happy.

Class distinctions show themselves very openly. The theatre charges a price which makes it impossible for the workingman to attend the legitimate productions. Which is of course, just a polite way of saying, Mr. Worker, you do not belong in the theatre; the theatre is for the pleasure of those who can afford to pay. All of which proves the necessity of the Workers Theatre movement, which will make art accessible to all. In the Soviet Union this problem is no problem at all. Art has become the property of all. The theatre is the theatre of the masses and as a result the theatre flourishes. In capitalist countries workingman to attend the legitimate productions. Which a result the theatre flourishes.

An interesting phase of the play, dialectic in its approach is the use of the device on the Times news building—flashing news headlines. This device serves the double purpose of keeping the eye of the audience while the scenery is being changed in darkness, and also the more important purpose of presenting more views than one to the audience at the same time. Thus, in the third degree scene when the chief of police has been ordered to get a confession from someone, anyone, no matter who,—but get a confession by tonight,—OFFSTAGE—we hear the cries of the innocent bellboy being given the third degree by the dicks—ONSTAGE—The chief of police sits quietly with a few of his henchmen talking about food, the missus,—the guy across the street, etc.—ABOVESTAGE—the newspaper headlines flash the news to a waiting audience. Three views—And the news flashes forth— BELL BOY, STAR WITNESS, ACCUSED OF STRANSKY MURDER— ACCUSED RACKETEER IN EFFORT TO SAVE SELF— CONFESSION IMMINENT—again we hear the thud, thud of the black jacks as they beat the boy into writing a confession) followed by another flash of the newspaper headline.—POLICE ARE WORKING DAY AND NIGHT —CONFESSION EXPECTED ANY MINUTE— Nothing could drive home more vividly the extraordinary ease of the newspapers to dupe the public, the remarkable utilization of language to give an entirely different impression than what actually takes place.

Here is a play that with a few slight changes can be produced by the Revolutionary Workers Theatre. Here is a play that I feel certain would receive wide acclaim in the Soviet Union.

In the 'Theatre Arts Monthly' for July, the play "Merry Go Round," is listed as a propaganda play. The reviewers agree that Merry Go Round is a good play but without, of course, casting aspersions on the play there is a general feeling that it belongs with the rest of those propaganda plays. I am a bit muddled on this question of with and

without propaganda. It might be a good idea to ask some of these more learned critics such as the Theatre Arts Monthly just where one can draw the line between propaganda and art. 1. Why is Merry Go Round a propaganda play? Is it because it sticks to the facts? Is it because it is not especially pleasant to watch? Certainly it agrees with the definition of Art as far as conveying the emotions of the authors to the audience are concerned.

Is "Of Thee I Sing," art or propaganda? Of course I don't know much about these things but it seems to me that "Of Thee I Sing" is propaganda—and loud propaganda at that. It screams to the skies. It laughs pleasantly and loudly at politics. It makes a three ring circus of a presidential election and has a side show of freaks which make a sucker out of Barnum. It is the cry of a section of our American thought and a fairly large section. "Of Thee I Sing" is propaganda for indifference to politics. It makes politics so funny that few want to mix in with these clowns and caperers. It is an excellent argument for steering clear of all this farcical hullabaloo called politics even though these politicians run the country and cause unemployment, starvation, graft, corruption and terrific misery for the working class. Question No. 5. Is "Another Language" propaganda? I can hear all the critics from the Pacific to the Atlantic letting off loads of steam and working themselves up to an intense pitch of excitement at this question. If I may have leave to whisper—I wish to whisper very loudly that "Another Language" is nothing less than propaganda. The author assuredly carried out the characterizations with a deft brush which still makes "Another Language" nothing less than a propaganda play. Would you say that a play of protest like Merry Go Round is propaganda? Then certainly "Another Language" is a stinging protest. It is a protest of the ambitious, rising middle class young man who wants to be let free to do his own choosing without interference from the pa and the ma. The problem as presented in "Another Language" certainly does not belong to the working youth of this country.

The entire trend of American drama has generally developed this narrow individual outlook. The problem of the individual has always been considered without a look at the larger world around him. Plainly this is a reflection of the anarchy in thought and action which arises from capitalist influence and psychology. The results in turn are plain. The problem of the individual being thrust forward as the one and only problem assume such monstrous proportions that the individual arises without any sense of proportion to the whole. And this is the propaganda of "Another Language", the propaganda of the Johns. It is not bad propaganda from one angle, liberating John from the influence of the small headed, little minded Hallams, but from the other angle it is very bad propaganda fostering a spirit of individualism which later in a burst of architectural success becomes the psychology of the cut-throat capitalist, the Nietzschean dogma. Me first and you never. "Another Language" is propaganda against the Hallams and for the liberation of the Johns. It is a continuation of a long line of propaganda authors who have made the rights of the middle class individual the only rights there are in the world.

And is "Counsellor at Law" propaganda? Just as surely as are the other bourgeois art works. "Counsellor at Law"

is similar to "Street Scene"—in its presentation of pattern characters but is much weaker. In "Street Scene" the lives the plot but is much weaker. In "Street Scene" the lives of his characters were much closer to Mr. Rice than the passers by in "Counsellor at Law". In "Street Scene" Mr. Rice not only understood but enjoyed getting under the skin of his characters. It was a bit duller in "Counsellor at Law". It is the story of a young lawyer who rises from the gutter to success. Around this characterization Mr. Rice has woven a number of everyday types who pass in and out of the office. Although "Counsellor at Law" presents a picture of a leading character who, through contact with the society of capitalism has imbibed well the doctrine of devil take the hindmost—and who through this doctrine has become a vicious, brutal, domineering, get-what-he-wants type—nevertheless Mr. Rice presents him in a very sympathetic light—Mr. "Counsellor at Law" is a charity giver—the same sort of charity giver as Rosenwald, Rockefeller, Morgan, etc., who donate millions to the schools and churches, the millions which they have taken from the sweat of the people in "Street Scene." Among his office help he is a man to be admired and looked up to. This is the propaganda of sympathy and idealization of our successful men regardless of how they got that way—sympathy for these strong men—these hero's of capitalism who have risen from the ranks.

The one scene which stands out for its honesty is the bit where the Communist who after being beaten up and thrown into jail, faces the lawyer in his office. When this crook attempts to moralize to a boy who has just been beaten up for having an excellent set of morals, the young boy loses his patience and tells him just what sort of a parasite he really is. It is the one spot where the real character of the "Counsellor at Law" comes to the front. The Communist is especially well played by that good actor, Martin Wolfsohn.

Whether as in "Street Scene—it is propaganda for a continuation of life as Elmer Rice sees it, or whether as in "Counsellor at Law" it is propaganda idealizing this lawyer who has risen from the ranks by hook and crook all plays are propaganda presenting some thought to the mind of the audience and feeding them with the propaganda of the authors liking which in turn is dictated by his economic position in the society in which he lives. Of the four plays under discussion the one accused of propaganda, "Merry Go Round", is the most powerful theatrically and the most effective emotically—which to my way of thinking, makes it the most artistic. The other three are well written but we must cast aspersions on them by classifying them as propaganda plays. Thus necessitating a change of title. One Play with Art and Three with Propaganda.

Two of these plays can be of assistance to the Workers Theatre Movement. "Merry Go Round" and "Of Thee I Sing". The former can be played practically as is, changing the last scene. "Of Thee I Sing" has clever satire which can be used in the Workers Theatre. Instead of the interludes of cheap dance routine which accompanied the Pulitzer Prize Play these interludes between satirical skits can be bridged by the introduction of agit-prop mass recitations. Not alone to vary the theatrical menu but also to give direction to a show that needs a constructive point of view with the satire.

ALFRED SAXE—W. L. T.



# LONG LIVE MR. MCFADDEN

An episode in two scenes

By MYRON T.

## Scene first

Mr. McFadden: capitalist and philanthropist  
A toastmaster  
Mr. Lee, a union representative  
A city official  
A rich benevolent lady, a charity worker

The scene represents the rich home of Mr. McFadden. The assembled guests are sitting at an oblong table, set with food and flowers for the occasion in honor of the host, Mr. McFadden. He is the originator of the cent-a-portion restaurant which is the panacea against hunger and starvation. His pet slogan is "No one need go hungry", Starvation is a term only found in the dictionary". When the curtain rises the guests are at their places, the toastmaster stands up, speaking.)

TOASTMASTER: My ladies and gentlemen, we are here tonight as guests of Mr. McFadden (applause) to commemorate the wordly and wise deed of our benevolent friend. I now introduce our patron, who has the honor of the evening. One who is esteemed and loved by all alike, rich and poor. Mr. McFadden.

MR. MCFADDEN: My esteemed friends, I wish to apologize for being in the limelight. I know we are all concerned with the appalling conditions and misery in which the unfortunate poor find themselves today. We hope to God, that conditions may improve, and there will be no need for the cent-a-portion restaurant. The restaurant now functioning is feeding the poor. No one need go hungry. My friends, picture the gratefulness of these unfortunates. Let us not forget our fellow men. In these times of unrest and wild ideas, it is important that we show the masses our interest and deep concern in their plight. (applause) (The guests) Three cheers for Mr. McFadden (applause) Thank you! (Sits down)

TOASTMASTER: And now before we enjoy the delicacies of the table, I present to you Mr. Lee, a leader of the unions. (Applause) Mr. Lee is in direct touch with the masses and is a great conciliating force for creating amiable relations between industry and labor. (Applause) (The Guests) Three cheers for Lee.

TOASTMASTER: Mr. Lee.

