

2<sup>ND</sup> ANNIVERSARY NUMBER

# NEW THEATRE

JANUARY

1936 15c

HAPPY NEW YEAR



"HYMN TO THE RISING SUN" • A Play by PAUL GREEN  
CLIFFORD ODETS • JOHN W. GASSNER • HAROLD CLURMAN



"With a motion of the hand or a slight movement of her foot Trudi Schoop can express as much as Strindberg in all his rage. Yes, it is true, Trudi School is Grock's and Chaplin's little sister."  
 —Politiken, Copenhagen.



"The result is that of a silly symphony by Walt Disney."  
 —Excelsior, Paris.



S. HUOK presents

*"The Female Charlie Chaplin"*

FIRST TIME IN AMERICA

**TRUDI  
SCHOOP**

To whom can we compare her? To Charlie Chaplin, indubitably! This is a new personage who has created a new world of the dance."

—La Nation, Brussels.

22 Actor-Dancers in one of the most novel stage programs ever witnessed here depicting the tragi-comedies of everyday universal man . . . the stuff of Charlie Chaplin's dreams!

"This woman is a phenomenon of soulful and humorous talent. Her great art is universally comprehensible, like music, and a world-wide success, I believe, will surely be hers."

—Thomas Mann.

*and her*

**COMIC  
BALLET**

The Sensation of Every European Capital!

➔ BEG. FRI. EVE., DEC. 27th—10 DAYS ONLY ←

Every Evening Including Sundays—Matinees Thursday and Saturday

**POPULAR PRICES:** 75c—\$1.00—\$1.50 (plus tax)  
 \$2.00 — \$2.50 (plus tax)

**MAJESTIC THEATRE** Seats Now at Box Office

44th Street West of Broadway



# NEW THEATRE

JANUARY, 1936

Under the Tydings-McCormick Military Disobedience Bill which was passed by the Senate during the last session, and the Kramer Seditious Bill which was reported favorably out of the House Judiciary Committee, the theatre stands to lose what little there is left of "freedom" of opinion. Should these bills be enacted into law, drama here in the United States will be reduced to almost the enervating pap which is listlessly offered in Hitler's Germany and Il Duce's Italy. Through the efforts of such organizations as the Civil Liberties Union and the American League Against War and Fascism, these bills, along with forty others were shelved at the end of the last congressional session. But when Congress reconvenes in January, Mr. Hearst, the D.A.R., the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, with their friends will be on hand to try to force these bills into law. (On this point, telegrams to your Congressmen are very effective.)

Censorship in Chicago and Boston is such a recurrent irritation that one has an unwise tendency to laugh it off. Burton Rascoe, literary critic, is only accurate when he calls the Chicago action against *Tobacco Road* "tin-horn Hitlerism." Mayor Kelly closed *Tobacco Road* without any legal process, without giving the producers a notice or a hearing, by intimidating theatre owners with the threat of withdrawing their licenses. After using every legal channel, and seeing one court refuse to recognize another court's decision, Producer Sam Grisman was compelled to take the play out of Chicago, pending decision by a higher court. In an interview Mr. Grisman expressed his awareness that the case goes deeper than an issue of "morals" in the city where Sally Rand put in two hot summers fan-dancing to keep the Century of Progress backers solvent.

Following the tradition, Mayor Mansfield of Boston has seen fit to deny the long-suffering citizens the right and privilege of seeing *The Children's Hour*. This play has no

broad criticism of the social order, but it does deal straight-forwardly and with a sensitivity to truth, with a minor social problem.

On the film front, audiences who protest the showing of fascist and pro-war films are abused and arrested. The latest instance was in New Orleans where six pickets have been arrested for protesting the unprincipled attack on academic freedom, and the militaristic tone of *Red Salute*. The charge is "distributing circulars without a permit and refusing to move on." Protests, headed by a hundred signatures from Tulane University, have attacked the arrests as an infringement of the rights of free assembly and free expression.

While police protect pro-war films with money behind them, pro-labor films are banned. *The Youth of Maxim* and *Peasants*—both high water marks of artistic achievement—have been banned by the Detroit Chief of Police and by the Pennsylvania Board of Censors. *Soviets On Parade* was temporarily banned during a recent strike in Bellington, Washington, on the grounds that it would be "unwise" to show it at that time. The American Legion, without advancing a single reason stopped the showing of the classic *Road to Life* in Zanesville, Ohio. In Columbus, Ohio, the Safety Director (!) seized this film and refused to release it. The same picture was barred in Florida at the instigation of the Nazi consul.

The call to the third U. S. Congress Against War and Fascism, which meets in Cleveland, January 3rd to 5th, is one that theatre and film workers and dancers, and their audiences must answer. The New Theatre League and New Dance League have already endorsed it. The threat of war, in Africa, in Europe, in the Far East, hangs over us all. The signs of incipient fascism in the cultural fields multiply every day. A Congress Against War and Fascism is not a theoretical meeting. It is the best practical way that you have of stopping the threat of reaction in America, and the present looming menace of world war.

## DRAMA

Editorials	3
"The Awakening of the American Theatre" • Clifford Odets	5
"Paradise Lost" and the Theatre of Frustration • John W. Gassner	8
"Hymn to the Rising Sun" • Paul Green	11
Interpretation and Characterization • Harold Clurman	21
Shifting Scenes	32
Book Reviews	37
New Theatre's Second Anniversary	40
Backstage	46

## FILM

Stills from "Borinage"	6
English Documentary Films • Evelyn Gerstein	7
Love 'em With Bullets • Robert Stebbins	22
Dovjenko's "Frontier" • Peter Ellis	24
Uncle Tom, Will You Never Die? • Arthur Draper	30

## DANCE

The Dance in Mexico • Sophia Delza	26
Dance Reviews • Elizabeth Ruskay	28
Dance Front	36
Cover by William Entin	

HERBERT KLINE, Editor • MOLLY DAY THACHER, Drama • ROBERT STEBBINS, Film • EDNA OCKO, Dance • BEN BLAKE, European Editor • GEORGE REDFIELD, Managing Editor • DAVID CRYSTAL, Business Manager.

ASSOCIATES: L. Berman, Dorothy Dannen, Stephen Foster, Leo T. Hurwitz, Jay Leyda, Ray Ludlow, John Makepeace, Mark Marvin, Louis Norden, Norma Roland, Muriel Rukyser, Elizabeth Ruskay, Augustus Smith, Robert Steck, Jin Stern, Norman Stevens.

Vol. III, No. 1. Published monthly by the New Theatre League and New Dance League. Editorial and Business Offices: 156 West 44th St., New York City (BRyant 9-8378). Single copy: 15c. Yearly subscription: \$1.50. Foreign: \$2.00. Subscribers are notified that no change in address can be effected in less than two weeks. Illustrations and text cannot be reprinted without permission of New Theatre Magazine. Entered as second-class matter, October 29, 1934, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under act of March 3, 1879. Address all mail to New Theatre Magazine, 156 West 44th St., N. Y. C. Printed by Blanchard Press, Union Printers.

Hopes ran high several months ago when the plans for a Federal Theatre Project were announced. Many people felt that a new force was entering the American theatre, a force which would extend the influence of the theatre throughout territories where the stage is virtually dead and in addition give needed employment to many thousands of theatre workers in desperate need of relief. It seemed to us that even if the project was shortlived, it would give impetus to the establishment of many theatre groups, and thus widen the scope and influence of the theatre, bringing back an audience which it had thought was lost.

We still feel that the project may accomplish some of these aims, that its plans under the direction of Mrs. Flanagan and her talented associates are intelligent, imaginative and practical, its attitude towards organized labor cooperative and friendly—but we must recognize that faults common to all relief projects have cropped up in the drama section too. Sympathetic though we are with the problems facing the directors, it is now obvious that there is danger that the red tape of officialdom will continue to hamper them, and that thousands in need of immediate work relief will be kept waiting even longer. Production plans were announced several months ago; 2,750 men and women are already on the payroll with 2,250 more registered and waiting for assignments. But the drama projects, except for a few vaudeville groups, have not gotten under way, though publicity releases that have appeared in the press throughout the country indicate that every regional director has outlined projects which promise good theatre as well as work relief.

Meanwhile, about 200 workers, supervisors, and clerical staff, are demand-

ing backpay in New York, some of them for as much as two months work. They were told on starting work that salaries would be forthcoming, but now nobody will assume the responsibility for them. The WPA ruling that only ten per cent of the project workers may be non-relief workers, and that relief recipients registered after November 1st are ineligible still holds. This in spite of a side-tracked order from Harry Hopkins permitting the number of non-relief workers to be increased to twenty-five per cent, in special cases on cultural projects. News of the pigeon-holed order leaked out and protests from Equity, Associated Musicians, Local 802, the American Federation of Actors, the Stage Hands Union and the United Scenic Artists bombarded Washington. Furthermore, where applicants for jobs formerly had to pass through home relief only, they now have to go from Home Relief through the National Reemployment Bureau which, with neither the facilities nor the background to judge them properly, seems to have as its main objective the rejection of as many applicants as possible. Similar red tape in the interests of skimping and checking impedes transfers from project to project and outlays for necessary expenditures. The Service Department, the Inspection Department and the Procurement Department must have their say on the most trivial matters and their say, in some cases, can hold up work for weeks at a time.

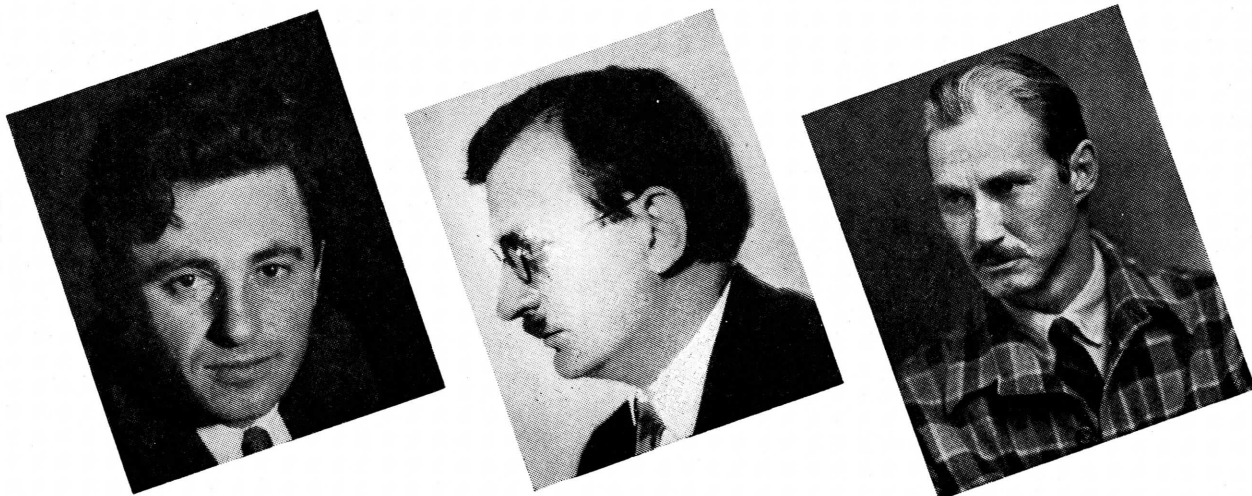
There are rumors of another kind of threat to the projects. Although it cannot be verified, the story persists that one of the largest lobbies in Washington since the utilities lobby is preparing to swamp the next session of Congress with activities directed against the Federal Theatre Project and its staff. Backed by owners of the film industry who fear the

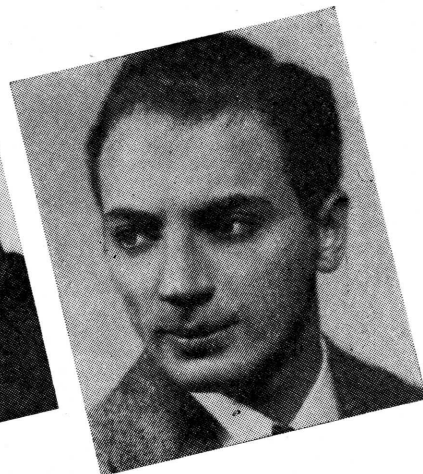
competition of low-priced plays, it might be joined by those whose only interest is to cut federal expenditures, not of course in the munitions industries, the C.C.C. camps, or any other disguised projects which serve the war interests, but where it will deprive thousands of workers of the employment for which they are fitted and force them back on senseless doles.

On the brighter side of the WPA picture, the theatrical unions have banded together, taking joint action on some of the issues which the project has presented in a manner which approaches an industrial union policy. All of them are realizing the need for a special classification and a lowering of dues and initiation fees for project workers. The Musicians' Local 802, is permitting the payment of initiations in installments and the Theatre Project Union which was formed by the members of the defunct Drama Project has dissolved so that many workers may enroll on the Central Projects Council, the organization for all employees of the WPA.

We have examined the economic side of the Federal Theatre Project in detail, at the risk of being criticized for over-emphasis, because it is the only National Theatre phenomenon so far observable. It seems evident that the current chaos comes largely from the fact that constructive planning is being attempted under an economic system which is anarchic by nature. Bureaucracy and threats to profits, as well as failure to reach agreements in the beginning with the stage unions, have held up the work, but it is still our earnest hope that the project, in addition to serving as a stop-gap for relief, will permit the talents which it has at its command to work for the rehabilitation of both theatre workers and the stage.

• LEADING FIGURES IN THE AWAKENING OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE. LEFT TO RIGHT—ALFRED SAXE, ALFRED KREYMBORG, PHILIP STEVENSON, CLAIRE AND PAUL SIFTON, EMJO BASSHE, JOHN HOWARD LAWSON, GEORGE SKLAR, PAUL PETERS, ALBERT MALTZ, CLIFFORD ODETS. PHOTOGRAPHS BY TALBOT, PINCHOT, MARTIN HARRIS, G. MAILLARD-KESSLERE, GRINELL-WOLF.





# "The Awakening of the American Theatre"

BY CLIFFORD ODETS

In the boom days of our country, lots of young and old people slept fitfully in the night. They wanted "art." They had money and all the implements of prosperity but no "art." It troubled them. They got out of bed and ate a roast chicken, sometimes two. But they didn't sleep. So they finally started the Little Theatre Movement. They got their "art."