MR. LEE: Ladies and gentlemen, it feels good to be here amongst our friends. By virtue of his deeds, Mr. McFadden, has endeared himself to the masses. His kind heart shines forth like a diamond. The cent-a-portion restaurant inaugurated by Mr. McFadden, will prove a great moral force and will teach a lesson for mutual consideration among our people. And last but not least it will shut the

mouths of the reds who always look forward towards casting a stone, no matter how worthy a cause may be. I congratulate Mr. McFadden upon his big heartedness towards his brethren. This worthy cause is deserving of support of every right thinking person. It is true, my friends, that the poor are ungrateful at times, but you must not blame them, because with all the agitators at work, it is a wonder that they do not grow more impatient of their lot. The cure for discontent, my ladies and gentlemen, is philanthropy, rightly administered. The laboring man is by nature a peaceful individual, who is proud of his home and family. Don't fear, my friends, all the reds cannot change the character of our laboring man. I wish to express my sincere gratification in behalf of my union and myself, for the kind efforts of Mr. McFadden. I thank you. (Sits down, the guests applauding.)

TOASTMASTER: And now my friends, I present to you an official of our great city. ....

CITY OFFICIAL: On behalf of our city, I wish to present this scroll of appreciation as a humble token to our citizen and benefactor, Mr. McFadden. I hope our leading citizens will realize the trying situation, and follow in his footsteps, and help to ameliorate the unfortunate condition created by the unscrupulous panic mongers, and selfish individuals, who prefer hoarding their money, rather than placing it into circulation, and start the ball a-rolling. We can assure Mr. McFadden that the city will long remember his unselfish devotion to the cause of betterment. Thank you. (Applause) (Sits down)

TOASTMASTER: My friends, I now present to you a lady who has the heart of an angel. Our poor find great consolation upon her visits to their homes. May her work continue to bring the good fruit of instilling into the hearts of the poor the spirit of thankfulness and gratitude. (Long applause)

RICH BENEVOLENT LADY: Dear friends, I represent the women's auxiliary of the third district. In our visits amongst the poor, we encounter such patient mothers and lovely children. They are all so quiet and grateful. We distribute our food packages and old clothing. You should see how their eyes gleam with thankfulness. My friends, there is nothing like charity. (Applause) That feeling fills you with contentment. Blessed be His name Who said "Unto them you shall give". I wish to express my thanks to Mr. McFadden for his benevolence in opening the

cent-a-portion restaurant. No doubt the poor will be grateful, and remember his name, long after he meets his maker. Long live Mr. McFadden. (Applause) Thank you. (Sits down)

TOASTMASTER: (Looking at his watch) And now my worthy friends, we are just in time to tune in, and listen to the radio announcement of the opening of the restaurant.

Over the radio: Station HOH. Here we are friends, at Mr. McFadden's bountiful paradise. Listen to the band. (A brass band is heard playing a popular tune) (Shouts are heard) Hurrah for Mr. McFadden, Hurrah, (intermingling with the music and tumult of the crowd)

A voice over the radio: Stand in line there. Where do you think you are, in the bread line? Get your pennies ready. What? You have none? Get the hell out of the line.

Another voice: Hey, you tramp. What are you doing here. Go on, you dirty bum.

A voice in reply: You lousy cop, you. Oh! (A knock is heard as if from a club. Moans are heard)

Another voice: Look at that big, fat stiff. He is clubbing him. Hey, fellers, get hold of that bitch of a cop. Give it to him, give him his own medicine.

Several voices: The cops are here. (A tumult is heard)

Voices in chorus: Down with McFadden's police. We want jobs. We demand unemployment insurance.

To hell with McFadden's charity.

On to the City Hall.

The toastmaster and the guest looking at each other in bewilderment. Their expression is comical. Somebody shuts off the radio. To distract the attention to the incident, a string quartet is playing. Waiters are rushing around the tables, bringing in food. Everybody is busy devouring the sumptuous repast. All guests rising, with glasses of liquids. Hail Mr. McFadden! (applause) Three cheers for the benefactor of humanity. Three cheers for Mr. McFadden. (Applause)

### Scene two

(A busy street. On the left is a restaurant, with a large sign reading "McFadden's Cent-A-Portion Restaurant". Several workers are on the stage, and more workers join them as the action goes on. Included in the crowd as the scene opens are a Negro worker, two apple sellers, shoe polishers, a policeman.)

FIRST APPLE SELLER: Buy an apple. Help the unemployed. Buddy, these guys haven't a nickel to their name.

SECOND APPLE SELLER: Oh, hell, the apples are rotting. Let's beat it. Let's go to Wall Street. Everything they sell there is rotten.

We'll get rid of our apples there too. (Both leave)

A worker standing with a shoe shine box with inscription "Unemployed chauffer and expert mechanic. Shine, 5 cents". A couple of pitiful kids with their shoe boxes. They quarrel with the man for the stand.

The kids: Go on, you big stiff. Why don't you go and rob a bank. (A cop arrives and chases them away. The cop vanishes)

A sandwich man arrives, carrying a large sign illustrating a steaming bowl of soup and a loaf of bread, with lettering reading: "Hot sizzling meals. One cent a portion. At McFadden's". A crowd gathers around him.

One of the crowd to another: What do you say, Joe? Let's try it.

The other in answer: O. K., Mike. Now we must graft a nickel.

A preacher arrives, unfolds his chair, stands on it addressing the crowd.

The preacher: Brothers, come one, come all. It's McFadden's heart for his poor fellow men. A meal for a nickel. A portion for a penny. No one need go hungry. God bless Mr. McFadden. Pray to God. Blessed be his name.

One of the crowd: Pray hell. Give us a job.

Another of the crowd: He is damn right. How about some grub?

Another of the crowd: Buddy, you know the saying: "Work and pray and live on hay".

Another of the crowd: I have prayed till my lips are frayed.

The colored worker: The Lawd he is lookin afta the rich.

An Italian Worker: God, he gooda bisinis men. He lika the rich. He no lika the poor.

Another worker: Look how fat the father is. He can preach all right, but all we get is pie in the sky. (Addressing the preacher) How about some sleep in God's place. In your church, I mean. Nearer my God to Thee.

One of the crowd, laughingly: A swell chance you got to sleep in his church. He'll forget all about the angels, he will. He'll call the cops as sure as you're born. (The crowd roars with laughter)

The preacher: (Holding up his chair, singing) Hallelujah! we are with you. Jesus, Son of God. Jesus will save us. Save us. Hallelujah. Amen. (Is preparing to leave)

One of the crowd: Hallelujah go to hell. (The crowd) Amen.

One of the crowd: (pointing to restaurant) Say, fellows, let's all of us go in there. Why, you guys are a bunch of puppies. Come on. No need of grafting a jit. (The crowd beleaguers all around. At the door of the restaurant a cop, half dead from fright and wildly swinging his club. Nobody pays any attention to him. The voices of the crowd are drowning his words.

Voices from the restaurant: Fakers. You said anyone who is hungry will get a meal.  
A voice in reply: Come tomorrow.  
Voices in reply: Tomorrow hell. We are hungry now. Listen to this son of a gun. He had plenty of grub for himself. (The sound of smashed dishes is heard)  
A chorus of angry voices: To hell with McFad-

den's charity. Let's go to the city hall. Let's see the mayor, the holy father.  
Suddenly a squad of bluecoats arrives. They club the workers.  
Voices: Fellow workers, these are McFadden's cops. Down with McFadden's charity. We demand jobs. We demand unemployment insurance.



# Situation and Tasks of Workers Theatres in U.S.A.

By JOHN E. BONN

A report to the First National Workers Theatre Conference held in New York, April 17

(Concluded from Nrs. 2 and 3)

## SHORTCOMINGS

Our considerable progress during the last months should not make us blind to our shortcomings and mistakes in our work. The consciousness of our achievements gives us the impetus and the courage to proceed and to improve, while the recognition of our shortcomings will show us the direction in which we must travel in order to develop. Constructive criticism and self-criticism are the bases of the revolutionary movement, also of this special section of the revolutionary movement. The time at my disposal does not allow me to give a complete enumeration and a thorough analysis of our shortcomings. All I can do at present is to point out the main weaknesses, in order to lay the basis for further critical discussion in the groups, or for contributions by the individuals concerned with our work.

■ The first and most obvious shortcoming is the lack of forces. We have not even enough groups available to answer the demand for dramatic entertainment at affairs of workers organizations. And where are the groups to be activated for special political tasks; to prepare or to support special political campaigns; to perform at open-air meetings; to approach neutral or misled workers? New York, for instance, has no more than 5 English speaking agit-prop groups, of which only 1 or 2 are absolutely reliable. There is no Negro agit-prop group in the country. There is no group to propagandize the farm workers and the poor farmers. Which mass organizations used dramatic activities for that twofold purpose,—to activate the membership and to recruit new forces at the same time? The W. I. R. is the only mass organization with its own agit-prop group: the Workers' Laboratory Theatre.—Much must be done and can be done in this direction.

Does the quality of our work make up for the shortage of forces? Not at all! Although a considerable improvement took place during the last year, it cannot be denied that our actual efficiency is far from what we would call real revolutionary energy and power. Too many of us are not yet convinced of the seriousness and importance of

our task, do not realize the role which the workers theatres play in the class struggle. There is still a drastic lack of political education, a drastic lack of responsibility and discipline, a drastic lack of revolutionary militancy and activity in our movement. All these find reaction in the quality of the single performance as well as in our major political events. Each group, each functionary, each group member should check up on these shortcomings and remedy them. Our future theoretical and practical work should take a special interest in an organizational and political strengthening of our movement.

■ If we look backwards at last year's production of plays we can state that we have quite a good repertory. There are quite a number of comrades, all non-professional who, on account of their day to day experience with the practical work in groups acquired a fine sense and knowledge of the technique, sometimes too obvious and too conscious a technique of agit-prop plays. The next step in our development is to build upon that foundation, a correct structure of real, live art. Our future plays will have more variety in content and form. They will deal more with facts, figures and events than our former plays which mostly reflected ideas, principles and abstract contrasts.

Numerically, however, our production of plays is not yet satisfactory. The reasons for these shortcomings are the following:

- 1) individual comrades do not get enough encouragement and help
- 2) too few attempts are made in collective play-writing
- 3) absolute passivity of our professional revolutionary writers.

The isolation of the professional writers from the workers theatre in this country is an especially impermissible shortcoming. A little more interest on the part of the writers and more serious attempts on our part to attract our professional comrades will lead to cooperation which can be of greatest advantage for both parts. The workers theatre will gain in color, life, and ideas, while the professional playwrights will find demand for and response to their revolutionary art for which they are looking, without success, in the bourgeois theatre.

NEED FOR A NATIONAL WORKERS THEATRE ORGANIZATION IN THE U. S. A.

Comrades, there are many shortcomings in our movement. More than I can mention in this report. However, this fact cannot discourage us. We look at our mistakes and failures in a revolutionary spirit, that means in a constructive spirit. The statement of our shortcomings is at the same time the expression of our willingness to correct them. In order to accomplish this task we must utilize, coordinate, and collect all available forces. The only organizational basis for a collective and cooperative work of this kind is a national organization of all workers theatres in this country.

The experience of the workers theatres in the European countries as well as the rapid development of our own movement since the establishment of the Dram Buro, as a provisional coordinating body, prove the necessity for such a national organization. At the beginning of my report I said that this conference takes place between two periods of the history of our movement. We look back at the period of clarification and preparation. And we look forward to the period of action. We can and must do more than just deal theoretically with this turn. It is

our revolutionary duty to materialize our conclusions into facts, by laying the concrete foundations for the important and immense political tasks we have to carry out in the future. Comrades, let us, today, form the national organization of all workers theatres of this country. Let us make this day the first day of our period of action. Let us make this conference an historical event, not only in the development of the workers theatre movement, but also in the history of the revolutionary movement of this country.

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## WHERE ARE YOUR SHORT REPORTS AND REVIEWS OF THE ARTISTIC, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC, CONDITION OF THE BOURGEOIS THEATRE?

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# SPARTAKIADE REPORTS

## Reports from the delegates at the National Conference

### CITY CLUB COMMITTEE OF JEWISH DRAMATIC GROUPS

Reported by  
Comrade Zucker

When about two years ago we decided to build dramatic groups in our clubs we were faced with the following difficulties:

1. We knew almost nothing about such work.
2. There was no group we could turn to for help and guidance.
3. There was no material for us to start producing.
4. The organizations that should have given us the benefit of their experience and ability did not, and still do not, offer us any guidance. The Jewish Writers' Federation did not consider our project sufficiently important for them to bother with. The Artef was an isolated group that existed solely for the development of its own talent and art.

Realizing this, we concentrated on the development of our talent. Our slogans were—Write your own plays—Build your own cadres of dramatic workers.

The latter part of last year we arranged A COURSE IN DRAMATICS UNDER THE SUPERVISION AND TUTELAGE OF THE ARTEF. There were many reasons for the failure of the class. The main weakness was that THE MATERIAL WAS UNSUITED FOR OUR SIMPLE, AGIT-PROP TYPE OF PLAY. The Artef instruction was of a too professional nature.

When the Dram council was organized, we immediately affiliated ourselves with it. The immediate benefit derived by us from the council was the realization that we should re-orientate our repertory.

In the past six months we translated and produced eight agit-prop plays.

Organizationally the dram council is weak in that it LACKS THE FACILITIES FOR SUPPLYING PRACTICAL GUIDANCE THROUGH INSTRUCTORS.

What is the result of our work of two years?

We now have SIXTEEN dramatic groups out of a total of twenty-three clubs affiliated with our central body.

Four of these groups have been organized in the past six months.

These groups have given two hundred performances, to audiences totaling about thirty thousand workers.

As a result of our concentration on the writing of our own plays, we wrote and produced twenty-five plays. All of these plays were CONCRETELY LINKED UP WITH SOME CURRENT CAMPAIGN IN THE WORKERS MOVEMENT.

At a recent conference we also decided to affiliate with the Artef. We hope that this new affiliation will facilitate the establishment of our dram groups on a better basis, and help us to more quickly develop talent within our own ranks.

### ■ DRAMATIC SECTION OF THE I. W. O.

Reported by Comrade Pevzner

The main feature of the cultural work of the Youth Section of the International Workers Order has been dramatics. DRAMATICS HAS BUILT MORE BRANCHES FOR THE I. W. O. THAN ANY OTHER ACTIVITY. It has also rebuilt more branches.

Continued on page 16



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# INTERNATIONAL NEWS . . . .

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## CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

The little country of Czecho-Slovakia has 419 workers theatre groups. The Czecho-Slovakian section has issued a challenge to the German section for the best preparatory work for the International Theatrical Olympiade to be held in Moscow in Oct.

## ENGLAND

The bourgeois press which until now has systematically ignored the very existence of the proletarian theatrical movement suddenly became alarmed when the Red Players Troupe played in the "St. George Circus" and was received with great enthusiasm by the great mass of workers who had gathered there from all parts of London. Like the bourgeois press throughout the world the Sunday Pictorial points its finger at these Workers' Theatre troupes accusing them of undermining the constitution,—The crime these troupes are guilty of is educating the worker to an understanding of his problems,—to assist him in fighting wage cuts, speed up, and unemployment.

## JAPAN

The "Left Theatre" in Tokyo presented for the first of May a play in five acts by Toma Murayama. This play was presented shortly after the recent persecution of the Proletarian Theatrical Union of Japan (PROT). During the play, several of the main actors and actresses were arrested.

This is no new measure in Japan. This year with the war in Manchuria, persecutions have been extremely intense. In Tokyo alone, more than 1000 demonstrators were arrested. Despite the police terror, the agit-prop troupes continued their activities. The PROT also succeeded in issuing special numbers of its organ and of its mass paper called "Theatrical Gazette."

## GERMANY

**The German Theatre Is No More.**

The well-known German actor, Fritz Kortner, who recently played abroad in the Scandinavian countries, declared before the representatives of the conservative paper "Berlings Tidende" (Kopenhagen) that nothing remains to be said about the German Theatre (during the last 2 years). The German Theatre has fallen into the hands of entrepreneurs (salesmen) who know but the principle of Geschaefit (profit) and who are interested only in monetary success. Unfortunately, he declared, the German Theatre has lost all connection with contemporary life and its problems.

## SOVIET UNION

Chalatov DOLL THEATRE is described as "A tiny theatre with only 90 seats, a small stage on which there are

usually only two actors performing." Nevertheless, this is one of the mass forms of theatrical performances for children; during the two years existence of the theatre 1000 performances were given at which over 400,000 children and 60,000 adults were present. The aim of the theatre is solely to interest children in Literature and Books. The purpose is to create in them the desire to read, read, read and then read some more.

## AUSTRIA

There is a report that the Soviet film "Enthusiasts" (Song of the New Structure) was banned in Austria. For lack of any formal excuse for such a ban, the police did not even motivate its ban, failing to point out on the basis of what law the film was banned. The protest against the ban proves again that the masses of workers are eager to see films which strengthen their self-confidence and will struggle. The old worn out theme of the poor little shop worker who becomes a millionaire no longer interests the workers.

## FRANCE

The French Theatrical Workers Association (FTWA) has issued two special bulletins prepared especially for the election campaign and the struggle against war danger and the defense of the Soviet Union. On May 1st, in the Paris district alone, 8 troupes appeared 122 times at meetings and sold 900 copies of the French Workers magazines. (Workers Theatre groups of the U. S. A. please note).

## INTERNATIONAL THEATRICAL OLYMPIADE

All eyes will be turned toward Moscow in the next few months where tremendous activities in the theatre world heralds the approach of the International Theatrical Olympiade. While the bourgeois theatre world is in the depths of a financial and artistic slump the Workers Theatre strikes forward to preparations for this huge gathering of theatres from all over to gain a world of technique from each other and to show what powerful creative talents lie in the hands of the workers.

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## Questions and Answers

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Let all groups benefit from your experiences. Send in your questions. Let us have your comment on the answers you find in this section.

Q.: Is it possible to become an individual member of the League of Workers Theatres?

A.: No. 6 of the constitution of the L. O. W. T. (published in the May issue of W. T.) states: "Individual members are accepted in localities where no groups are in existence. In this case it is the duty of the individual member to organize a workers theatre group as soon as possible." It is, of course, the duty of the National Office in New York and of the respective district committees to give all assistance necessary. The dues for an individual member is 25c. Unemployed individual members do not have to pay dues.



# YOO-HOOEY . . .

An election play for outdoor performance

By **HAROLD KOTZKER**

John Reed Club  
Philadelphia Dram. group

## CHARACTERS

FOUR WORKERS, SOCIALIST, WAR, BOSS

FIRST WORKER enters. Voice off stage: Yoo-hoo

SOC.: (Entering) Yoo-hoo!

F. W.: Quit your yoo-hooing, will you? It gives me the willies. Who are you anyhow, and what do you want?

SOC. (puffing with pride). Me? I'm a Socialist. Yes, yes. See? (Pulls a bunch of beets out of his pockets.) I'm for the farmers. (Touches his torn pants.) I'm for the poor. (Lifts his high hat.) I'm for the rich. (Lifts his hammer.) I'm for the workingman. (Lifts his flag.) I'm for the country. Hooray. (Waves the flag.)