By the time the big dark days came, they discovered the art wasn't very important. Banks were crashing, men fell off roofs, Hoover lost more hair; and art and the little theatre movement drifted away empty, smokey, evanescent. What was the use? What did it have to do with life? Besides money was scarce. Bye-bye little theatre.

All this was true of the big time Broadway theatre too. A rash of art broke out all over the street. Art was a paying proposition! Anything stuck on the stage was a paying proposition! Lots of talented playwrights were bothered. They got paid for their bother! Mr. Ford, the Bishop of Detroit (since replaced by the Bishop of Royal Oak), promised Americans the gold stream would not stop. But what is man? Man proposes, God deposes!

With the first thunderclap it was all over in the home, in the garage and in the theatre. The Columbia Burlesque circuit gave up the ghost. Many Broadway producers took to the Riviera. A few playwrights went on bravely. They discussed the problems of 1492 and 1669. They earnestly examined their navels; and told audiences what they had found. On the West coast Mae West got to be America's favorite tootsie. Over night

she became America's symbol of the good old days. Daring went, and no one could look 1929 in the face.

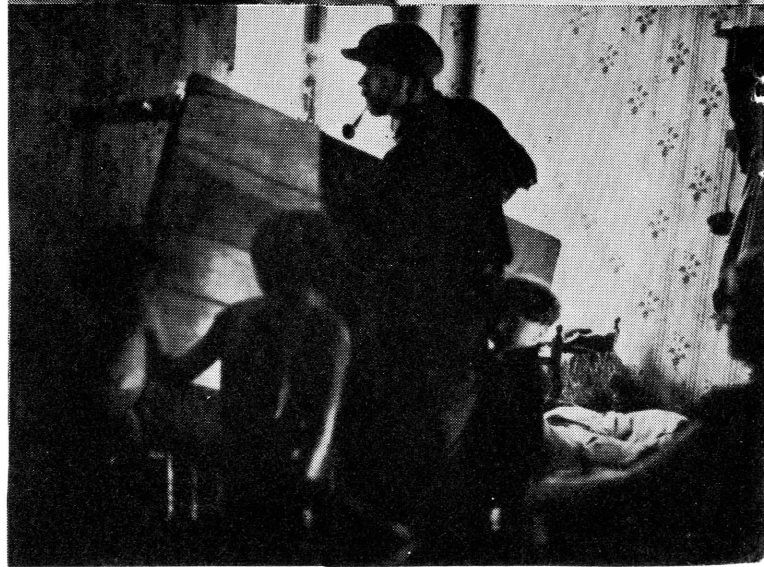
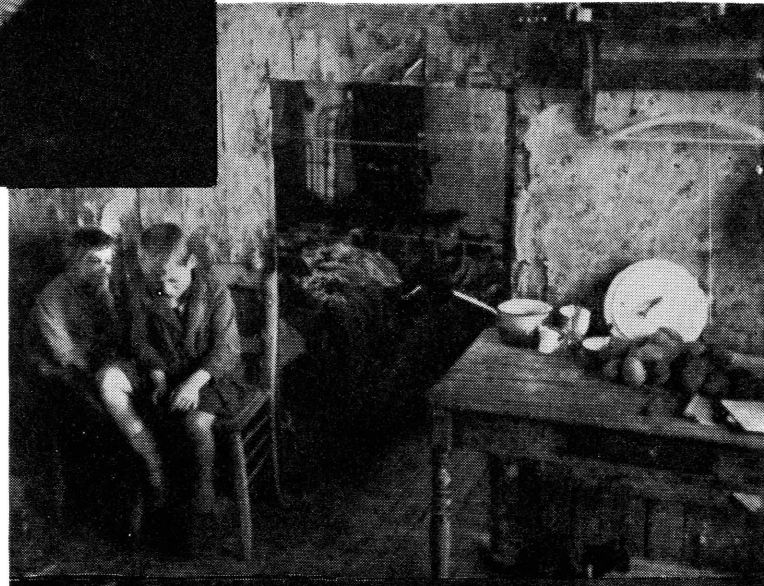
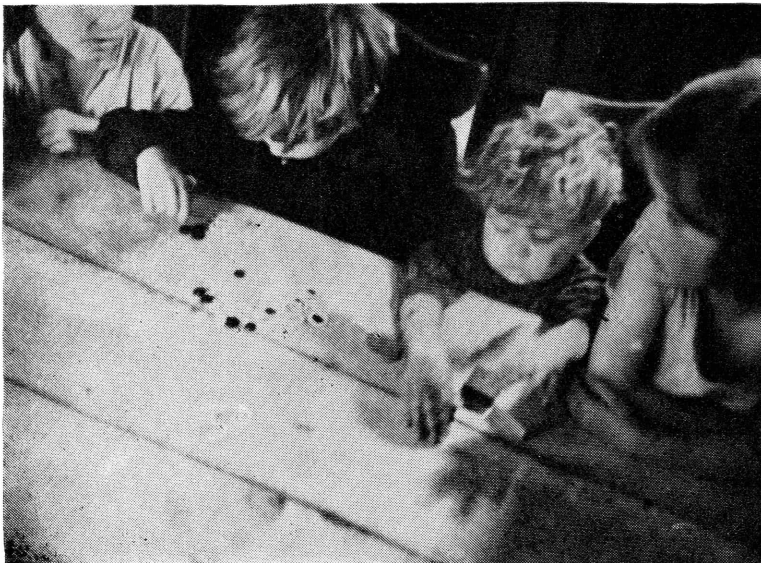
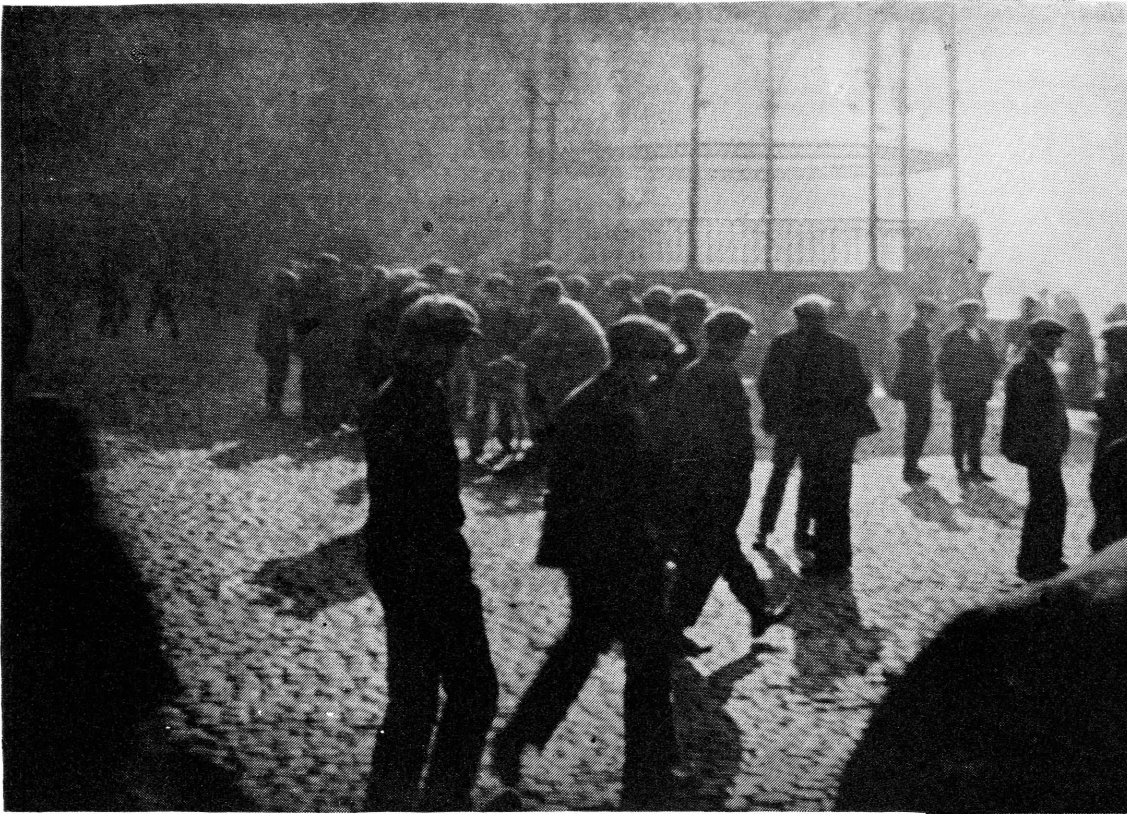
Yes, it looked black from wherever you sat. Everyone was saying the theatre was dead. Some blamed the movies. Some the radio. Others said it was the Gulf Stream's fault. Nights were growing longer. People were wishing Teddy Roosevelt would come on the scene and straighten things out with a big stick. (Still going on!)

Then a curious thing occurred: Certain small groups of theatre people began to concern themselves with 1929 and the years to follow. These isolated groups said art must be about something. It must be hot and spiteful, and it must probe the future with reference to the past and present. Yes, it was an early spring that year and out of the bloody earth a lone pale flower was growing up. It grew stealthily at first, quietly, underground, unnoticed. It sucked in fresh air. It was cultivated tenderly. It happens to be a forest of healthy trees at present!

The record of the growth of this theatre is the concern of Ben Blake in his fine pamphlet, *The Awakening of the American Theatre* (63 pages—issued by Tomorrow Publishers—and 25 cents buys it). You will find compactly stated the history of a whole genuine theatrical renaissance. Abundant and vital are good words to use for this new theatre which concerns itself with a sincere critical examination of life. Most of our theatre is gangrened tissue on an ailing body. This will drop off of its own weight even before the surgeon of economics gets to the scene. The live tissue of the Amer-

(Continued on page 43)





● FROM *BORINAGE*, JORIS IVENS' DOCUMENTARY FILM OF A BELGIAN MINE STRIKE, PHOTOGRAPHED UNDER CONDITIONS OF ACTUAL ILLEGALITY. MR. IVENS IS EXPECTED IN AMERICA WITHIN THE NEXT MONTH TO WITNESS THE FIRST SHOWING OF HIS FILM IN THIS COUNTRY. THE NEW FILM ALLIANCE WILL SPONSOR THE PRESENTATION OF *BORINAGE*.

# English Documentary Films

BY EVELYN GERSTEIN

Documentary films, without a footnote to explain them, are apt to be confused with that said American ritual the newsreel: child life on parade, the fleet parading the Pacific, and Rockefeller parading the dime, the smile and the homily.

The name suggests an arid compilation of data. But the document, whether it is scientific miniature, geography in a single reel or notes on the life of a coal miner, is the realistic core from which the film of the future most grow.

The phrase itself is bare and unequivocal. Yet, in the hands of a director like Dziga Vertov and in his film, *Three Songs About Lenin*, collected statements of fact become threnody and paean through the imaginative conversion of the artist.

There are three kinds of documentary films: the simple statements of fact, impartial, external; the films with editorial bias, implied or stated; and the films, very few, that attain conviction beyond their partisanship. Ruttman's silent film, *Berlin, Symphony of a City*, belongs in the first group; *March of Time* and Alexander Korda's imminent *Conquest of the Air*, the film that is taxing the zest and the budgets of London Films and the British Air Ministry, are in the second category; Dziga Vertov's films are in the third.

The Russian document derives from the news chronica, those brief, inter-Russian dispatches that are shown between feature films in a separate room in the film theatres; the English documentary film originated with Robert Flaherty.

At a time when the Hollywood movie never stirred from the studios, when the *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Lon Chaney and the gargoyles represented models of cinema fidelity to literature, Robert Flaherty went north for Revillon Frères and made *Nanook of the North*, a plotless film about Eskimo life. Like each of his later films *Nanook* was half camera record, half, poetic thesis on the beauty of isolation and primitive living. His films are notably barren of the drama talent in social contrasts.

Flaherty has made *Moana*, *The Twenty-Four Dollar Island*, or New York as a still life between rivers, and *Man of Aran*. He is now in India filming *Kim*. *Man of Aran* is all sea, kelp and fishing; it has neither wakes, nor dirges, nor people in their homes. It is no longer a document of reality but a photographed song of the surf. Flaherty has gone off the thin

edge of the document into the sea.

But in Flaherty's wake in England today, there is a school of younger film directors led by John Grierson, the film critic, who once touted Flaherty as the creator of cinema and leader in the escape out of the studio impasse. Today, Grierson has rejected Flaherty as an exotic, and established a unit for the production of realistic documentaries. His sponsor is the British General Post Office.

The list of the G. P. O. films is formidable; but the films themselves are seldom electric. Grierson says that it is not the individual directors, the separate films, that are significant, but the bulk of output; the list of the box offices they have forced; the Rotary clubs that will book their films; the film library of three-hundred odd films that they have to lease; and the permanence of their future endowment.

The English documentary film began when Grierson left New York for London to make films for the Empire Marketing Board. In 1933 Grierson acquired the title and post of Film Officer of the General Post Office, with the disposal of cameras, scripts and salaries to whom ever he chose.

Today, in offices off Soho Square, with a self sustained national campaign to insure them an audience in Wales, Edinburgh or Manchester, or wherever a film society, workers' film club or Rotary has

risen to cheer them the General Post Office unit lists eight directors, two apprentices and two staff composers.

W. H. Auden, one of the two apprentices will help in the filming of *Air Mail to Australia*, or "the decay of materialism," as Grierson puts it. In addition certain film-struck amateurs, musicians, artists, have joined the band. Directors include Cavalcanti, formerly of France; Basil Wright who made *Song of Ceylon*, that lyrical film, of the tea industry, sunken temples and Buddhas, soon to be shown here; Elton, the director of the slum clearance film for the Gas Company; Stuart Legge who made the British Broadcasting tract; Mary Field who did *This Was England* for British Instructional Films; Marion Grierson, Taylor, Watt and Austen. Paul Rotha is at present working for the British Instructional Film unit.

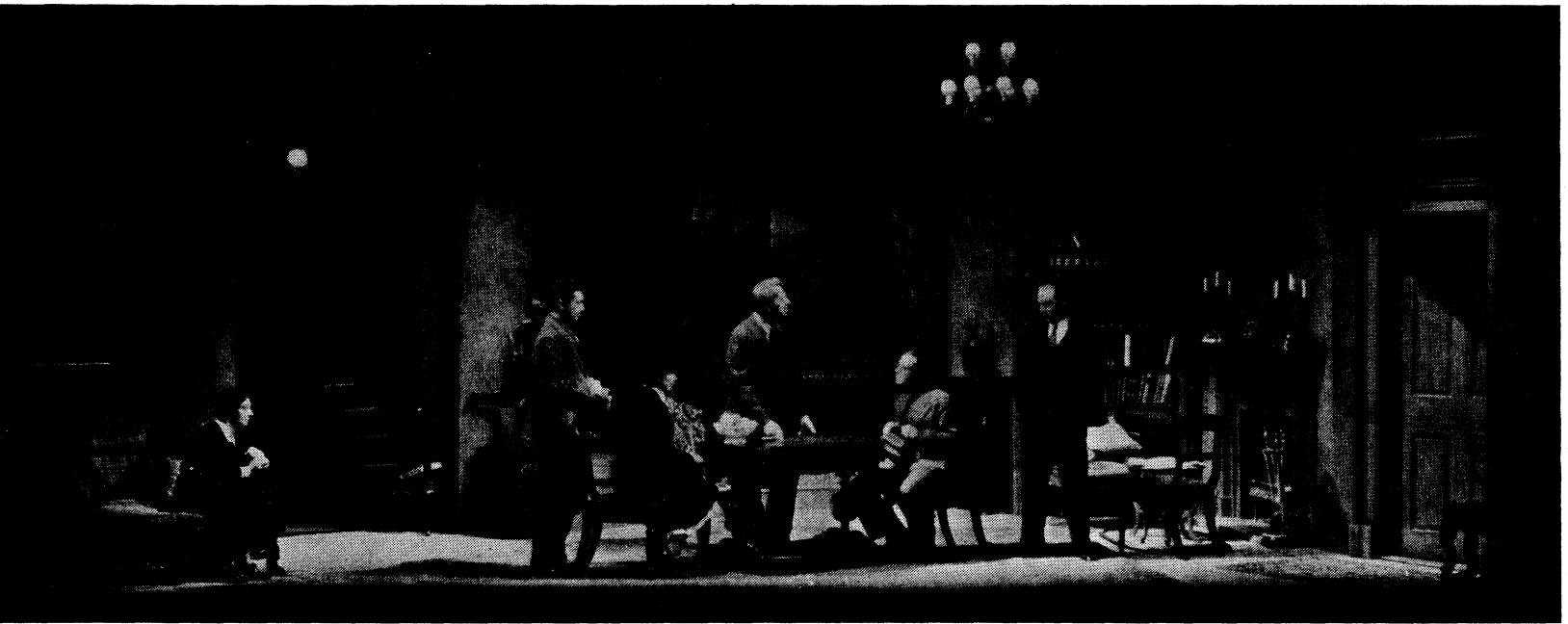
Among their films are: *Night Mail*, *S. O. S.*, *The Calendar of the Year*, *Derby*, *The Summer Post Card Industry*, *The Christmas Post Office*, *Stamps*, *Post Office Engineers*, *Negroes*, *Gas*, and a comedy *Thrift*, directed by Cavalcanti, as well as an original color cartoon painted directly on the film strip by the Australian Len Lye.

These films, though ostensibly advertising media for the Post Office unit are not too obviously tagged except at the

(Continued on page 38)



STILL FROM "SONG OF CEYLON," A G.P.O. FILM, PRODUCED BY BASIL WRIGHT



A SCENE FROM ACT I OF "PARADISE LOST"

# "Paradise Lost"

## and the Theatre of Frustration

BY JOHN W. GASSNER

It is historically significant that the theatre of frustration should be the special province of modern times. There was wailing and gnashing of teeth or subdued grief in the theatre long before the middle of the last century, but the anti-heroic or non-heroic type of tragedy seems to be the prerogative of the middle class. And it is not surprising that the drama of frustration should be the expression of the lower middle class, which is not high enough to escape frustration or low enough in the social scale to have its plight taken for granted and regarded as inevitable. Nearly every generation for more than three quarters of a century has given theatric expression to its doldrums, and one need only mention the names of Ibsen, Strindberg, Turgenev, Ostrovsky, Chekhov, Gorki, Brioux, Hauptmann, Kaiser and O'Neill in confirmation of this analysis. It was not to be expected that our own economically "depressed" and spiritually stalemated generation should fail to contribute to the harvest of dramatized defeat and stagnation. The past month has appropriately seen no fewer than three tragedies of this order, *Paradise Lost*, *Weep for the Virgins* and *How Beautiful with Shoes*.

It should be noted that in general the theatre of frustration is also a theatre of protest. Airing one's discontents is a patent form of rebellion, dramatization

of frustration is already a form of acting out, exposing a situation is criticism and often a challenge to action. This seems to have been sensed by those who have welcomed the work of Lawson, Kingsley, Geddes, Green, Odets and others, partly or wholly, into the camp of revolutionary drama. Sometimes the flame of revolt is quickly smothered by general pessimism and passiveness, as in *Beyond the Horizon*, *Juno and the Paycock* and Andreyev's *The Life of Man*. You can see the victim writhing, but there is practically nothing you can do for him. On the other extreme the theatre of frustration flares into open revolt, and defeat becomes a springboard for action. The evils of *Doll's House* and *Ghosts* were eradicable. Drama of this order presupposes a program.

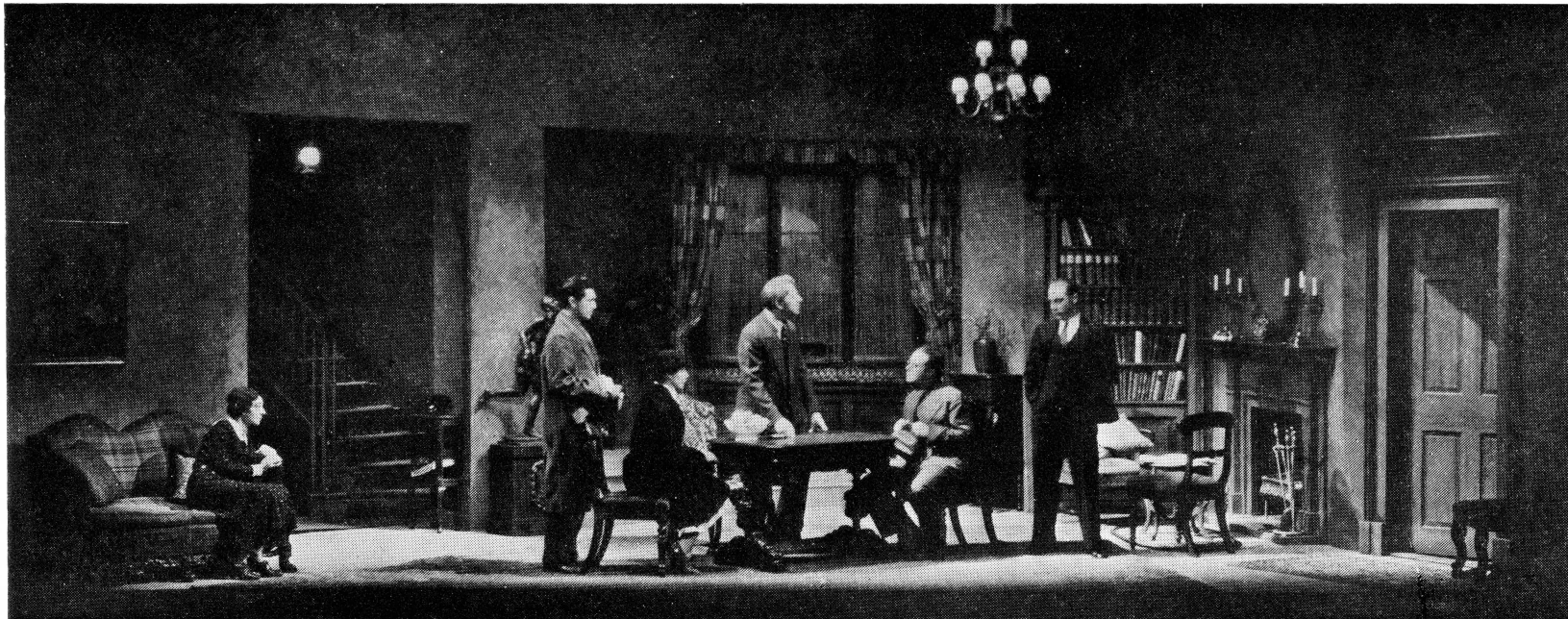
A third intermediary type of drama unrolls a situation without either accepting it as inevitable or flourishing a reform plank. Actually it presents an *impasse* from which one may gather that the *status quo* is impossible, that things cannot go on as they have been going, but the playwright, remaining strictly true to his characters, confines himself to their confusions and gropings. To the classic example of *The Cherry Orchard* one would add such dramas as *The Lower Depths*, *The Moon in the Yellow River*, *Tobacco Road* and, most recently, Clifford Odets' *Paradise Lost*, which,

however, does at least imply a program, if ever so subtly.

The honesty of dramas of this order commands respect, but their tight-rope walking exposes them to perpetual danger. Because they do not editorialize and fail to point to the road ahead with the definiteness of a partisan, they are apt to be denounced as confused and obscure. Because their preface to victory is infinitesimal in comparison with the long-enduring suffering and bewilderment of the characters such plays are likely to be reprimanded as exaggerated and unreal, witness the reception of *Paradise Lost*. If the playwright seeks to avoid this danger by means of understatement, like Virgil Geddes in his published plays, he is charged with incoherence. If, on the other hand, the dramatist allows his characters to express their doldrums openly and makes them symbols in the flesh by moving from photographic reality to caricature, compression and poetic intensification, he becomes guilty of every conceivable crime against dramaturgy in the eyes of those who are bound to a plodding, prosaic kind of realism. Let him fall short of perfect technique here and there, and he will face a determined firing squad.

All these problems appear to have swooped down upon Clifford Odets with the persistence of an anemic vulture when he wrote and launched his latest





A SCENE FROM ACT I OF "PARADISE LOST"

and to date most comprehensive drama. Turning from the relatively simple terms of his powerful shorter plays, Odets undertook the ungrateful task of holding up a mirror to the times which would reflect its deformity. He had already attempted this in his decidedly less mature first full-length play, *Awake and Sing*. But this play could be, and was generally, taken as a realistic picture of life in the Bronx—that is, as simple “genre painting”—with a detachable revolutionary peroration. Nothing can be detached from *Paradise Lost*, no matter how hard one tries, and it cannot be accorded the faint praise of being considered a fluid picture of family life in a rather “unique” environment.

Regarded as simply another ploddingly realistic family picture the play would become the jumble of troubles it has been accused of being. A kindly and idealistic pocket-book manufacturer has financial difficulties. One of his sons has had an attack of encephalitis and loses his reason at the end of the play. Another son, an Olympic champion, develops heart trouble, contracts an unhappy marriage, tries to sell toys on the corner when the Wall Street bubble bursts, and allows himself to be killed in a hold-up upon learning that his wife and his best friend have betrayed him. The daughter of the family loses her lover, a violinist with an unenviable future, in a period of depression, when he leaves town in search of employment. The manufacturer's partner, an unhappy impotent man whose frantic viciousness is that of an animal at bay, finally embezzles the firm's money. Bankruptcy and eviction from the two-family home follow. And throughout this tragic tale three outsiders fill the stage from time to time with their private sufferings and confusions—a lonely young gangster with tangled emotions, a native radical nursing his hatred for those who sent his sons to their death in the last war, and a senile old family friend.

That is all one sees in the play, if that is all one wishes to see. Then criticisms rush to one's lips. This is not reality, one says; too many catastrophes in one family, too much trouble in one package! (According to this indictment, *Oedipus Rex*, *Antigone* and the *Agamemnon* trilogy of Aeschylus should have received no-star ratings from the Athenian critics!) Moreover, this is not the middle class, one protests. Surely this estate does not abound in cases of encephalitis, and even if this were so it would still fail to be a strictly social or economic or political issue. Surely members of the middle class do not go about cheating their partners because of genital impairment. Surely this class is not pre-

ponderantly composed of such helpless, dying and inchoate individuals as the characters of the play. One grants that there are special cases, but one denies that the characters are representative.

Such an approach to *Paradise Lost* is the method of obdurate philistinism. It does not catch the intent of the play as bodied forth in its flow of characters and events, as expressed in its tone (or “feeling-tone,” to lift a good word from the psychiatrists), as circumscribed by its economic picture and social viewpoint. Since when has dramatic art been a statistical graph to be tested by the mathematical method, instead of a mode of dealing with the essence of things in tangible terms of flesh and blood! *Paradise Lost* brings together a group of people and a set of circumstances in the arbitrary manner of all art. Statistically speaking, you will find few middle-class families in which this combination is duplicated, but the dramatic complications of this drama represent the quintessence of a social tragedy—that of the disintegration of the middle class in our self-confessedly stalled social order. This stalemate is indicated in the play on two intimately connected levels: a general economic plane, the living presence of the depression with its accompaniment of financial pressure, foreclosure, evic-

tions, homelessness and artificial demagogic reassurances (“prosperity block-parties”); and a private, personal plane. The play is basically a *condensation* of a historic process.

In one compact and crowded picture Odets expresses the morbid state of society as he sees it. His is the method of realistic symbolism rather than realistic representation which would be inadequate for his purpose. You cannot “represent” a complex social phenomenon in the limited form of a single play. The impotence of much that seems hard-boiled about the small-time merchant and manufacturer finds rich exemplification in the character of Marcus Katz. He may rage and fume but he is unable to perpetuate himself, and with all his shrewdness he cannot cope with a relentless economic order. He may intimidate and exploit his handful of employees, but he is himself a pawn in the larger game which he does not run. His life's achievements are a woefully inadequate private life, economic insecurity, fruitless exploitation of the under-under-dog, and a petty embezzlement the consequences of which are bankruptcy. The iron men of the middle class in an era of economic gigantism are mostly straw. The other putative heroes of the family group are likewise duds. The handsome Olympic

MR. MAY (BOB LEWIS) WHOSE BUSINESS IS STARTING FIRES, IS TRYING TO MAKE A DEAL WITH KATZ AND GORDON, HANDBAG MANUFACTURERS. KATZ (LUTHER ADLER) IS SOLD ON THE SCHEME, BUT GORDON (MORRIS CARNOVSKY) REFUSES EVEN THOUGH THE INSURANCE MONEY WOULD SAVE THE CONCERN . . . —“PARADISE LOST,” ACT II.