F. W.: Dam it, who ain't you for?

SOC.: And—(looks about him secretively and speaks in a hoarse whisper.) See? (touches his red tie fondly.) I'm a radical too.

Ooooooh! You're a worker, aren't you.

F. W. Was, until they laid me off.

SOC.: Good! You need us. We'll help you!

F. W.: Fine. That's what I need. What can you do for me?

SOC.: I educate you. You must learn to understand the whole situation.

F. W. There ain't nothing to understand. I have no job, I have no money. I have nothing for the kids. And the landlord is going to put my furniture out on the street. That's simple, ain't it?

SOC.: True. I'll organize you under the most radical slogans. The radical slogans of the Socialist Party cannot be surpassed.

F. W.: I understand. You want to force the boss to give me a job.

SOC.: No, my dear friend, we do not believe in force and violence.

F. W.: But if my landlord throws my furniture out on the street by force and violence?

SOC.: That is not force and violence. There is a law that entitles him to do so. The radical program of the Socialist Party cannot be ENFORCED. Our intention is to improve the present situation gradually.

F. W.: While I die of starvation? I don't understand.

SOC.: Wait a minute. I'll explain everything. I'll prepare you through intelligent education. What's that over there? (The sound of a toy drum is heard off-stage. WAR marches in, dressed as U. S. soldier, beating on a toy

drum. He marches in a circle around the WORKER and the SOCIALIST.)

SOC.: Stop! Yoo-hoo. Stop. Who are you?

WAR: (Snatches out toy pistol and shoots at SOCIALIST'S legs.) I'm war. WAR!

SOC.: Get away from me. We don't believe in war.

WAR: Oh, yes you do. Our boss is in danger, and everybody must help.

SOC.: Everybody? You mean the poor, the rich, the farmers, the workers, the radicals? (Repeats business with hammer, high hat, etc.)

F. W.: Who's in danger?

SOC.: (takes off high hat, places flag beside it, and waves the two together.) Our country, our country.

F. W.: What kind of danger?

WAR: (looks all about him, and moves closer, with an air of confidential disclosure.) It's Russia! Those damned Reds want to do away with him (pointing to Socialist), with me, and even with our boss!

F. W.: (points to Socialist.) Well, he's got a red tie, isn't he a Red?

(Socialist snatches red tie from his neck and puts it in his pocket; then assumes an air of innocence.)

WAR: (belligerently) Who's a Red? Oh, **him?** No, no, no. (laughs and pats Socialist on the back.) He's O. K. He's with us. Aren't you old boy?

SOC.: Well, I'm against you as a rule, you know, but when a country like the Soviet Union tries to break down our government, well, that's a different story. We have to stick by Uncle Sam.

F. W.: Guess I'll be going.

WAR: Going? Going where? You can't go. You stay with us and—(Boss enters) Psst, the boss! Now you must stay.

(War and Socialist get down upon their knees, salaaming, while Boss stands with his arms folded, watching the scene. Worker looks about him in bewilderment.)

BOSS: (imperatively, pointing to Worker.) Why is he standing?

(Socialist from one side and War from the other side pull the Worker down, and all three begin salaaming.)

BOSS: That's fine. That's fine. Arise, my good and faithful citizens and patriots. Rise. As always we must work hand in hand. But (pointing to Worker) who is this?

SOC.: A newcomer to the cause, sir.

BOSS: (to Worker.) Well, my boy, here in this country you have complete freedom. We don't force you to think our way. (Boss, Socialist and War join hands, forming a circle within which stands the Worker.) You are free to go, if you choose. (Worker starts off)

BOSS: What! Pass me? Pass the one who runs your country? Want to be jailed? If you

don't like it here, go elsewhere. Keep back; if you don't, beware of me and my assistants.

WAR, SOC., BOSS: For we work hand in hand.

F. W.: Let me out! Let me out, I tell you!

BOSS: But you must not try to pass me.

BOSS, WAR, SOC.: For we work hand in hand.

SOC.: You must not strike militantly.

BOSS, WAR, SOC.: For we work hand in hand.

WAR: If you do, beware of me.

BOSS, WAR, SOC.: For we work hand in hand.

BOSS: (sweetly) Now, now. Why should you go, anyway? We're all good fellows. Aren't we your friends? Sure we are. Sure, sure.

(All four start to leave the stage. They have taken a few steps when SECOND, THIRD, and FOURTH WORKER enter and stand facing them blocking their way).

S. W.: Don't listen to the bosses' bluffs!

F. W.: Who said that? (Boss blocks his attempt to see)

T. W.: Refuse the call to fight against your brothers in China and the Soviet Union, the workers' fatherland.

F. W.: Somebody's talking! Let me go! (WAR blocks his way.)

FOURTH W.: Expose the hypocrisy of the Socialist Party, that makes promises to all, but gives only to the boss.

F. W.: (starts struggling to get out of the circle. The other three workers rush forward, one pulling aside and holding BOSS the second, WAR; the third, SOCIALIST. First WORKER steps forward.)

FOURTH W.: Now, comrade, you can see.

S. W.: Now you are no longer blinded by the boss who calls HIS war YOUR war. Now you see how he tries to make you kill your comrades, the workers in other lands.

T. W.: Now you see exposed the fake character of the Socialist Party, now you see what friends these three really are.

BOSS: (In rage, to the FIRST WORKER.) If you go away from me I'll jail you, I'll blacklist you, I'll crush you, I'll kill you.

SECOND, THIRD, and FOURTH WORKERS: Comrade, fight together with us.

S. W.: Fight together with your fellow workers against oppression and starvation.

T. W.: Fight together with your class against military terror and police brutality.

FOURTH W.: Fight with the party of your class against the lies these curs invent.

SECOND, THIRD and FOURTH WORKERS: Fight with the Communist Party against imperialist war and for the defense of the Chinese people and of the Soviet Union.

F. W.: I am with you, fellow workers. (Turns to audience.) And how about you? Do you want another world war to make the rich richer? You do not? Then, to fight imperialist war—

ALL: VOTE COMMUNIST!

S. W.: Do you want the Chinese people murdered in order to make money for the bosses and the bankers? You do not? Then, for the defense of the Chinese people—

ALL: VOTE COMMUNIST!

T. W.: Do you want a war against the country where the bosses and the bankers have been driven out? where the workers are free, where the workers rule? You do not? Then for the defense of the Soviet Union—

ALL: VOTE COMMUNIST! VOTE COMMUNIST!

WAR and BOSS slink away. SOCIALIST, sees somebody else off stage and runs off, yelling) Yoo-hoo. Yoo-hoo.

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## CORRESPONDENCE

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### WHO IS NEXT?

"Workers Theatre" has received a letter, \$1. enclosed, from "A Reader" in Hart'ord, giving us the names of several friends who would possibly be interested in our Magazine. Thanks to the "Reader". The copies were sent out without delay.

Who of our members has ever thought of sending in the names of those interested in what we are doing? There are a great number of friends of our movement who are not with us as yet because they don't know anything about us. Let them know! Spread the "Workers Theatre" Magazine. Gain sympathizers, gain new members for your group, through "Workers Theatre". Send names of friends so that we of the Workers Theatre can send them sample copies. And don't wait—do it today!

The League of Workers Theatres received the following letter from its youngest group:

Comrades—

Enclosed herewith is \$1.—dues for June for the Red Guards (Pioneer) Dramatic Group, Philadelphia.

This Dollar was raised mostly by 2c dues a week for each member of the group as the Pioneers had no opportunities to play for a fee anywhere during June. However, prospects for the coming month are better.

Comradely yours

Red Guards (Pioneer) Dramatic Group,  
Philadelphia.

Ed. Note: Here we have a splendid example of the spirit that should prevail in all groups. The Philadelphia Pioneer group not only takes an active part in all discussions and makes valuable suggestions but also believes in immediate action.

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**HAVE YOU SENT IN YOUR CRITICISM OF WORKERS THEATRE?**

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Federation des Theatres Ouvriers En Belgique  
Sec. 155, Boulevard Anspach  
Bruxelles.

Dear Comrades:

At first, please, excuse my bad English language.

We have constituted a Federation of the Workers Theatres in Belgium with the Secretariat in Brussels: 155 Boulevard Anspach. We are trying to come in contact with the comrades in the U. S. A. We edited monthly a revue: EQUIPES 1932 in French. We send you this revue for examination.

The comrades of Belgium would be very glad if you comrades of the U. S. A. could help us with material for agitprop troupes (sketches, song, etc.,) and also with the experience you have had. You can send plays in English. I can have translated any English material by the comrades in Brussels.

We have growing activities here and we have given many workers theatre productions. We send you our material with the revue EQUIPES 1932.

We hope to come with you in a good contact. Awaiting your answer we send you the revolutionary greetings from the comrades in Belgium.

Yours truly

G. Vernailen

## SPARTAKIAD REPORTS—continued

### CHICAGO BLUE BLOUSES

Reported by  
Ben Sager

There is no necessity for dramatics, the district organizations said in Chicago when the organization of such a group was mentioned. The first thing was said to get members who are interested in dramatics. We got a group together of about ten and began to work on something by Ernst Toller. We had no capable person to direct us, so finally we decided to get someone from the outside, but he wanted to do three-act plays with scenery, etc., so we found ourselves without a director.

We started with a mass chant and also attempted to put on The Belt by Paul Sifton. Our group was called upon to perform for the John Reed Club, and it was a big success. Since then we have been very much in demand.