Vandamm



MR. MAY (BOB LEWIS) WHOSE BUSINESS IS STARTING FIRES, IS TRYING TO MAKE A DEAL WITH KATZ AND GORDON, HANDBAG MANUFACTURERS. KATZ (LUTHER ADLER) IS SOLD ON THE SCHEME, BUT GORDON (MORRIS CARNOVSKY) REFUSES EVEN THOUGH THE INSURANCE MONEY WOULD SAVE THE CONCERN . . . —"PARADISE LOST," ACT II.

*Vandamm*



runner lives on the thin air of promises and goes downgrade in a society which he helped to "glorify." His friend Kewpie is a pathetic caricature of the tough-minded individualists who run the world and are aped on a slightly higher scale by the petty owning class of which Katz is a member. Only the radical furnace man and the shop delegates possess some real positiveness insofar as they are floating or being driven down to the clear and bracing sea of social responsibility instead of stagnating in a private puddle like the Gordon family.

But the middle class is not composed solely of professed materialists. Contrary to the opinion of some embattled persons it has its dreamers too, men of great inner refinement and idealism. Their tragedy can be the most appealing, and Leo Gordon's failure provides a sound and incisive analysis. His soul has been almost continually insulted by the sordid details of business enterprise, and he has even been an unconscious accomplice in the exploitation of his employees who are living on a starvation level. He has tried to escape these and other realities, but they close in on him. Then comes the final débâcle, with his home and business lost. He does not quite realize it yet, but he has become a worker, and an unemployed one at that; he is an example of "the proletarianization of the middle class." He is left only with his least material possession, his spirit that tells him that there must be something beyond the *impasse* which he has reached, that the spirit of man must leap over it, for a fruit tree does not wear a lock and chain.

A play that presents all this in flowing language and characterization is obviously a significant and deeply moving

achievement. Its symbolism, much more potent than that of the *Within the Gates* which received last season's plaudits (undeservedly in our opinion!), falters here and there. Thus one could have wished for a better exposition of the radical's and the working-class delegates' positive attitude. This might have clarified Leo Gordon's own vision at the end. The play would have also profited from the inclusion of a more robust and resilient member of the middle class who would speak for whatever real stamina it still possesses. The middle class may be dying according to Odets, but only an unrealistic optimism or pessimism will deny it a certain degree of vitality. The symbolism is a trifle misleading in this respect. We might, moreover, dispense with a few gratuitous speeches on decay and bewilderment particularly in evidence at the end of the first act, and with the encephalitic son, whose corroboration of the playwright's testimony is unnecessary and not quite clear. One would prefer a little less of the old family friend and his oblique action and statement. And finally, this reviewer could wish for a more native idiom and characterization at times. Still, with all its minor shortcomings, *Paradise Lost* is not only a notable advance in Odets' craftsmanship but one of the most thoughtful and moving plays of the American theatre. It is certainly the outstanding play of the season to date.

The Group Theatre, facing the best test of its art of collective acting, gives *Paradise Lost* the flow and studied *ensemble* which alone could do justice to the play. Not since the visiting Moscow Art Theatre's production of *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Lower Depths* has this reviewer seen such a richly human and sensitive collective performance. Harold Clurman's direction is sensitive and forceful; his handling of the final act gives it a tension and rising power essential to the production. A swifter pace in the second part of the first act, a smoothing out and additional clarification of Luther Adler's tense performance, and excision of Stella Adler's mannerisms at the beginning of an otherwise even performance would have made the production perfect in its kind. This reviewer would have also preferred a somewhat more native idiom in the acting of several parts, which would have strengthened the representativeness and credibility of a few of the characters.

### Other New Plays

The prerogative of making errors in the choice of plays is, of course, some-

thing that no theatre has ever quite renounced. But it was expected in many quarters that the Group would duplicate last year's successful presentation of militant drama, and it might have been hoped that the dramatic and social clarity it achieved in last season's work would guard against selection of a muddled and inconclusive play.

*Weep for the Virgins* is not a particularly important contribution which deserves closely reasoned attention. Nevertheless Nelisse Child's short-lived play must have been a tempting script with its treatment of the subject of frustration and mistaken dreams and its criticism of the artificial respiration by which many people live. Like that other only partially realized effort, Lawson's *The Pure in Heart*, the play reveals the tragic consequences of the lure of the theatre and the cinema, and of the general notion that material success can drop like manna from heaven, that the promised land (in this instance Hollywood), along with prosperity and Santa Claus, is just around the corner. The result is the frustration and bewilderment of the three hopelessly unhappy girls. Surely an excellent subject, a kind of contemporary *Three Sisters*!

Where the play collapses so disastrously is in failing to relate their tragedy to the outer world, the environment from which their delusions are supposed to spring. A single brief statement by a young worker on the social confusions imminent in the domestic tragedy is woefully inadequate. Instead of emanating from the larger environment, from intentionally false education by the press and the cinema, the tragedy of the girls derives from their mother, a woman so utterly common and fatuous that she would befoul any ideology that she represented. Thus the emphasis is shifted upon a personal influence of little general bearing, the issue is confused, the meaning obscured. The mother, too, is in a sense the victim of success propaganda, a fact that may very well have seemed more definite in the script. On the stage she is nothing but a contemptible moron.

*Weep for the Virgins* would have profited from the lesson of Odets' play — namely, that a treatment of frustration must have a focus. So would have the beautifully conceived dramatization, *How Beautiful With Shoes* by Wilbur Daniel Steele and Anthony Brown. The play tries to achieve a more than special and personal causation by placing two

(Continued on page 39)

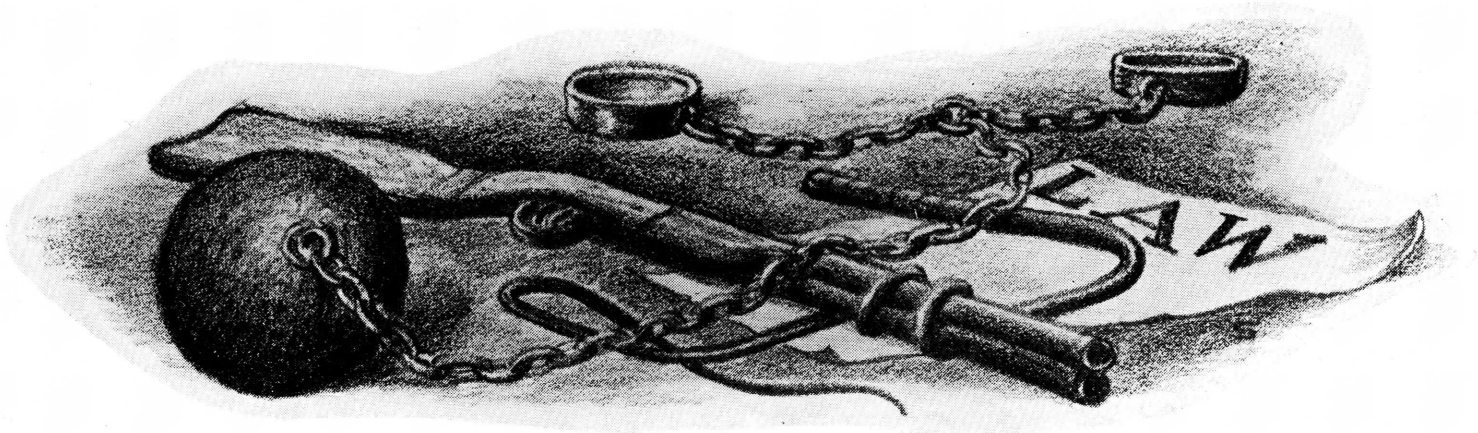


White  
ETHEL WILSON AND THOMAS FINDLAY  
IN A SCENE FROM "FIRST LADY"



*White*

ETHEL WILSON AND THOMAS FINDLAY  
IN A SCENE FROM "FIRST LADY"



# “HYMN TO THE RISING SUN”

BY PAUL GREEN

“As a place of punishment our chain gangs are the whole works, but as a place for building up of human beings they are sadly lacking in it. Under the present system of handling prisoners, our society is continually having thrown back into it—after their terms expire—a horde of hardened trained criminals—I know!”

—From the diary of a Convict Guard.

## CHARACTERS:

CAPTAIN HUFF, a convict boss

TWO GUARDS

BRIGHT BOY

PEARLY GATES

HOPPY

CARELESS LOVE

THE RUNT

OTHER CONVICTS

} Convicts

TIME: The Present.

PLACE: Somewhere in the United States.

*(The rising curtain discloses a convict stockade. It is the hour before sunrise, and in the grey twilight of the upheaving dawn a tent with the lips of its opening snarled back stands silhouetted against the paling stars. A line of posts like Indian palisades passes behind the tent, and stretched across them are the faint horizontal streaks of close barbed wire. At the left front is a barrel, and besides it a rough square table, and at the right front a box structure much like a small privy, some four feet high and about two feet wide. A smoky tin lantern set on top of the box casts its bilious eye over the scene and into the mouth of the tent where the convicts are sleeping in their double bunks. For a moment after the curtain rises nothing is heard except the deep breathing of the sleepers and the occasional clink of a chain as some convict moves his weary body on a hard shuck mattress. And then far away from the other side of the round world comes the snug crow of a rooster in salute to the waking day. A huge half-naked middle-aged Negro lying in the bottom bunk at the left smacks his lips and mutters in his sleep.)*

NEGRO: *(The sound growling up from the deep cavern of his belly.) Ah—oom.*

*(His long arms slide off the bunk and hang limply down to the ground. The top bunk at the right creaks, a chain rattles, and a boy about seventeen years old, with shaved head, haggard face and hollow eyes props himself up on his elbow and looks over at the Negro. He also is naked from the waist up.)*

BOY: *(Calling in a low husky whisper.)* Pearly Gates. *(But there is no answer from the Negro. He calls again—softly and with a careful look about him.)* Pearly Gates. *(The Negro stirs in restless fitfulness, pulls his long arms back up across his body and with a deep sigh goes on sleeping.)*

A CONVICT'S VOICE: *(From the depths of the tent, angry and guttural.)* Pipe dow-n-n!

COPYRIGHT, 1936, BY PAUL GREEN. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. FOR PRODUCTION RIGHTS SEE PAGE 46.

*(The boy waits a moment and then turns and stares at the box. A long while he gazes at it as if listening, and then with a sort of moan stretches himself out on his mattress. For awhile everything is quiet again—no rattling of chains, no clank of iron on iron, cuff on cuff, no muttering is heard. A deep and dreamless sleep once more seems to pervade the scene. But the sickly rheumy eye of the lantern does not sleep. Steadily it watches, waits and watches, while the night gnats and bugs whirl dizzily around it. Now it begins to wink, for the box on which it sits has started shaking. Something is imprisoned there. A scurried drumming is heard inside as if a huge bird is beating at the plank walls with bony featherless wings. The boy at the right front raises himself up in his bunk again and stares out at the box, then looks over at the Negro at the left.)*

BOY: *(In an agonizing whisper.)* Pearly Gates, Pearly Gates! *(The Negro at the left shakes himself like a huge chained animal, sticks his great hands up and grasps the siderails of the bunk above him.)*

PEARLY GATES: *(Muttering.)* Ah—oom. *(His hands release the rails and drop to the ground with a thud. The drumming in the box grows louder, and a voice inside is heard calling piteously.)*

VOICE: *(As if embedded in a thick quilt.)* Water—water!

BOY: *(Now sitting bolt upright and wagging his head in anguish.)* Somebody do something! Oh, do!

*(A tremulous shaking of iron chains passes through the tent, and the convicts turn in their bunks.)*

ANOTHER CONVICT'S VOICE: *(From the depths of the tent.)* Go to sleep!

BOY: Yeh—yeh—who can sleep? *(Calling softly again.)* Pearly Gates.

CONVICT'S VOICE: *(In savage mockery.)* Pearly Gates—Pearly Gates! What can he do?

*(One of the great hands of the Negro at the left begins waving in the air around his face as if shooing off pestering mosquitoes or flies.)*

PEARLY GATES: *(Groaning and smacking his lips in his sleep.)* Lemme 'lone, lemme 'lone, I say.

VOICE: *(In the box.)* Water, water—!

BOY: *(Moaning.)* Pearly Gates.

*(In the bunk below the boy a dropsical brutal-faced white man of fifty-five turns wrathfully over.)*

WHITE MAN: Shet your face, Bright boy, shet it! *(Muttering.)* A man's got to git his sleep, ain't he, if he swings them picks? What with you and the bugs and the heat—

*(He suddenly lunges upward, shoots his hand out around the rail of the boy's bunk and grabs him fiercely in the side. The boy lets out a low wail and pulls loose from him, and the white man lies down again.)* Next time I get hold of you I'll tear out a whole handful of your guts. *(The boy bends his head on his knees and begins to weep silently. Presently he chokes down his sobs, wipes his eyes with the palm of his hand and sits staring before him. For an instant everything is silent once more, and then the drumming in the box begins again. The boy moans, and the white man jerks up his leg to kick at the mattress above him, but a groan bursts from his lips as the shackle bites down on his ankle.)* Great God A'mighty—I've ruint my leg! *(He bends far over and rubs his leg, and then snarls around at the box.)* Stop it, Runt! Stop it! *(He turns his face away from the lantern light and stretches himself out for a nap. Pearly Gates suddenly sits up in his bunk. He wiggles his fingers in the air, waking them to life and opens his mouth in great gasps.)*

PEARLY GATES: *(Scratching his close-cropped head and staring about him.)* Who that called my name?

BOY: Runt's dying in that box. Oh, he is? Get the Cap'n, I tell you.

PEARLY GATES: *(Thinking a while and then showing his white teeth in a grin.)* How I gonna git the Cap'n and me chained to this here bunk?