#### Seven Negro Members

At present time we have one group of 28 members, 7 OF WHOM ARE NEGROES. The comrades who are in other dramatic groups in the foreign languages would not cooperate with us, saying that they were professionals and we were just a bunch of amateurs. However, with the beginning of the conference, I trust that all these problems will be solved.

### HUNGARIAN WORKERS' DRAMATIC SECTION

Reported by  
Comrade W. Weinberg

Hungarian workers' dramatic groups, located in big and small cities throughout the country, are under the leadership of the Hungarian revolutionary press, and have been established about 15 years.

Productions of these groups are along the lines of these done by the Artef, long plays, suitable for the stationary theatre. By producing such plays, the Hungarian dramatic groups can reach a ten times larger audience than if they produced small agit-prop plays. Hungarian comrades are in this country mostly concentrated in the heavy industries, and are uneducated. Agit-prop plays do not go over with such workers. Such workers must have simple plays, melodramatic plays which are taken out of their own lives and which show them how to get out of their suffering.

(Editor's note— The comrade reporting for the Hungarian workers' clubs made the foregoing remarks mainly in answer to the criticism of the judges at the Spartakiade that the play presented by the Hungarian section was not suitable for agit-prop work. In this we are with the judges. We also believe that the Hungarian comrade underestimates the willingness of workers to listen to plays that speak out boldly and simply the message of the workers' struggles against the bosses. Try it, comrade. The workers' theatre must LEAD the workers, not drag at the tail end.)

### DRAMATIC CLUB OF THE SOUTH PHILADELPHIA PIONEERS

The group was organized at the beginning of April. A secretary was elected. Good short sketches were worked out for a preliminary meeting on war. The cooperation of the John Reed Club was arranged for. Comrade Glass of the John Reed Club was sent as director. There are at present twelve regular members, INCLUDING NEGRO CHILDREN.

This children's workers' theatre has already put on a play, having participated at the preliminary Spartakiade in Philadelphia on the occasion of the 19th anniversary of the Young Communist League. A translation of "First Fight" will be presented at an open air demonstration in South Philadelphia.

Comrade Katz (a boy of about 13) emphasized the importance of enlisting the Young Pioneers in the workers theatre movement. The young workers, he pointed out, will constitute the WORKERS' THEATRE OF THE FUTURE. Young pioneer dramatic groups help TO BRING IN OUTSIDE CHILDREN and "start them off right", he said. He reported that it was the purpose of the South Philadelphia dramatic group to spread the workers' theatre movement to pioneer groups in all parts of Philadelphia. He concluded with praise of the Black and White solidarity dance presented at the Spartakiade because of the great importance of uniting black and white workers to fight their common class enemy.

THE VANGUARD YOUTH PLAYERS recently organized at 2800 Bronx Park East is giving its first performance July 23rd. The group is growing rapidly and has every intention of leading in the workers' children's theatre movement. The play now in production is "Helping the Strike", an adaptation from "Milk for Miners' Children." BRIGHTON BEACH DRAM GROUP has 14 members now. The group gave two performances last month, including the Scottsboro mass recitation in Yiddish. The next production will be the Yiddish translation of "Vote Communist."

## JACK LONDON DRAMATIC GROUP, NEWARK

### Comrade Daniels

Last June, in 1931, three members decided to organize a cultural group. Now more than 100 members are included in the group, with 75 engaged in active work.

**THE GROUP NOW HAS A MAGAZINE**, a debating team and a glee club. Open forums are conducted Sunday afternoons. Meetings are held Tuesday afternoon, to which outside speakers are invited, and at which floor discussions give each member a chance to speak.

Until December 20, 1931, the group had no place to meet, and had to call meetings in homes of members. Half the members are unemployed and have no funds. "Mr. God is Not In" was the first play to be produced in December. It was given four times. From then on the group became very active in agit-prop work. Two of the plays produced were written by members of the group: "Women's Solidarity" and "Paris Commune". Other plays produced were:

Scottsboro, given 9 times; Step on It, 8, Lenin Calls, 7; Liberty in U.S.A., 2; Charity (2nd half original), 1.

The group has performed in Newark AND IN THE SURROUNDING TOWNS, Elizabeth, Stelton, and Linden. Linden.

Plans are now going ahead for summer activities. The director has taken a two months' vacation, and in the meantime will start another group.

New members are now being drawn in. Two semi-professional actresses will help in the May Day celebration.

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## NEWS and NOTES

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**NATUREFRIENDS—AGIT-PROP GROUP, NEW YORK** participated actively in the campaign "Boycott the Olympics—For the International Athletic Meet in Chicago". In addition to this the group filled the program for 2 evenings, all proceeds going to the Counter-Olympic Committee. Counter-Olympic bottoms were sold for the amount of \$13.50. A campfire affair in camp Midvale was held as an anti-war demonstration, for the defense of the Soviet Union. The same recitation was given before the first convention of the newly organized district of the C. P. in New Jersey, and at the I. W. O. Picnic in N. Y. The Naturefriends Dance Group gave its first performance, dancing the "Red Army March" and "The Red Marine". After a short vacation the group will start full speed ahead for the fall and the election campaign.

**THE JOHN REED CLUB, MILWAUKEE** has been organized and is already actively engaged in building up its dramatic section. A program for the Anti-War demonstration on August 1st, is being prepared, including the mass recitation "Lenin Calls".

**THE INWOR BRANCH (I. W. O. YOUTH BRANCH 404), BROOKLYN**, has organized a dramatic group. The group is rehearsing a play for street work. The next production to go into rehearsal will be "The Chilean Naval Revolt".

## JOHN REED DRAMATIC GROUP, DETROIT

Reported by Comrade Beverly

This group had much difficulty in getting started. The group was organized last October. The first attempt along dramatic lines was made with the cooperation of the Jewish Dram Group of Detroit, in connection with Lenin Memorial Day. After that the group gave its own productions.

"Box, Knox, and Fox" was given several times. "Liberty in U. S. A.", "Help the Miners" and "Madame Liberty" were also produced. A performance at a Tom Mooney demonstration was produced at the largest high school in the city. Another Tom Mooney skit, written by the members themselves, was also produced.

The John Reed Dramatic Group is one of six groups in the city. The groups help each other with whatever assistance is needed. Most of the members of this group go to college or high school. It includes a great many teachers who naturally cannot appear in public, but who do their share in many other departments of the theatre. One member is secretary to an official of the American Legion.

**PLANS ARE BEING DRAWN UP FOR WORK WITH THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE**, which has been asking for aid and material. The Detroit group also has one dance group made up of high school students. The group has been working with the Communist Party in preparation for May Day celebration.



The Nature Friends, German Agit Prop Troupe in Action

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**GOOD PLAYS ARE NEEDED FOR WORKERS THEATRE.**

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THE FIRST INDIVIDUAL MEMBER OF THE L. O. W. T. is Comrade Naomi B. Auxter in Kalamazoo, Mich. Comrade A. intends to organize a dramatic group in the fall and is spending the summer with a workers theatre group in another city in order to gain some practical experience. Any workers in K. interested in dramatic work may get in touch with the L. O. W. T. to receive more information.

#### "THE POLITICAL THEATRE"

"DIE POLITISCHE BUEHNE", organ of the Socialist Dramatic Groups of Austria, carries in its May issue a detailed report about the workers theatre movement in the U. S. A. as well as a translation of the play "We Demand", by Bernard Reines, printed in the Feb. issue of Workers Theatre. It is interesting to note that the Socialist Workers Theatre in Vienna, speaking of the Workers Theatre Movement of the U. S. A. does not mention any activity or group of the so-called Workers Theatre of the Rand School and the Socialist Party which is a little group playing for the "best of audiences", isolated from the masses and their daily struggle. The real workers theatre, our workers theatre, growing daily through its activities in the class struggle and being itself a part of the masses, becomes known not only throughout the U. S. but also in all foreign countries.

THE RED PLAYERS, N. Y. en masse, on a homeward bound subway train, held one of their usual "subway rearsals". It so happened that the car was literally full of "dicks" who were just itching to keep the group quiet. One of them picked a quarrel with one of the Red Players. The rest was easy.—The group—agit-prop—to the last, stood ready to aide a comrade in distress. The "dick" exposed his badge, his fellow "dicks" closed in, and the Red Players finished their ride—not in a homeward bound subway, but in a patrol wagon headed for a NIGHT IN JAIL.

BRIGHTON BEACH DRAM GROUP has 14 members now. The group gave two performances last month, including the Scottsboro mass recitation in Yiddish. The next production will be the Yiddish translation of "Vote Communist", and plans are in progress for performances on the beach during next month.

#### PERMANENT THEATRE ORGANIZED

In line with the demand for a Permanent Workers Theatre producing full-length plays, the Workers' Laboratory Theatre of the W. I. R. has organized such a theatre and is planning to open the first production—Paul Peters' "Hallelujah, I'm A Bum"—sometime in September.

Several new departures in the theatre have been promised. Mordecai Gorelick, the scenic designer of "Processional", "King Hunger", "1931", one of the directors of this theatre, recently returned from Germany and Russia, has brought some interesting ideas from there and is incorporating them into the production.

One of the most important characteristics of this Theatre, however, is the collective approach in every one of its departments—in organization, in direction, in technical work; even in the matter of changes in the play.

Playwrights wishing to submit full-length plays should send them to "Stationary Theatre", 16 W. 21st St., New York, N. Y.