BOY: Call him—he'll come.

PEARLY GATES: Nunh-unh.

WHITE MAN: *(Turning over on his back and chuckling.)* Reckon when Runt gets out of that box he'll quit going behind the tent to love hisself. *(Pearly Gates begins to laugh softly.)* What's tickling you?

PEARLY GATES: Bull of the woods, he said he was. Ah—om—a hundred pounds of skin and bones—wimmen's ease.

RUNT: *(In the box.)* Help me! Help me!

BOY: *(Vehemently.)* You got to do— *(His voice stops dead in the air as the first guard comes in from the left. He is a dissolute-looking fellow about thirty years old, dressed in overalls, a wide field straw hat, and a homespun shirt. He carries a double-barrelled shot-gun in the crook of his arm. Everybody grows silent, and Pearly Gates lies down again in his bunk.)*

GUARD: *(Quietly.)* Cut out the talking. *(Looking over at the boy.)* Lie down, sonny. *(He starts on out at the left rear.)*

BOY: Please, sir, please, sir—

GUARD: *(Stopping.)* What you want?

BOY: *(Trying to control the trembling in his voice.)* It's the Runt—water—give him a drink.

GUARD: *(Sauntering back and stopping in front of the tent.)* So Bright Boy don't like the way we treat the Runt, huh?

BOY: Give him some air. *(Raging out.)* No I don't like it! Nobody likes it.

GUARD: *(Peering at the boy.)* Maybe you forgot what the Cap'n told you yesterday.

BOY: But he's smothering to death, I tell you.

GUARD: It's Runt in old Aggie's belly, not you.

BOY: *(Half-hysterically.)* And you're killing him—killing—

PEARLY GATES: *(Interposing warningly.)* Heah, heah, boy.

GUARD: So you think this is a Sunday School, huh? *(Suddenly roaring at him.)* Stop that whimpering! *(Then quietly.)* The Cap'n said keep your tongue to yourself, didn't he? Ah-ha, seems like we can't please you, son. But we'll learn to please you.

*(He turns and saunters on out at the left rear. The boy flings himself back on his mattress and stuffs an old ragged blanket over his ears to keep out the low sound of Runt's whimpering in the box.)*

PEARLY GATES: *(Looking out and whispering.)* Jesus, child, you gonna git hurt if you don't mind. Heah me?

WHITE MAN: *(Whispering likewise up towards the mattress.)* It's hard at first, Bright Boy. But don't you worry. You'll forget your mother's love—song at evening—all of that. Yeh, after while you will. *(Now once more from that other world far away comes the proud crowing of the rooster. The white man mutters to himself.)* Wisht that chicken had a ball and chain around his neck. Oh, God, I do! *(He turns over again and hides his face under his arm.)*

PEARLY GATES: *(Singing in a whisper to himself.)*

“Good morning, Mr. Rooster,  
I wisht I had your wing,  
I'd fly across the ocean—”

*(He stops as an alarm clock goes off somewhere at the left, its little sharp daggers of sound stabbing the quiet scene. The convicts lie still a moment and then twist and mutter in their bunks, and the rattle and clink of chain accompany*

them. A moment passes, and the cook enters from the left front, carrying a steaming tin tub in his hands which he sets on the table. He is an elderly bent white fellow with a sad monkey-like face. His close-shaven head gives him a strange youthful appearance around his forehead and ears which contrasts sharply with the gnarled eldiness of his mouth and jaw. As the tub thumps down on the table, the prisoner in the box at the right front drums and thunders with a last despairing burst of energy. The lantern reels crazily and falls to the ground, filling the scene with plunging grotesque shadows. A flood of clinking sounds rises from the tent, and the muffled faces and shoulders of the convicts can be seen as they rear up in their bunks to look out. With the slow waddling movement of an old duck the cook goes over, picks up the lantern and replaces it on top of the box. Then he turns and pokes his way out at the left front, mopping his sweaty face with his apron as he goes. The convicts lay themselves down again to their rest. By this time the slaty grey of the approaching dawn has changed to a pearly grey, and the outlines of the bunks in the tent, fifteen or twenty of them, show up somewhat more distinctly, as do the posts and barbed wire across the rear.

The convict boss comes walking slowly in from the right front. In the morning gloom he shows to be a heavy-set man, dressed in sombrero, khaki shirt, bow tie and khaki trousers. Jammed down in one of his heavy boots is the snakelike form of Old Jeff, as the convict lash is called. In a holster at his waist he carries a forty-five automatic. Stop-

ping by the box a moment, he listens and then raps on it with his knuckles.)

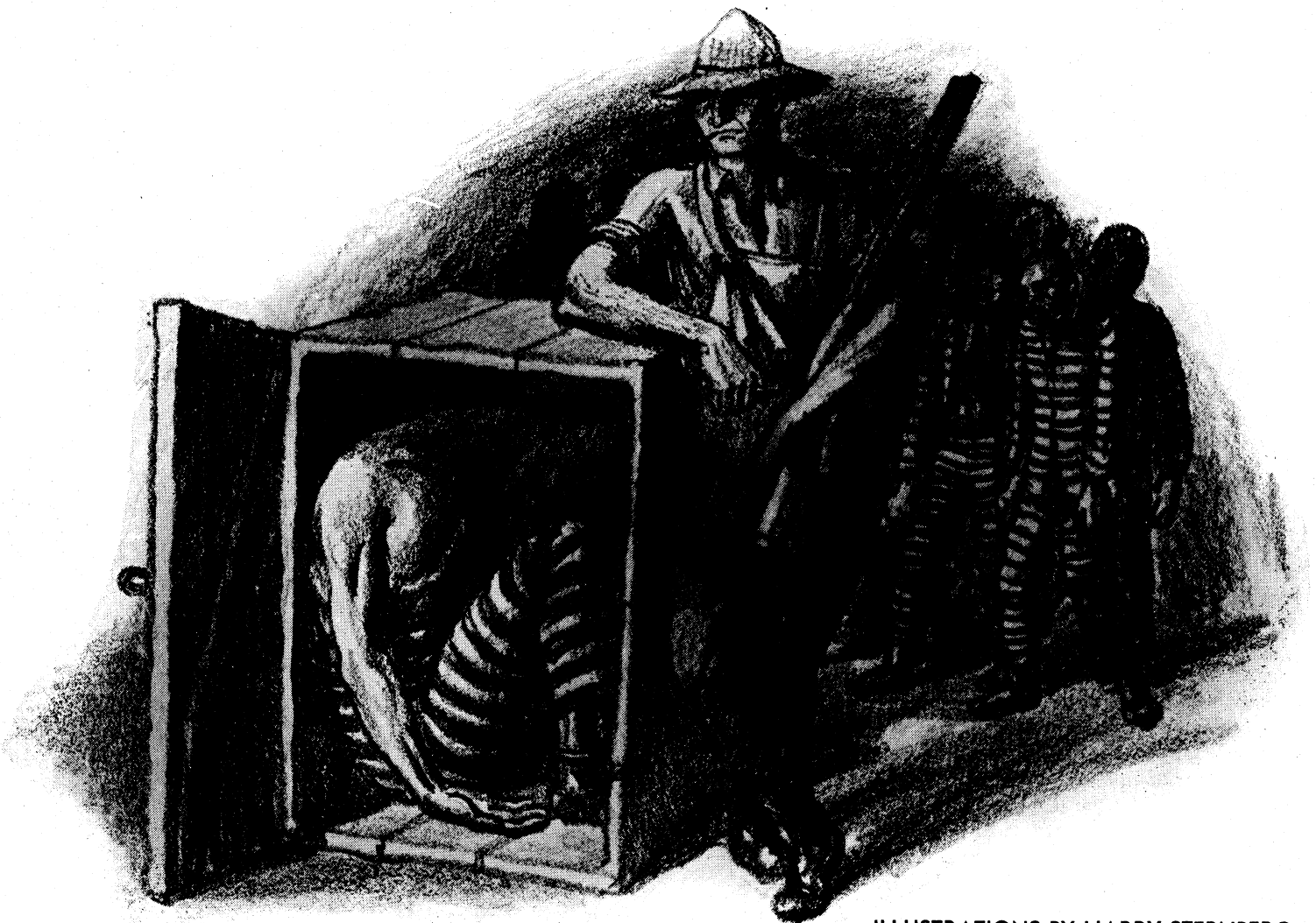
CAPTAIN: (In a husky pleasant voice.) How is it, old Love Powder?

RUNT'S VOICE: (Faint and faraway.) Water, water!

CAPTAIN: Sure you're going to get your water—your piece of bread too—at feeding time. (He walks on toward the mouth of the tent and speaks cheerily as he enters.) Morning, boys, morning. (Without waiting for a reply he continues.) Hope you all slept well. (Pulling a key from his pocket, he begins unlocking the shackles with a cool, deft sound.) I've let you sleep late today—half an hour extra. Now ain't that nice. I say, ain't that nice?

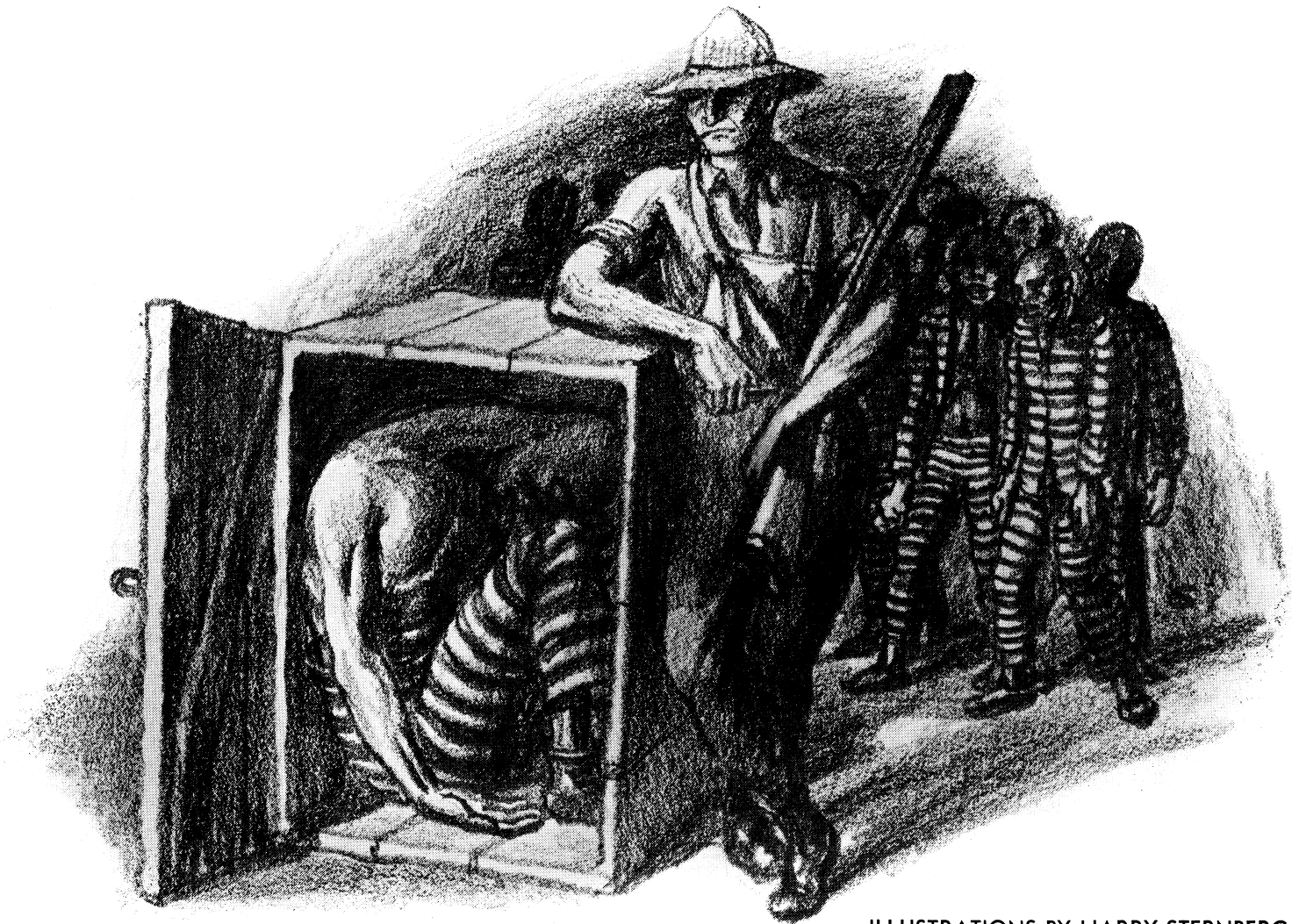
SEVERAL SCATTERED VOICES: Yessir, Cap'n, yessir.