## GROUPS IN ACTION

#### A DRAMATIC EXPERIMENT IN PHILADELPHIA

Due to a shortage of bookings and in order to broaden the territory covered by the dramatic groups, the various groups which constitute the Philadelphia Dramatic Council got together and planned a joint venture. We arranged a Dramatic Night, to be held June 24th and 25th. Our purpose was to (1) broaden our influence (2) activate the Philadelphia groups and give them some much-needed experience, as well as interest and draw in new audiences (3) make some money for rent. We did not expect to draw workers audiences at a 35c admission fee, and therefore made strenuous efforts to get publicity in the bourgeois press. Strangely enough, we were to a degree successful in our efforts (as the enclosed clipping indicates). Press notices were obtained in the Philadelphia Evening Ledger, the Jewish World, and the South Philadelphia News. Notices also appeared in the Freiheit and Daily Worker. We even succeeded in getting the affair announced over the radio by a local station, free of charge. Which taught us that if sufficient efforts are made, we CAN get publicity in the capitalist press.

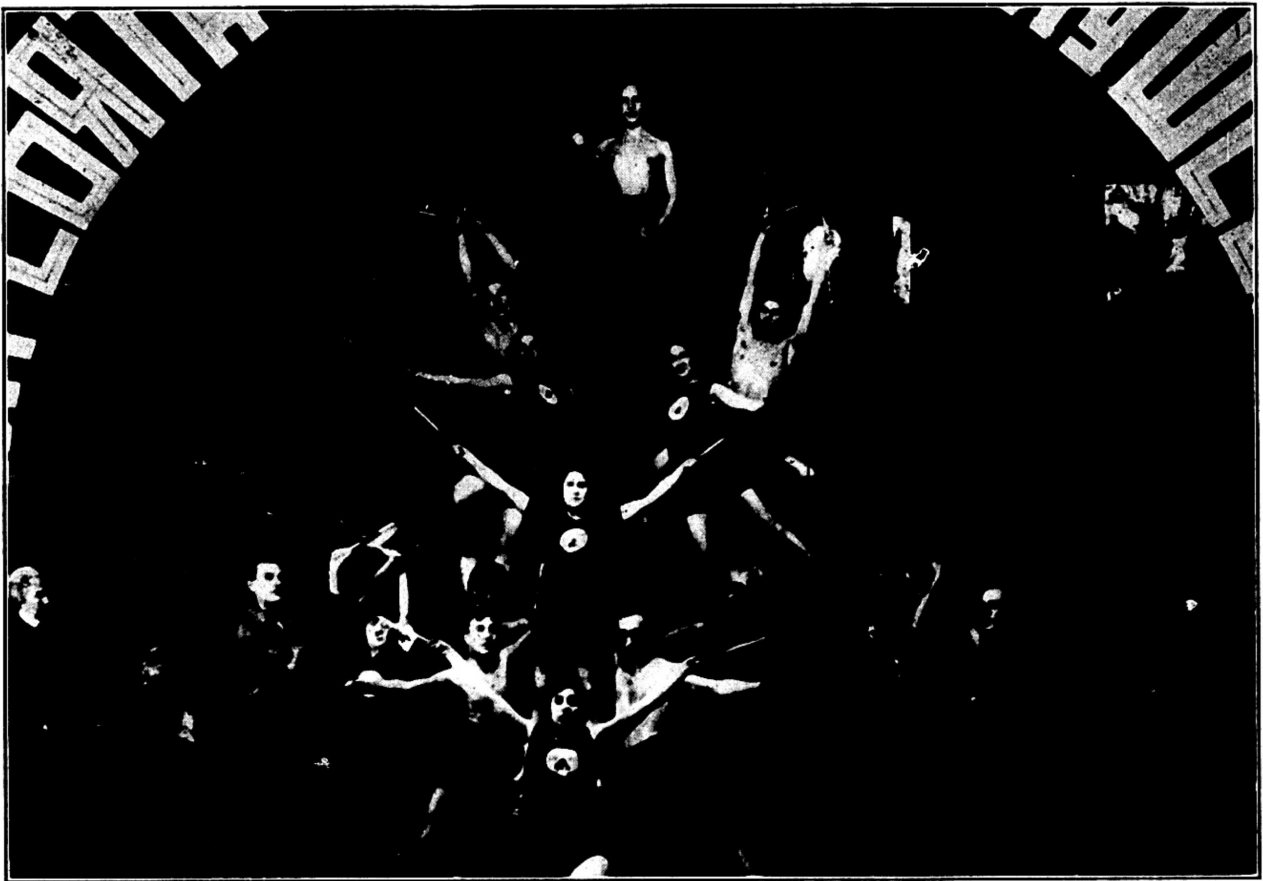
Our success was gratifying. We drew in certain elements which we are certain were looking at "workers theatre" for the first time. They reacted very nicely to all the plays; and seemed to prefer "Charity" and "Scottsboro". Their comments were "We never realized plays could be so vital and effective, as well as entertaining, with the use of so little of the usual 'theatrical' effects." This referred to the absence of scenery, minimum use of props and make-up, and sparing use of costumes. Not only were they entertained and thrilled, but we believe they learned the story of Scottsboro in the way class-conscious workers see it, and their sympathy was aroused to aid in this struggle.

This was the program:

- "Yoo-Hooey" by John Reed Dram. Group
- "Hurrah for the Bolshies" by Pioneers Dram. Group
- "Charity" by John Reed Dram. Group
- "Excession" by Prolet-dram (Yiddish) Group
- "Scottsboro" by W. Phila. Cultural Centre
- "Mr. God Is Not In" by John Reed Dram. Group

The play "Mr. God Is Not In" is not considered revolutionary by our group. Remembering it was written in 1926, we nevertheless criticize it for its weak ideology. It is atheistic satire treated from a bourgeois "liberal" standpoint. Fun is poked at Mr. God and his angelic hierarchy, and slight reference is made to Mr. God's resemblance to the capitalist mill boss on earth, but this kind of satire is practically harmless to the organized church, and Charles Erskine Scott Wood's "Heavenly Discourse" (which is made of the same stuff) is found on the best and most respectable bookshelves. We criticize this play for failing to point a revolutionary way out of the stupefying depths which the masses have been thrown into by organized re-

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A scene from the theatre of the Trade Unions in Moscow.

## REVIEWS

### ART IS A WEAPON—IN HOLLYWOOD!

A Review of "FORGOTTEN COMMANDMENTS"

by Jean Rivers

"Don't call me 'darling': it's bourgeois". Thus we are introduced to sixty-six minutes of what Hollywood might proudly proclaim as an example of the usual bourgeois culture-dispenser's theory of theatre for entertainment's sake, or cinema for sin's sake.

Hollywood, reduced as it is to the least petty-bourgeois denominator, is, even for our present society, extremely reactionary. And it was not until this year that Hollywood, no doubt inspired by the success of Soviet Russia's imported pictures, first began to be faintly aware that even movie audiences are really interested in the happenings of that country, which had hitherto only been the source of cinematic atmosphere revolving around sadistic czarist rebels, dashing cossacks, dark, passionate, heaving countesses, luscious peasant girls, or, more recently, pathetic refugee generals forced by a cruel fate to play the role of privates in motion pictures.

Let us watch *Forgotten Commandments*, one of their first efforts in this direction:

Paul, the speaker of the above classic lines, and his

pure, trusting young wife, Marya, just arrived from a small Russian village, are walking about dazedly through the corridors of what I judge to be Hollywood's notion of a Soviet University. Posters of Stalin, Lenin, etc., provide those inimitable Hollywood touches of authenticity, but not all the shabby, rough clothing and embroidered dresses can disguise the exquisite, frail nordic features of Hollywood extras. Paul and Marya are increasingly shocked at evidence here and there of a strange life under the Soviet Regime. (Apparently, according to Hollywood, the pernicious communist ideology has not as yet penetrated to the villages). They hear a fiery-voiced orator,—the usual long-haired, Greenwich Village conception—passionately exhort his hearers that the State is their soul, the State is their body, that marriage is bourgeois, etc., etc.

Paul has come to take a surgical course with the famous Professor Marinoff, and when they register, they are asked about their parents, to which they stammer out that they come from farmers and working people, but faintly imply that they are really of noble birth. The man next in line comes from a manufacturer's family and is refused admittance to the place. No doubt the audience is intended to be shocked by this strange contrast.

Paul visits his beloved professor, first having a romantic encounter with his sloe-eyed, pencil-browed, seductive assistant, in which she assures him that marriage is bourgeois, but easy to dissolve in Soviet Russia. Then Marinoff, her lover, comes in and informs his protegee that he has abandoned the unimportant career of surgery for the more communistic science, bacteriology. "In these billions of



germs," he exclaims, "is the future of Communistic Russia!" or words to that effect, as he caresses tubes with that peculiar feverish, wild-eyed expression that Hollywood connotes with pure but cold scientists. Marinoff also regrets Paul's marriage as being bourgeois, and Paul is very impressed.

In fact the word bourgeois is rolled around the mouth of the characters in this picture with the same frequency and delight of an illiterate discovering a new word.

■ Marya works in the clinic, once a church, with the wild boys, and we are treated to a Hollywood version of the wild boys handled so sympathetically and beautifully in the Road to Life: Pretty winsome faces, golden curls, hardly disguised by unconvincing rags—playing havoc with the church. (Incidentally, they group boys and girls together, an untrue but sexy touch.) The former priest enters, and when the children ask him about a bible they find, he gathers them about and proceeds to solemnly tell them about the Ten Commandments, with the aid of scenes borrowed from an ancient motion picture. (Strangely parsimonious for Hollywood, whose hitherto notorious extravagances have only been relieved by cutting the wages of extras and humbler employees). The children are shown very much moved by this tale, (based actually on the exploitation of the Jews under Egypt), and it is carefully impressed upon them that it was no organized revolution that saved them, but a divine miracle. Marinoff rushes in, indignantly thrusts the priest out, and gives out the new commandments, some of which are: Thou shalt have no other god but the Communist Party. thou shalt labor 7 days if the State wills it; thou shalt not kill unless the state wills it; thou shalt covet thy neighbor's wife if she wishes it, etc.