CAPTAIN: In honor of the occasion, I did. Now stir yourselves. (As each prisoner is unlocked, he slips his shoes on, steps out into the aisle and stands with his face to the front waiting. The Captain goes on talking pleasantly.) I've been up an hour. Already had my breakfast. (Click, click.) Yessir, couldn't sleep. Responsibility, worry, thinking about you fellows—how to handle you, how to keep you happy. (Chuckling.) Happy, you heard me. I'm the one that really wears the ball and chain in this camp. (His voice dropping down into a sudden hard note and then rising to a pleasant pitch again.) Ha-ha, that's right. (Passing along the tier of bunks to the left he continues unlocking the shackles—click, click.) I hope Runt's cutting up in that box didn't hinder your beauty sleep. (He is now unlocking the shackles of

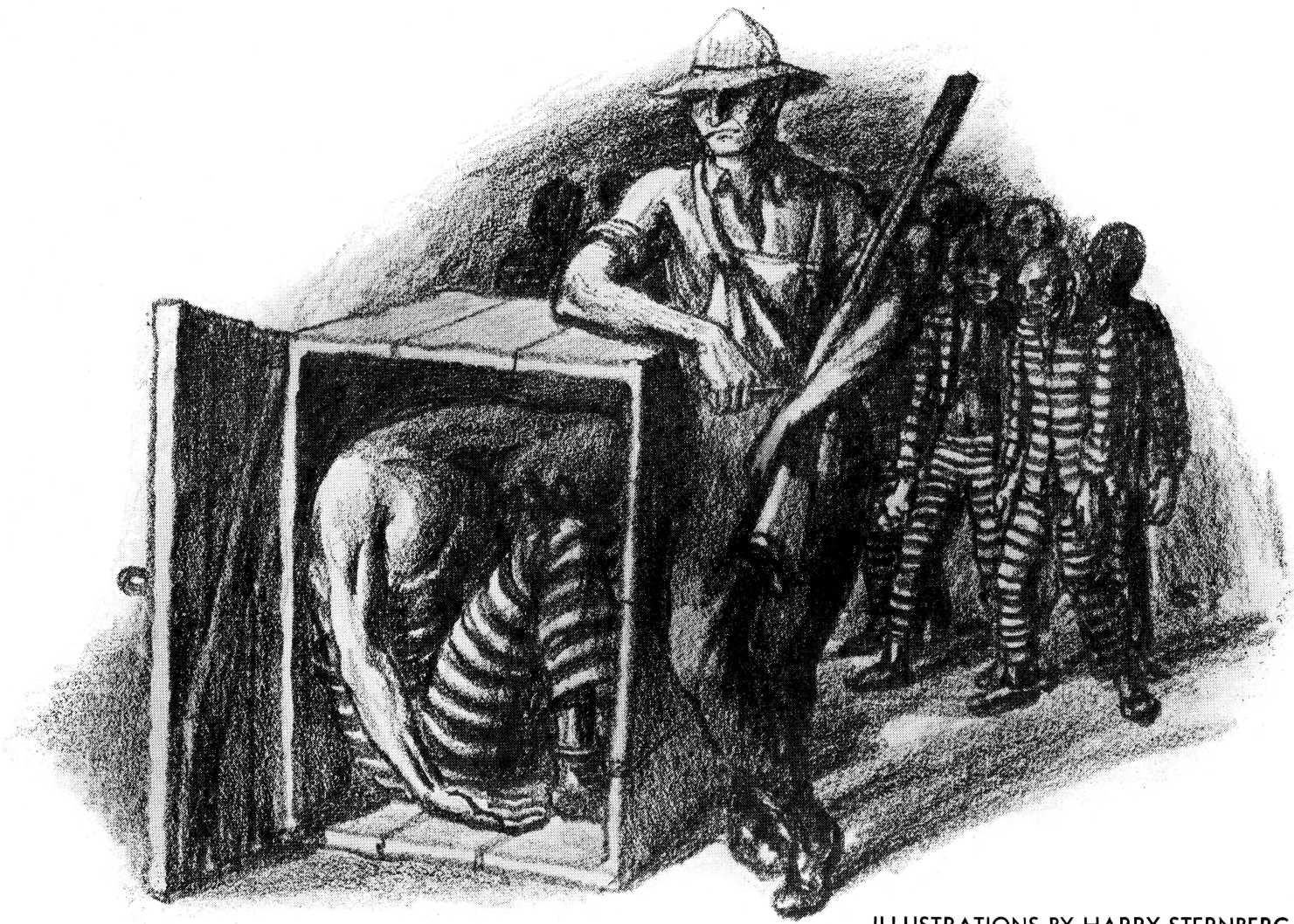


ILLUSTRATIONS BY HARRY STERNBERG





ILLUSTRATIONS BY HARRY STERNBERG



ILLUSTRATIONS BY HARRY STERNBERG

Pearly Gates.) I say, did it keep you awake?

PEARLY GATES: (*Showing his white teeth in a sudden spasmodic grimace which is meant for a grin.*) No sir, no sir. (*The Captain steps back two or three paces towards the front and draws himself up in a military pose.*)

CAPTAIN: (*His voice barking through the morning air.*) Hep—hep! (*The line of white convicts on the right march out and stand facing towards the left. There are ten of them—two elderly men, three middle-aged men, and five boys from seventeen to nineteen years of age. They are all naked to the waist, wearing dirty striped trousers and carrying their jackets and convict caps in their hands. The Negroes led by Pearly Gates come out and join the end of the line. There are eight of these, four young bucks, an old bent mulatto, and three middle-aged fellows. The Captain counts them.*) Two-four-six-eight-ten-twelve-fourteen-sixteen-eighteen— (*Adding with a gesture towards the box behind him.*)—nineteen. All right, get over there and purty up your faces. (*They move over to the barrel at the left and begin washing themselves in turn. As each one steps up to the barrel, he sticks his jacket and cap between his knees, lifts out a cupped handful of water, dashes it on his face and moves on, drying himself with his jacket. The cook brings in a dishpan from the left, sets it on the table by the tub and returns the way he came. The convicts begin putting on their jackets and caps and forming in a line before the table, the ten whites in the same order as before and the Negroes behind them. The Captain pulls out a heavy gold watch, looks at it, snaps the lid to and sends a brazen shout towards the rear.*) Guard Number One!

VOICE: (*Answering from the right rear.*) Yay-hoo!

CAPTAIN: Guard Number Two!

A VOICE: (*From the left rear.*) Yo-ho!

CAPTAIN: Four o'clock!

(*The cook comes rolling a wheelbarrow in from the left. It is loaded with tin pans and spoons. He stops it by the table, steps behind the tin tub and picks up a dipper.*)

COOK: (*Croaking out to the tune of the army mess call.*) Greasy, greasy, greasy!—Greasy, greasy, greasy!

(*The convicts shuffle towards the wheelbarrow, and the white man who is in the lead picks up a plate with a spoon and holds it out for his helping. The cook loads him down with a dipperful of cabbage, fatback, grits, and a hunk of bread. He passes on, goes over to the right rear, squats down on his haunches and begins eating ravenously. The second man follows with his helping, takes his place by the first, and so on in turn until all have ringed themselves across the scene in a squatting semi-circle, showing in the half-light like a row of grotesque animals. Some of them eat with the rapacity of dogs—their pewter spoons going scrape, scrape against the bottoms of their tin plates—others slowly and with no interest in their food. The middle-aged and elderly ones seem to have the best appetites. The younger ones eat little, and Bright Boy nothing at all. While the convicts are busy getting their food and settling down, the Captain stands watching them indulgently like a circus-master with his trained pets. Now he moves over to the right front and leans against the box. As he faces us we get a better view of him in the lantern's glow. His face is swarthy, heavy jowled, clean-shaven and set off with a close cropped gray moustache. When he is in an easy-going mood as he seems to be now, the pupils of his slumbrous brown eyes are cut across by the drooping curtain of two heavy eyelids. But when he gets mean, these same eyelids have a way of snapping back like the hinged flap of a box, and the gleaming forked light from his eyes looks holes through a man.*)

CAPTAIN: (*Scanning the row of figures and listening to the scrape, scrape of the pewter spoons.*) Go to it, boys, I like to

hear you eat—and you need it. (*Looking off by the tent towards the horizon where the red of approaching sunrise is beginning to dye the sky.*) It's going to be a fine day. Clear as a bell. And hot—clear and hot. We ought to move many a yard of dirt on that fill, hadn't we? I say hadn't we?

SEVERAL SCATTERED VOICES: Yes sir, Cap'n.

PEARLY GATES: Yea, Lord, let the buggies roll!

CAPTAIN: That's right, Pearly, old wheel-horse.

PEARLY GATES: Just watch me wheel, Cap'n.

CAPTAIN: (*Tapping on the box and addressing the prisoner within.*) And if you'll be a nice boy, Runt, we might give you your shovel back.

(*The boy who is squatted over his untouched food looks joyously up.*)

BOY: (*With his voice half-breaking in a fervent sob.*) Thank God!

CAPTAIN: (*His glance drifting lazily over towards the boy.*) Son, you hurt my feelings. You oughta thank me—not God. (*His gaze coming back to the box.*) And besides, Runt, we might need this bedroom of yours, who knows? (*The scraping of the spoons suddenly stops. The Captain laughs.*) Oh, I'm joking boys, unless—(*His voice dies out, and a low aimless whistle begins to sound through his full lips. The scraping of the spoons begins again. Suddenly the air is rent by the sound of two shotguns fired off almost simultaneously in the distance. The convicts spring to their feet with a howl and stand trembling with fear, some of them dropping their pans and food in the dirt. The Captain speaks soothingly to them.*) Never mind, boys, the guards are just celebrating a little. They ain't shooting nobody. (*Calling off in his great voice.*) Ready to ride!

FIRST VOICE: (*From the back.*) Yay-hoo!

SECOND VOICE: (*Likewise.*) Yo-ho!

(*The convicts settle down again on their haunches, some of them holding empty pans disconsolately in their hands. The Captain walks over towards the row of figures. He stops before Pearly Gates who is getting his hunk of fatback out of the dirt.*)

CAPTAIN: Why, Pearly, you let a gun firing off scare you, too? I'm surprised.

PEARLY GATES: (*Grinning and gulping.*) Me too, Cap'n. Seem like I can't help it. (*Now showing his teeth in the same spasmodic grin and with a half teasing unctuous begging.*) Bet they ain't no seconds for a good boy, is they, Cap'n?

CAPTAIN: (*To the cook.*) What say, Greasy?

COOK: (*Croakingly, as he stares out before him with his bat-like eyes.*) Ain't no seconds. (*Pearly Gates begins eating his meat, dirt and all. The Captain smiles and moves on.*)

CAPTAIN: (*Stopping in front of the boy.*) What's the matter, son?

BOY: (*Struggling to make his tongue speak and at last getting out a few words.*) Not hungry, Cap'n.

CAPTAIN: Not hungry?

BOY: No sir.

CAPTAIN: Sick?

BOY: Yessir, yessir.

CAPTAIN: Sorry to hear that. Wish I could fix you up a nice feather bed. Yessir, and give you a pretty little nurse to hold your hand and smooth your forehead. But we can't do that, son. (*Suddenly bending over him, his voice chilly as steel.*) Eat them God-damn rations! (*With a terrified look the boy grabs up his plate and begins shoveling down the hated cabbage and side meat. And then suddenly his mouth flies open and he vomits them out again. The Captain backs away from him, bends over with his hands resting on his knees and peers at him.*) That little shooting upset you, huh?

BOY: (*Teetering back and forth on his heels and choking.*) I just can't eat it, Cap'n, I can't.

CAPTAIN: Not good enough, eh?

BOY: (*Watching him with ashy face.*) Yessir, it's all right, but I just can't eat it—I—

CAPTAIN: And how the hell you 'spect to roll your wheelbarrow, if you don't eat?

BOY: (*His words sputtering from him like a shower of crumbs.*) I'll keep it rolling, Cap'n, I'll keep it turning—I'll—

CAPTAIN: (*Sorrowfully.*) You didn't do it yesterday, son.

BOY: (*Whimpering.*) Yessir, yes sir, I did.

CAPTAIN: Well, never mind, maybe you did. Anyhow, don't worry over your appetite, son. In a week or two you'll think fathback and cabbage are angel cake. (*He straightens up, laughs quietly as if dismissing the subject, and then addresses them.*) You boys know what today is? (*No one answers.*) Hey, you, Pearly Gates, what is today?

PEARLY GATES: Lawd, Cap'n, I don't know.

CAPTAIN: What, my right-hand man and he don't know? (*To the bloated-faced white man at the right.*) You, Hoppy, what day is it?

HOPPY: Dunno, sir.

CAPTAIN: (*To a tall sad-faced young fellow.*) You know, Careless Love?

CARELESS LOVE: Thursday, I think.

CAPTAIN: I'm ashamed of you fellows. Ain't you got no interest in your country? (*Snarling out to the boy who jumps nervously.*) What's today, son? What sets it apart from all other days?

BOY: (*Fearfully.*) It's the Fourth of July.

CAPTAIN: That's right, Bright Boy. Independence Day. (*Shouting at them.*) Attenshun! (*They all spring to their feet and stand with their tin pans in their hands.*) Forward, march! (*They move over towards the left, and passing by the wheelbarrow lay their utensils down, then form in a line as before. The two guards enter, one from the left, one from the right. The second guard is dressed like the first, is about the same age, and also has a double-barrelled shotgun in the crook of his arm. They are both gnawing sandwiches. The Captain calls out to them.*) Well, gentlemen, I thought you'd fell into the latrine and got drowned. (*A staccato burst of laughter is fired off among the convicts and then dies suddenly away as the Captain looks at them.*) I was just saying that this is the glorious Independence Day, the great day when Old King George got his tail bit off. Hum—hum. I used to shoot thunderbolts in my mammy's yard on Fourth of July. Years ago, years ago, I did. My daddy beat me half to death once for doing it. (*Holding up his left hand from which two fingers are missing.*) Got them fingers blown off that way. (*Pearly Gates snickers. The Captain looks over at him.*) I forgot you knew all about it, Pearly. (*To the convicts.*) Well, he's right. A nigger bit 'em off long ago when I tried to arrest him for stealing a bushel of corn from old man Tyler. (*Reminiscing as he drops his hand.*) Hum—hum, and when I drilled him with the cold steel, he spit 'em out again—kerdab right in my face. And now, boys, since you know how it happened you needn't keep looking at my hand after this. (*His voice crackling out an order to the first guard.*) All right, clean up!

FIRST GUARD: (*Adopting the authority of the Captain.*) Fall out! (*The convicts fall out of line and begin policing the ground around the tent. The second guard finishes his sandwich and stands by the box. The Captain wanders towards him.*)

CAPTAIN: (*In a low voice.*) Anything stirring?

SECOND GUARD: (*Likewise in a low voice.*) Looks like he's got to have it, Cap'n.

CAPTAIN: Hum.

SECOND GUARD: Can't seem to quiet him down. Talk—talk—cry, cry. Nobody couldn't sleep last night.

CAPTAIN: (*Softly.*) Bright Boy?

SECOND GUARD: Ah-hah, Bright Boy.

(*In the background the boy bends over for a bit of paper, then stops and looks questioningly around. The first guard touches him in the rump with the nozzle of his gun.*)

FIRST GUARD: Step along, Buster.

(*The boy darts forward, grabs up the bit of paper and begins searching the ground in front of him.*)

SECOND GUARD: (*To the Captain.*) Been here a week and worse than ever.

CAPTAIN: He wants his mammy.

SECOND GUARD: Three days now and he says he's sick.