Later we see that priest being shot down by a firing squad.

Paul is seduced by the assistant. Marya declares "one man for one woman", and they are divorced in an absurdly short time, even for Soviet Russia. Marinoff sternly counsels Marya to forget about it, since love is bourgeois and we must devote our lives to the state. However, when he finds his mistress (wearing surprisingly chic underclothes for a Russian worker) in Paul's arms, he shoots them both, fatally injuring her. Marinoff has a return of bourgeois conscience, consents to operate on Paul, and Paul survives, not because of the skillful surgery of Marinoff—oh, no, it was "the finger of God", we learn as Marinoff nobly gives himself up to save Paul from suspicion. And so the curtain falls down on the inevitable reconciliation, scoring one for Holy Matrimony, Moses, the flight from Egypt, and Art for God's Sake.

Subtly, the two virtues duly wedded characters speak in perfect unaccented English and definitely give the impression of being typical nordic American suburbans, whereas the exponents of free love and communism, the Professor and his assistant, look and talk in a markedly foreign manner.

That dread word "propaganda" shunned by all American critics except in connection with the Russian film, found no place in any of the capitalist press reviews that I read, in spite of the obvious propagandistic nature of this picture.

Ironically, a "short" on the same program conceived

itself with the ease of divorce in Reno, and the orgies and loose living that go on there.

Recently, some motion picture company, after long and expensive preliminary work by Sidney Howard on the script of "The Way of a Lancer", a counter-revolutionary best-seller, declared publicly that since the book is anti-soviet in character, and as it is their policy to be unprejudiced in such matters, and as to neutralize the propaganda would be to destroy the artistic value of the film, therefore it would not be produced. Of course, the fact that "Forgotten Commandments" showed very poor box-office receipts was just a coincidence!

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#### JEWISH GROUP TAKES TURN TO AGITPROP . . . . .

(A Review by J. Zucker) . . . . .

The Coney Island Workers Dram Group recently produced "Me Lust Nit" (Hands Off), which is printed in the last issue of this magazine.

The scenery and staging employed is shown in the picture of the Coney Island group printed in that issue. The picture shows that all the implements of a stationary theatre were employed, with costume and make-up.

Despite these encumbrances the group showed it was on the right track toward real agitprop performances. The group has made great progress in that respect since the time it produced "Pressers". "Pressers" had all the paraphernalia of the stationary theatre, including real sewing machines and press irons. In "Hands Off" the group was much more effective in dramatizing working class issues in a real agitprop manner.

There were some shortcomings that can be easily eliminated in future productions. The cannons, for example, were too large, so that it was not easy to manipulate them and their meaning was obscure. Also the scenery, although excellent, is not the sort that can be carried from place to place, and should be very much simplified.

During the "peace" conference of the imperialists, a voice is heard from back stage, "Defend the Soviet Union", which is sort of mystic, when it would be more real and effective to have the voice come from a player stationed in the audience.

In the same way, three workers with little hammers and sickles appear from back stage at the end of the play to defend the Soviet Union whereas they could have come out of the audience. Also instead of a pantomime on defence of the Soviet Union, which is a weak ending for a revolutionary play, it would be better to have these workers state clear slogans of constructive action.

The Coney Island Dram Group is to be commended for being the first Jewish dramatic group in New York City to take a definite turn toward agit prop work. We hope other Jewish groups will follow their example.

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RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS TO WORKERS  
THEATRE—NOW.

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Continued from page 18

ligion and superstition. We feel this play lacks the revolutionary conclusiveness and directness of a play like "Charity" for example; which not only satirizes bourgeois charity but shows the workers why they should support and join the Workers International Relief; why they should strive for Solidarity instead of Bosses' Charity.

Our experiment was successful: we broadened our influence by drawing in new elements, we activated our groups, and we made a little money for each group. This last point has its benefits too, in these days, when dramatic groups are faced with important tasks, with vital duties, and must strengthen themselves in order to carry out their resolutions to dramatize the coming Election Campaign for the revolutionary working class.

Note—The Editor would like comment on the foregoing criticism.

■  
Comrades:

Our Blue Blouse group has been functioning in Los Angeles for approximately five months. This group was organized when the Rebel Players, a workers' theatre group, found it impossible to fully supply the need for a workers' theatre. The need of a group which could be handled easily, whose members were disciplined, and who could quickly give dramatic expression to the daily struggles of the workers, had long been felt. In the short time of its existence the Blue Blouse group has become so popular that at the present time it is difficult for it to keep pace with the demands made upon it for performances.

The group consists of eleven members selected from the most active of the Rebel Player members. Plain blue shirts and blue jeans is the uniform which has been adopted both for the boys and the girls. It was felt that such a costume would best portray the nature of the group and also serve as a distinguishing mark. Characters in our skits are portrayed symbolically, and we have found this method to be very effective in a group of this nature. Many times the Blue Blouses have appeared at workers gatherings with practically no preparation.

The ease with which the group can be assembled, together with the enthusiasm of the members has made the Blue Blouses the mobile workers dramatic group, assigning to the Rebel Players the role of a more or less stationary workers theatre. Aside from its dramatic work, the Blue Blouses hold regular weekly meetings where political and technical education is stressed. At all of our meetings we devote a short time to singing revolutionary songs since in this way we can pep up many of the meetings where we perform.

So successful has this group become that another group is being organized, and still there is more work to be done than there are comrades to do it. Prospect of Blue Blouse membership has created enthusiasm among many comrades and activated other capable members.

Our group has appeared before all types of workers gatherings and in many different parts of the city. The coming election campaign is an opportunity and a challenge to a group such as the Blue Blouses is, and we intend to make the most of this opportunity to get before more masses of workers.

WORKERS THEATRE CORRESPONDANT, for the  
LOS ANGELES REBEL PLAYERS BLUE BLOUSE

# Something for Nothing...

By TOM THOMAS

Workers Theatre Movement, London, Eng.

## A Sketch for Six Characters

WORKER: (calls to chargehand, who comes over to him from right) I say, Bill! It struck me the other day that we could save a lot of time on this job if we rigged up a gimble-sprocket driven off this cam-shaft, and connected it up with the jig. See?

STRAW BOSS: (Surlily) Don't suppose it would work, anyhow! I don't know why you're worrying your head about it. You're losing time, you know.

WORKER: Oh, all right. (Turns away)

STRAW BOSS: (eagerly) Mr. Brown. (The foreman steps forward) You know, it wouldn't be a bad idea to rig up a gimble-sprocket driven off the cam-shaft and connected up with the jig. Save a lot of time and power that way.

FOREMAN: (bored) Sounds all right. But you can bet it's been thought of before. There's nothing in that; (decidedly) You want to keep your eye on these fellows in the shop who are always wasting time, not bother about the plant. Leave that to the management. They're quite capable, you know.

STRAW BOSS: (snubbed, turns away to left)

FOREMAN: (eagerly) Mr. Campbell, can you spare a moment, please? (Works Manager enters from right) "It's just occurred to me that if we fitted up all these machines with gimble-sprockets driven off the cam-shafts and connected up with the jigs, we'd be able to make a big cut in costs.

WORKS MANAGER: (scornfully) Huh! That was tried out years ago, and wouldn't work. I forget exactly why. You know the output in your section is not increasing as it should. You must keep them down to it better than you're doing (bullyingly).

FOREMAN: (meekly) Yes, sir. (Also turns away to face left)

WORKS MANAGER: (In "Oxford" accent) Oh, I say, Mr. Footlingham. (Managing Director enters from right). I was doing a little research last night, and came across what may turn out to be a very valuable discovery. I need not bore you with all the processes by which I arrived at it, but it comes to this—that if we fit all the machines in the works with a gimble-sprocket driven off the cam-shaft and connected up with the jig, we shall be able to cut labour costs by at least 50 per cent.

MANAGING DIRECTOR: (pouring cold water on the idea) No! These theoretical propositions never work out in practice. And anyhow, it would cost far too much. The board wouldn't hear of it, I am afraid. Still, keep



on trying, you might find something useful one of these days!

**COMPANY CHAIRMAN:** (at an annual meeting of Company, addressing audience) My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen. It gives me the greatest pleasure to be able to announce an increased dividend in these difficult times. We realize that this is chiefly due to the magnificent untiring efforts of our Managing Director, Mr. Footlingham. As a direct consequence of one of his discoveries—brilliant in its simplicity—the whole of our production is being rationalized and cheapened. This enables us to produce at approximately 50 per cent of the previous cost. I think I am expressing your will, as your Chairman, when I suggest that in recognition of his exceptional services in connection with this discovery we should vote him a special remuneration of 10,000 pounds as well as a permanent increase of 5000 pounds a year in his salary as Managing Director. Agreed? On behalf of the shareholders, thank you very much, Mr. Footlingham. (He hands him cheque and shakes his hand).

**MANAGING DIRECTOR:** (modestly) Oh, not at all, not at all. (Chairman walks off right, smiling and bowing).

**MANAGING DIRECTOR:** (turns to Works Manager, who turns to face him) That wasn't at all a bad idea of yours, Campbell. I passed it on to the right place, and in the right way. You're worth an extra 500 pounds a year to the Company, anyhow. (Works Manager looks expression of thanks.) And, by the way, if you get any more ideas like that, let's have them. Don't hesitate. (Turns and moves off right).

**WORKS MANAGER:** (turns to foreman, patronizingly) I was able to use that little idea of yours, Brown—with a lot of modifications, of course. I'll see if I can get a little recognition from the Company. They like to encourage this sort of thing. What would you say to an increase of 1 pound a week?

**FOREMAN:** That's very good of you, Mr. Campbell.

**WORKS MANAGER:** Not at all. But mind, you let me have any more ideas you get. I might be able to turn them into a bit more cash for you. (Goes off right).

**FOREMAN:** (turns to chargehand) I say, Bill, you know they're cutting down the number of chargehands all over the works owing to this new labour-saving device. But you'll be right. I'll put in a word for you on account of that little idea you passed on to me. And any more you get like that—let's have 'em! Meet me outside tonight, and we'll have a drink!

**STRAW BOSS:** (turns to Worker) Sorry, Jack, you've got to have your cards at the end of

this week. The whole staff is being cut down. I can't do nothing for you, but if I get to hear of anything, you'll be the first I'll let know. With these new gadgets on the machines each man can look after two. So you're unlucky, that's all!

**WORKER:** Well, I'll be damned. That's what you call a raw deal. I give him the idea, and he gives me the gate. I give him the profits, and he gives me unemployment and starvation. I give him my labor and my brains and he gives me breadlines and flop-houses. To hell with sweating for the boss, who has everything while we starve! It's time that we fight against starvation and misery, child labor and unemployment! Workers! Organize and fight!

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### ATTENTION!

Look—

To all Workers Theatre Groups, playwrights, and readers of Workers Theatre Magazine:

In this issue you will find a stylized workers play, entitled, "Something For Ncthing." The play shows how the products not only of the worker's muscle but also of his brains are used to fill the stomachs of the bosses while the worker, as a result of his own ingenuity, loses his job.

#### THE EDITORS CALL FOR A COMPETITION!

Although the point is clearly brought home, nevertheless the Editors suggest the following: A second scene showing the same worker going through a similar experience in the Soviet Union which would result in a powerful contrast between the methods in the two systems of society.

Realizing as we do the lack of material for our purposes, and knowing that we must develop our own playwrights we call upon all Workers Theatre groups, playwrights, and readers to submit manuscripts bringing home this contrast.

The winning manuscript will be chosen by the Repertory Com. of the L. O. W. T. and will be printed in the Workers Theatre Magazine.

This contest is open to all. The basic ideas to be brought out are:

1. Show how the worker is rewarded in the Soviet Union.
2. Show how the benefits of constructive ideas are utilized for the good of all the workers.

This scene can be in any form, realism, stylization of any sort, symbolism, naturalism, or any other ism you can think of. Every Workers Theatre Group must send in at least one manuscript in this contest.

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**ARE YOU A MEMBER OF A WORKERS THEATRE GROUP? JOIN NOW.**

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# SHIFTING SCENES . . .

By AGIT-PROP

Did you notice a tiny news despatch from Hungary in the New York Times of July 3? It read as follows:

"Budapest, June 19.—Ten pensioned actors from the State Theatres have received from the Budapest police licenses to beg. Their pensions amount to a little more than \$2 a month."

Not that the United States is much different. Don't we read often of unemployed actors committing suicide here? And haven't we our grand bread-line for actors, which masquerades under the genteel name of the "Actors' Dinner Club?"

This is what a decaying bourgeois society has to offer to more and more of its artists.

## HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

That is to say, some people never learn.

Take Stephen Rathbun, dramatic critic for the New York Sun. In his column of July 18, he describes the even-more-languishing-than-usual Broadway summer season. He attributes the slump to "that bogey Man General Depression", and concludes: "Until that monster is removed, no great improvement is to be expected."

That sounds reasonable, by the usual superficial standards. But does Mr. Rathbun stop here? Oh, no, no! In his own words: "At least, let me end this last column before vacation on an optimistic note."

Are you listening, folks? Ready to be cheered up? Then let Mr. Rathbun continue: "Everybody wants to forget his troubles. There is no better anodyne than a few hours spent in a theatre."

I pause for breath. Did you get that, folks? Dig in, you unemployed workers, you ruined farmers, and fetch up the price of a good leg-show or its more "serious" counterpart. Then you can forget your troubles for a few hours. (How about taking dope straight, Mr. Rathbun?) You won't have a chance to figure out why you're suffering, and you certainly won't think of doing something about it. As our bright critic proclaims, "let us... learn to mark time until the period of readjustment has passed."

Rathbun says a few other things which should—and will—be treated more at length. For the present, I'll just say that his ideas are a perfect summary of a current philosophy,—as shallow, sterile, and brutal as that of the most reactionary big business man.

## MINERS PRODUCE AGIT-PROP PLAYS

Without any previous theatre experience, miners themselves are putting on agit-prop plays in the East Ohio region, where a strike against wage-cuts is now in its fifth month.

It began when a branch of the Workers International Relief in Yorkville, Ohio decided to put on the play "Charity", which was published in the May issue of Workers Life, the W. I. R. magazine. The members are largely miners.

Well, they rehearsed it for four or five days running. The whole town turned out to watch the rehearsals. And then the whole town turned out on Solidarity Day, June 12, and saw it performed. It went over with a bang.

Then the miners took the little play "on tour" to another mining town, and then to another. At each place it was warmly received and the original group helped

organize the local miners to put it on themselves.

Next this same Yorkville bunch found the play, "Morgan Goes Calling," in the June issue of Workers Life. This soon was in rehearsal, with the same success as the first production. It is interesting to note that the miners go in strong for naturalism. The "deputy sheriffs" in the eviction incident were "Ohio style"—with a pair of real guns at their belts.

If this spontaneous work is not directly evidence of the creative power of the proletariat, it is pretty strong evidence of their will-to-culture, especially to culture that reflects their interests.

## ONE WHO SOLD OUT

Once upon a time there was a young man tremendously interested in the theatre. He was credited with much intelligence, for he, knowing the rottenness of our present system, was a radical who, it may be, wanted capitalism overthrown by whatever means were necessary.

Now he occupies with ease and comfort the editor's chair of the Theatre Guild's magazine, The Stage. His manners are no doubt of the best Theatre Guild variety. As for his brains—well, if you take a peek at his July issue, you'll find him writing, in an article entitled "The Tourist Is A Patriot", such tripe as that tourists (including theatre-lovers) can help patriotically in this economic depression by spending more money in Europe, so that Europe will be able to buy more American goods, and lo!—our economic balance will be restored.

It makes you wonder whether it's Motherwell's intellectual honesty or his intellectual ability that has fallen so low. Note, too, his step on the road to jingoism.


## SHORT AND SWEET

From all over the world, agit-prop troupes and workers theatres will assemble in Moscow in October to take part in the International Workers Theatre Olympiade, part of the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the Russian revolution... The crisis in the bourgeois theatre has brought about the formation of a permanent National Theatre Conference "to serve collectively the interests of the American theatre." Which? American bourgeois theatre or American workers theatre? Need I ask?... Florenz Ziegfeld, "the glorifier of the American girl," or the man who made the leg-show "art", is dead... Just six shows on Broadway as July nears its close... Mordecai Gorelik, stage designer, is back from a trip to Europe. There he saw, among other things, workers theatre in Germany and, especially, the theatre of the Soviet Union. He is one of the lucky devils who saw the Soviet version of "Hamlet", at the Vakhtangov Theatre... Nathaniel Buchwald, dramatic editor of the Morning Freiheit, sails early in August for the Soviet Union. He will cover the International Workers Theatre Olympiade for WORKERS THEATRE... Far overshadowing the petty pieces of the stage, the great drama of the class struggle in Germany sweeps to its history-shaping climax. On one side, blood-thirsty fascism, grown strong thru the toleration of the Socialist Party; on the other, led by the revolutionary Communist Party, the working-class.

# **WE PROTEST!**

The Japanese Workers Theatre is faced with a veritable reign of terror. Actors, directors, in fact all cultural groups face wholesale arrest and brutal butchery on the part of the imperialist government of Japan which is now making war on the Chinese masses. The government proceeding along these fascist lines is attempting to completely suppress the Federation of Proletarian Cultural Organizations of Japan.


The League of Workers Theatres of the U. S. A. sends the following telegram of protest to the Japanese Government.



THE LEAGUE OF WORKERS THEATRES OF THE U. S. A., A FEDERATION OF 250 WORKERS THEATRES, PROTESTS AGAINST THE INTENDED PROHIBITION BY THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERATION OF PROLETARIAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS (KOPFJ). WE FURTHER PROTEST AGAINST THE BRUTAL AND SYSTEMATIC PERSECUTION OF THE KOPFJ ON THE PART OF THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT, AND THE SUPPRESSION OF THEIR LITERATURE AND MEETINGS. THE LEAGUE OF WORKERS THEATRES OF THE U. S. A. DEMANDS THE IMMEDIATE CESSATION OF GOVERNMENTAL TERRORISM AND THE UNRESERVED CONTINUENCE OF THE KOPFJ AS A LEGAL FEDERATION OF CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS IN JAPAN.

LEAGUE OF WORKERS THEATRES, U. S. A.

A second telegram showing that terrorism and brutality is not confined to the imperialist government of Japan but goes hand in hand with all imperialist governments was dispatched to Washington, D. C. in protest of Hoover's bullets for starving World War Veterans.



THE LEAGUE OF WORKERS THEATRES, A FEDERATION OF 250 WORKERS THEATRES OF THE U. S. A. PROTESTS AGAINST THE MURDEROUS ATTACKS ON THE BONUS MARCHERS. WE DEMAND THE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF THE TROOPS, CANCELLATION OF THE EVICTION ORDER, IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF THOSE ARRESTED, AND PAYMENT OF BONUS.

LEAGUE OF WORKERS THEATRES, U. S. A.