CAPTAIN: He ain't really sick.

SECOND GUARD: Oh, no, the thermometer said he weren't.

CAPTAIN: Ah-hah. He thinks we run a hospital.

SECOND GUARD: It ain't no hospital, is it?

CAPTAIN: Hell, no, it ain't that at all.

SECOND GUARD: And he thinks other things too. (*Pulling a spoon from his pocket.*) Found that in his mattress last night.

CAPTAIN: (*Chuckling.*) Thought he'd make him a pewter file, did he?

SECOND GUARD: Looks like it.

(*The Captain takes it and looks at it.*)

CAPTAIN: They will try them little tricks at first. (*He throws the spoon over into the wheelbarrow.*)

A NEGRO CONVICT: (*In a high melodious call from the rear.*)

Wanter void, Cap'n, wanter void!

CAPTAIN: (*Without looking around.*) You can do it at the job—we're late now.

FIRST GUARD: (*Singing out.*) That's about all, Cap'n!

CAPTAIN: Okay, line up! (*The convicts who have finished cleaning up resume their places as before. The Captain moves out and stands before them, and the two guards stand at the right and left front facing towards the back. For awhile everyone waits as the Captain's eyes study the pitiful motley crew before him. Presently he breaks into a low musical laugh. The convicts look at him with a mixture of perplexity and fear. And then he speaks in an easy voice.*) I was just wondering, boys, whether I ought to make you that Fourth of July speech or not. What the hell good will it do? What say, Pearly?

PEARLY GATES: (*With his everlasting grin.*) Yessir, Cap'n, we'd sure like to hear you.

CAPTAIN: I ain't had a chance to make you a speech since last Easter when I talked on the Resurrection. But orders from Headquarters say I must call your attention to the occasion. (*Clearing his throat.*) Well, boys, orders is orders, as some of you ain't never found out and I take the privilege of our Independence Day of once more addressing a few words unto you. (*He waits a moment and then begins his flow of words.*) According to statute number six hundred and forty-two of the penal code duly proved and entered in the House of Representatives, so I'm told, by a vote of ninety-six to four, the punishment for constant trifling and belly-aching is twenty-nine blows with the whip. (*Stopping and eyeing them.*) But did I ever whip a man that much? I say, did I?

PEARLY GATES: No sir.

CARELESS LOVE: No, Cap'n.

CAPTAIN: You're damn right I didn't. Also it prescribes old black Aggie over there, and the goat and chaining you up for various offenses, such as trying to escape, plotting a mutiny, sex perversion and crimes against nature. Yessir, that's what they tell me to do to you, and I'm nothing but the instrument of the voters' will. The voters say so, and what the voters say is law, ain't it?

HOPPY: (*Shifting his weight.*) It sure God is.

(*Some of the others nod their agreement, and all watch the Captain with roving blinking eyes, except the boy who stands with his head bowed.*)

CAPTAIN: Yessir, they've got the power, for this is a democracy and democracy means the voice of the people. And the people—well who are the people? Why they are the grand old Daughters of the Revolution, and the Confederacy—and the bishops and ministers of the gospel—Episcopalians, the Baptists, the Methodists and the Presbyterians, and all the Elks and the Kiwanis Clubs, the Rotarians, the Lions, the college presidents, the professors in the great institutions of learning, the folks that write books, and the lawyers—don't forget them. They are the people. They march to the polls and elect representatives and say pass the laws to keep the peace, and they pass the laws and they hand the laws over to me and say "Twenty-nine blows!" Ain't it so? And they tell me to put Runt there in that sweat box in solitary confinement for messing with his private organs. Yessir, they're the folks that fasten chains and shackles around your legs, ain't it so?

SEVERAL VOICES: (*With more feeling.*) Yes sir, Cap'n.

CAPTAIN: (*With a snarl.*) The hell it is! You fellows put the chains around your own legs. You don't pass the laws, but you break 'em. (*He quiets his voice down and goes on more pleasantly.*) I reckon some of you think I'm hard, that I ain't got no feeling, that I'm a brutal slave driver. Well, I ain't. You've heard me say it before and I'll say it again—I ain't enjoyed beating any one of you the whole time you been here. And I don't enjoy hearing Runt drumming inside that box no better than you do. But you're undergoing a course of training, and I'm the teacher, and I got to call it to your attention again that this ain't no life for a human being to stay in. Behave yourselves, I say. Do what you're told, and get out of here quick as you can. Go back to the other world and start a new life. (*More persuasively.*) Some of you boys have killed folks. You've robbed filling stations, burnt houses, stole and raped. Every one of you is in here for some reason. They didn't put you in here just because they liked to go around and ketch you the way boys do birds and wring their necks. The great commonwealth of this state wishes every one of you was out of here. And I do too—wishes you were good upright citizens. Yeh, citizens—you heard me. And that's what you're here for—to see if I can make citizens out of you. And how you going to do that? Not by lying in bed and eating chocolate candy and having a 'lectric fan blowing over you. No, sir. If they made jails like that everybody'd be in jail and there'd be nobody outside of it. (*With a barking laugh.*) Then what'd happen to me? I wouldn't have no job, would I? (*The convicts relax their stony attitude a bit, for now the Captain is feeling his speech-making power and his voice has grown mellow.*)

VOICES: Yes sir, Cap'n, that's right.

CAPTAIN: And I try to be a good Cap'n to you, don't I?

VOICES: (*More heartily.*) Yes sir, Cap'n.

CAPTAIN: You're damn right I do. And I have a hard time of it, 'cause there are a lot of folks on the outside who keep snooping about, messing around, trying to tell me how to run things. Them University fellows come down here and leave their books, and I been reading one of 'em written by a fellow named David Cook. And what does he say? Why, the man weeps tears, he does. He goes on page after page crying about the po' Negro, how we got to do this and that for him, got to raise him up. A lot of crap, every word of it. A nigger's a nigger. Ain't that so, Pearly Gates?

PEARLY GATES: (*With his puppet-like spasmodic grin.*) That's the gospel, Cap'n.

CAPTAIN: Right. And you niggers that's in here didn't have sense enough to know that, and so you went around trying to stir up trouble, thinking maybe you were just sunburnt white men and could do as you pleased. Well, you got away easy. A lot of you ought to have been strung up to telegraph poles and the limbs of trees, and you know it. Well, when you get out of here, go back home and keep to your place, a nigger's place. And as for you white fellows, look at you. I been bossing convict camps for twenty years. More'n half the prisoners under me has been boys like Bright Boy there—hardly loose from their mother's apron strings, just in the marble stage. What the devil's the matter with you? Well, I reckon it's them same mothers—they didn't know how to train you, petted and spoiled you. Well, I say it again—you won't be petted here. The course of sprouts I'm putting you through is a course of rawhide sprouts, as the scriptures say. And when I turn you loose you'll be hard as iron, you'll be men. You won't be wanting to go home to suck your mammy's sugar tit, no sir. Hard did I say? You heard me. For when the judge sentenced you here he said at hard labor, and that's what I aim to make it. (*His voice now taking on an oratorical, sonorous sweep.*) For this ain't no boat trip on the river, this ain't no little gang of girls playing doll-babies. No sir, not a bit of it. This ain't no circus full of hootchy-kootchy mommas strutting their hot stuff before your watery mouth. This ain't no riding on a Ferris wheel or eating peanuts and popcorn and drinking cold drinks at a lemonade stand. No it ain't, you bet your life. This is the chaingang, the chaingang. This is the ball and chain, the nine-pound hammer, the wheelbarrow, the shovel, the twenty-nine lashes, the seventy-two lashes, the sweatbox, the steel cage, the rifle and the shotgun. You've heard about them two niggers, Shropshire and Barnes, in the next camp down the road. They didn't want to work. Well, old boss Little chained 'em up to the bars till their feet froze and rotted with gangrene, and the doctor had to cut 'em off. Ain't that hard? Yes, that's a little bit hard. Shows you how hard I could be if I wanted to. Compared to that, the Runt is having an easy time of it in that sweatbox. (*The hard note coming suddenly back into his voice.*) But some of you don't think so, do you? Bright Boy there—he says it's killing the Runt. I hear that he lies awake all night making himself sick—worrying and moaning over poor Runt. Why that's a pity, for I'm looking after Runt myself, and there ain't no use of both of us trying to do the same job. Is there? No sir, there ain't. And Bright Boy will have to learn better. He'll have to get hard. I say it again and that wise old judge he knew. Hard, he said. You heard me. For if you don't get hard you can't make your time, and if you don't make your time you can't pay your debts to the state. And the only way you can pay it is by work. You can't pay by playing sick, by getting beat, by being shut up in the sweatbox, by being chained up till your feet fall off. That don't do nobody no good. It's work we want. Work the state wants. It's for that the great railroad company has hired you from the governor. Yes sir, the governor has rented you out the way he would a mule or a shovel or a dragpan—hired you out to build that railroad. And, boys, you got to build it. 'Cause they need coal down in Florida, and they need oranges and mushmelons and bananas up there in New York. And the cotton has to get to the seaport, and the tobacco's got to get to the factory. And there's a world of shipping and trade got to happen, boys. And it all depends on you. (*Now his voice drops to a low singing croon.*) I know it's a hell of a life. It's a hell of a life for all of us—the shackles and the iron pin, the hammer and the ball. But damn your son-of-a-bitching souls, I'm going



to see that you wear 'em till the end! *(His voice dies out and he stands staring at the convicts who shift themselves uneasily about. Then he smiles pleasantly at them.)* Well, boys, that's about all I've got to say. So we'll get on with the rest of the exercises as per the orders.

*(By this time the light has spread up the sky, and the figures of the raggle-taggle crew stand illuminated in it. The Captain moves around to the right and begins walking slowly behind them, studying each man as he passes. They feel him there apprehensively, some of them swaying nervously on their feet like saplings in a gentle wind. The Captain stops behind Hoppy.)*

CAPTAIN: Anything to complain of?

HOPPY: *(Stuttering and like the other convicts staring straight ahead of him.)* No sir, no sir, everything's fine.

CAPTAIN: Seems like yestiddy that little Georgy buggy needed greasing, huh?

HOPPY: *(Swallowing and gulping.)* I kept her rolling from sun to sun.

CAPTAIN: *(Pleasantly.)* Like hell you did! Didn't the wheel get stuck every once in a while and wouldn't turn?

HOPPY: No sir, no sir. But just watch me, boss, watch me today. *(And his great trembling hand goes up and wipes the popping sweat from his forehead.)*

CAPTAIN: Don't mind we'll have to grease it for you, son, the

first thing you know. *(And as he looks at Hoppy's shaking form, a half-affectionate smile plays on his swarthy face. For a moment longer he stares at him and then moves on to the next man. A sigh, a long half-inaudible sigh escapes from Hoppy's lips. The Captain turns and gazes at him.)* Don't let me scare you, Snowbird! *(And now he stops behind the boy.)* So you're sick, hah? *(His voice is brittle and steely, a new note in it, and a shiver seems to run the length of the dirty grey-striped line. The boy looks out before him with wide frightened eyes and face the color of ash tree wood.)*

BOY: Yes sir, yes sir, I'm sick.

CAPTAIN: *(Now looming above him.)* Hum. When a man's sick he's got a fever, ain't he? And when he's got a fever the thermometer says so, don't it? Well, the thermometer says you ain't got no fever. Therefore you ain't sick.

BOY: *(In a low agonized pleading.)* Please sir, please.

CAPTAIN: *(Suddenly pulling old Jeff out of the cuff of his boot and touching the boy on the shoulder.)* This way, son.

BOY: *(Terror-stricken.)* But I been doing all right, Cap'n. They ain't been any complaint has they, none you've heard of?

CAPTAIN: *(Kindly.)* This way, son.

*(Guard number one comes up in front of him and touches him in the stomach with his gun.)*







FIRST GUARD: You heard him.

BOY: (*His hands suddenly fluttering aimlessly in the air, his breath sucked through his lips with a gasp.*) Oh, Lord, have mercy! Mercy!

CAPTAIN: So, you're callin' on the Lord? Well, the Lord ain't here. The Lord is far away. In fact you might say this ain't no place for the Lord.

BOY: (*Whispering.*) Cap'n, Cap'n!

CAPTAIN: I know you need medicine, son. That's what we're going to give you. Maybe after that you won't be sick. Maybe you won't talk so much either.

BOY: (*Wailing and bobbing his chin against his breast.*) I'm sick, bad sick, I tell you!

CAPTAIN: (*Snarling.*) And I reckon the man you killed was sick too, when you soused that knife in him.

BOY: (*Gasping.*) I didn't kill him. I didn't, I tell you. They put the blame on me!

CAPTAIN: Oh, you didn't? But the jury said so. This way, son. (*And now with the lash of the whip clasped against the butt, he reaches out, hooks the loop over the boy's neck and jerks him backward. The boy shakes as if with ague and stands with half-bent knees, about to fall. The second guard moves through the gap in the line and takes him by the arm.*)

SECOND GUARD: Step back! (*He pushes him towards the rear.*)

CAPTAIN: Pull your pants down, son.

BOY: (*Moaning.*) Cap'n, Cap'n!

CAPTAIN: Don't call on me—'cause I'm like the Lord. I can't hear you either. Unbutton your pants. (*Snarling.*) I say unbutton your pants! Don't let me tell you thrice, as the son of God said to the rooster.

(*And now with a wild and desperate look around and with a sudden vague gesture in the air, the boy slowly begins to undo his belt. The cook at the left front who has continued cleaning up unconcernedly, piles the tub on the pans in the wheelbarrow and rolls it away to the left. And now the first guard steps several paces to the front and lays his gun menacingly ready across his forearm.*)

SECOND GUARD: Bend over, son.

(*The boy's knees sag, he falls forward and lies with his face in the dirt, his arms outstretched. The convicts stand in a stiff line, their eyes staring straight ahead of them, their lips tightly shut.*)

CAPTAIN: (*Calling.*) Come hold his feet, Pearly Gates!

(*And now like frightened animals before an approaching storm the convicts suddenly shrink closer together and the boy's prone body is hidden from our view.*)

PEARLY GATES: (*Twisting his shoulders and flinging his hands together in front of his stomach.*) He'll be good, Cap'n, he'll lie still.

CAPTAIN: (*Yelling.*) Come hold his feet! (*Pearly Gates leaves his place at the end of the line and goes gingerly around to the rear. The convicts stand like a row of stony-faced Indians, outlined against the red light of the approaching sun, the Captain's head showing above them as he speaks.*) Boys, let this be another warning to you. It's a month now since I had to use the lash. But some of you keep trying to dead-beat me, don't you? (*Now the lids of his eyes are snapped back and his dark brown pupils are filled with a fiery demoniac light. Suddenly like a flash he whirls back toward the recumbent figure, raises himself up on the balls of his feet and brings the whip down with a whistling tearing sound. Though we don't see it, the boy's body bounds from the ground like a rubber ball, and with a cry Pearly Gates*

*flings himself upon his plunging feet. But no sound comes from the boy's lips. At this first blow a gust of horror seems to sweep the line of convicts, and they waver back and forth and then stand still, their eyes lifted and set towards the vast and empty sky. Once more the Captain brings his whip down, and the convicts flinch as if their own backs had felt the lash. Then at the third blow, a wild hysterical scream bursts from the boy's lips.*)

BOY: (*With a shriek.*) Mama! Mama!

(*At the fourth blow he begins to whimper. And at the fifth and sixth blows the wild animal scream tears once more from his body. At the seventh and eighth blows he begins whimpering again like a baby, the sound of his piteous crying rising and then sinking again like a child crying itself to sleep. And then at the tenth blow the Captain suddenly stops and doubles up his whip.*)

CAPTAIN: (*Curtly.*) Button his diaper. (*Thundering.*) Turn him loose, Pearly Gates!

(*A moment passes and then the huge Negro backs toward his position at the end of the line, staring hypnotically before him where the gasping figure lies. Presently the Captain comes around to the front, crams the whip into his boot and stands gazing at them in silence. The second guard now pushes the shuddering boy back to his place and helps him fasten his belt across his jerking quivering stomach. As he moves away from him, the boy spins drunkenly about, and as he is falling the guard catches him and steadies him on his feet. The boy stands there moaning and shaking, his eyes closed, the tears wetting his cheeks. The second guard moves over to the right front, holding his gun before him. For awhile the Captain is silent, as if his mind was wrapped away from the scene. Then as the boy's weeping dies down to an almost inaudible whimper, he looks up.*)

CAPTAIN: I let him off easy this time, boys, because it's the Fourth of July. (*Gesturing to the two guards.*) All right, gentlemen, give us another little salute to the morning sun. For this is the day the Thirteen Original States freed themselves from the bloody Englishmen. Fee-fi-fo-fum. (*The guards raise their guns and fire a volley towards the sunrise. The convicts tremble and shudder, their eyes rolling in their haggard faces. The Captain laughs softly, then pulling off his hat gives it a rolling wave around in the air.*) Hooray,

FIRST GUARD: (*Loudly.*) Hooray for the Fourth of July!

SECOND GUARD: (*More loudly.*) Hooray for the United States!

CAPTAIN: That's right. (*To the convicts.*) Come on, boys, give us a cheer for your country. (*A feeble cheer finally breaks from their twitching lips.*) Damn it, don't you love Uncle Sam better'n that? Come on—once more. (*The cheer is given a bit more loudly, but by empty wooden voices.*)

FIRST GUARD: (*Calling out.*) All right, Bright Boy, we ain't heard from you.

(*The boy tries to control his quivering shoulders.*)

CAPTAIN: (*Interposing.*) Never mind, he'll do it next Fourth of July. (*Pulling a crumpled sheet of paper from his pocket, he smooths it out and looks over at the convicts pleasantly.*) Order of the day further certifies that before we set forth to work it shall be the duty of the boss to have a rendition of *America* sung by the prisoners. (*He puts the sheet of paper back into his pocket.*) Any you fellows know the tune? (*No one answers.*) I say do any of you know it? (*The convicts shake their heads.*) How about you, Bright Boy? (*The boy stands staring at the ground.*) I say do you know the song?

(*The boy's figure gives a spasmodic jerk.*)

BOY: (*In a muffled voice.*) Yes sir.

CAPTAIN: All right, lead it off.

*(The boy hesitates, gulps once or twice and then lifting his eyes towards the sky, begins to sing in a clear beautiful voice.)*

BOY:

“My country, 'tis of thee,  
Sweet land of liberty,  
Of thee I sing.”

CAPTAIN: *(Thundering at the other convicts.)* Take off your caps!

*(They pull off their caps. The Captain raises his hand in a salute, and the two guards present arms. The boy continues singing, some of the convicts mumble along with him, and the Captain brays out a stave or two.)*

VOICES: *(Led by the boy.)*

“Land where my fathers died,  
Land of the pilgrims' pride,  
From every mountain side  
Let freedom ring.”

*(At the end of the first stanza the Captain drops his hand, the two guards set their guns down, and the convicts stop singing. But the boy continues.)*

BOY:

“My native country, thee—  
Land of the noble free,  
Thy name I love.”

CAPTAIN: *(Sharply.)* All right you can stop now. *(The boy stops singing, drops his head on his breast, and stares at the ground again. The Captain turns and goes over to the box at the right front.)* And now, boys, as another honor for the occasion I'm going to do a good turn for the Runt. And I'm going to break the law to do it. The voters prescribe twenty-one days for the Runt. Yessir, that's what they prescribe in the house of representatives. But I'm letting him out on the eleventh day. *(He unlocks the door to the box, and flings it open.)* All right, Runt, roll out. *(Inside the box we can see a little skinny Negro doubled up like a baby in its mother's womb, his head stuck between his knees.)* Roll out, Runt.

*(But there is no movement from the doubled-up form. The Captain reaches it, takes the Negro by the collar, pulls him out and drops his head against the ground. The figure lies still. The Captain stares at it. A murmur of fear runs among the convicts. The second guard steps over and peers at the bundle of rags.)*

SECOND GUARD: *(Feeling the bony chest.)* Say, you better—  
*(The Captain drops down on his knees, lays his hand on the Negro's heart. He squats there a moment and then rises abruptly to his feet and stands staring thoughtfully at the body.)*

CAPTAIN: Ain't that a hell of a note!

FIRST GUARD: *(Now coming forward.)* He was okay a few minutes ago.

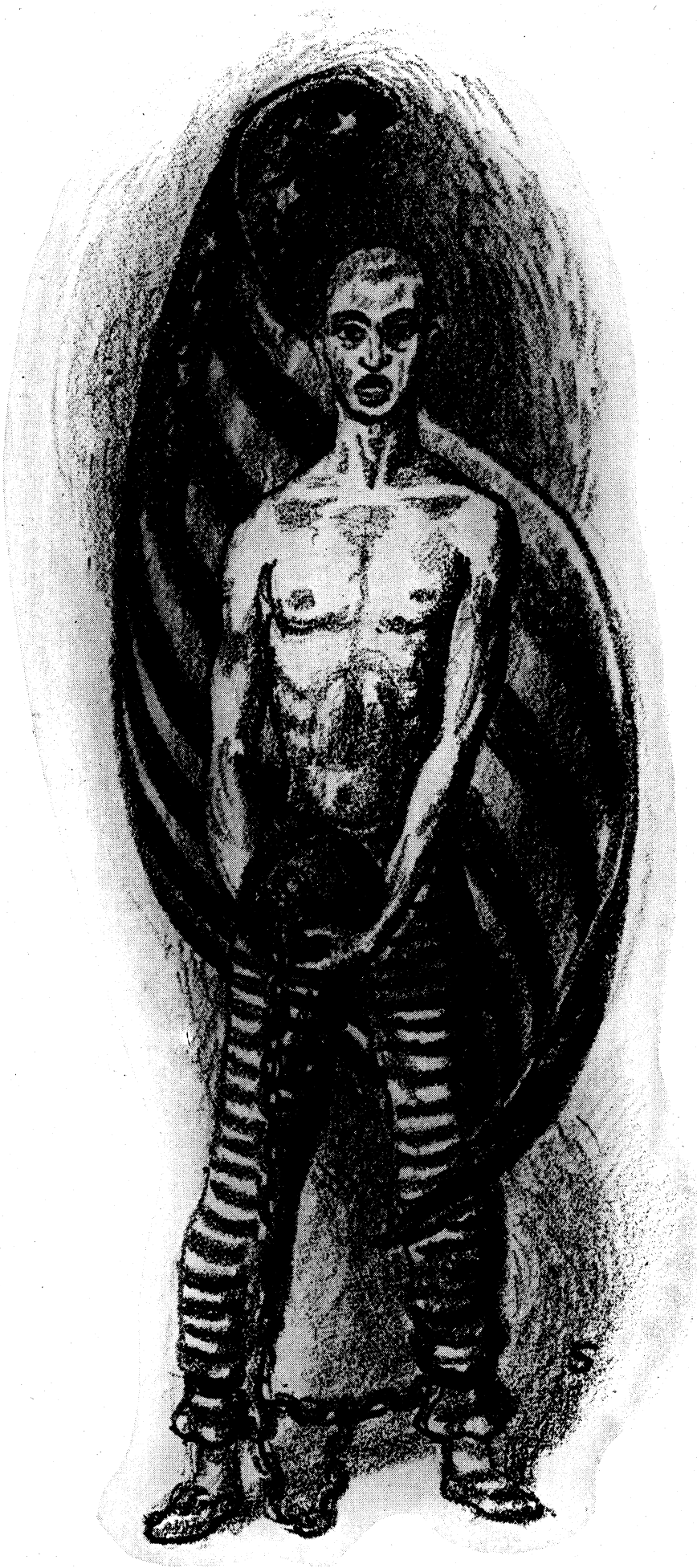
CAPTAIN: Yeh, but he ain't now. Yeh, that's right I remember—I ain't heard him making no fuss since I first come in. Hum—hum—*(Turning towards the convicts.)* Well, boys, the Runt's gone from us. He's dead.

*(A mumble runs through the line, and the prisoners take off their caps in awed respect. But the boy's cap remains on his bowed head, for he is paying no attention to what goes on around him. The cook comes in at the left with a glass of water and a piece of bread held priest-like before him. The Captain looks up.)* Runt won't need his breakfast today, Greasy.

*(The cook stops and gazes impassively down at the body.)*

COOK: *(Croakingly.)* Didn't think he'd make it.

CAPTAIN: The hell you say! Then why didn't you tell me he was getting sick in there?







COOK: (*Impassively.*) I did. Yesterday I said let's take him out—Cap'n, I said.

CAPTAIN: You fool! When did you feed him last?

COOK: (*With his old man's toothless snicker.*) Feed him, Cap'n?

CAPTAIN: Well, give him his bread and water, then?

COOK: Yestiddy—the way the orders say. He cried a little bit and said he was gonna die in that box, and I told him I reckon he would.

CAPTAIN: Yeh, and the bastard did.

(*He stands thinking a moment.*)

COOK: And he said you could bury him up on the railroad fill, 'cause he didn't have no home and no folks.

CAPTAIN: He told you that?

COOK: Yessir. And I said I didn't think you would on account of the law.

CAPTAIN: What law?

COOK: I dunno, Cap'n, just some law, I reckon.

CAPTAIN: (*Wrathfully.*) I'll bury him where I damn please.

COOK: Yessir, he said he wanted to be buried up here so he could hear the trains run at night.

(*He turns and goes on out at the left, carrying the glass of water before him.*)

CAPTAIN: (*To the convicts.*) That's right, boys, you remember how Runt liked to hear the trains blow. What you say? Shall we take him up there and bury him? (*The convicts look at him with dull cold eyes.*) Well, I don't blame you for feeling bad over it. I do myself. All right, we will. It's his last wish and the wishes of the dead are sacred. We all know that. (*Now standing over Runt and looking sorrowfully down at him.*) You know me, Runt, I didn't have no grudge against you. It was the law said do it. (*With sudden blinding rage.*) Yeh, the law! (*Then after a moment more quietly.*) All right, we'll put you away like you wanted. (*With a chuckle.*) But how the hell you gonna hear them trains running at night and your ears packed full of clay? (*Now looking pensively beyond the convicts, at the light flooding up the eastern sky.*) Yeh, we'll put him up there in a hole. And soon the cross-ties will be laid—the rails strung out, and the steel-driving men sink the spikes on down. And Runt won't care, will he? Runt won't care. Night and day the great trains will be running over old Runt's bones, running from the big cities up north to the Floridy pleasure grounds and back again, carrying the President, and his folks maybe, the big bosses from France and Rooshy, and the tobacco kings, pimps and bawds, the gamblers and the bridal couples and the congressmen, the lieutenants and the generals, all pulled along by the fiery iron horse with its one eye. "Hah, hah, hah," it snorts. "Get out of my way. You can harness down the earth and the sun and the moon but you can't put a check rein on me. 'Cause I'm

bound for Key West, and I'm going to run right off the deep end and drown the whole God-damned load in the Atlantic Ocean." Yes, by Christ and I hope it does!

(*The cook comes in at the left with a pail of water and a mop and begins to wash off the table. The Captain bends down and picks up Runt's frail little form in his arms. He looks along the line of convicts a moment and then steps towards Pearly Gates who draws back with a shudder.*) All right, Pearly, take him. He's crapped all over himself, but he can't hurt you now. (*Pearly still draws back, but the Captain drapes the crooked body over the huge Negro's shoulder. Pulling a whistle from his belt, he blows two sharp blasts, then barks out.*) R-i-g-h-t face! (*The convicts obey, but the boy stands staring at the ground as before. Careless Love pushes him around in line, and we can see the seat of his trousers showing sopping wet with blood.*) Forward, Mar-ch! Hep-hep—

(*The convicts start marching out at the right, the second guard going before. The Captain calls back to the first guard.*) Better fill out the death certificate.

FIRST GUARD: (*Dropping the butt of his gun lazily to the ground.*) Regular form?

CAPTAIN: Hep-hep—Hell, yes! (*And now Pearly Gates, the last of the line, goes out, carrying Runt's dead body like a sack on his shoulder. The Captain follows after, his heavy boots marching in step, and his voice calling rhythmically.*) Hep-hep-hep!

(*The cook goes on mopping the table. The first guard yawns and stretches his arms, guns and all, above his head.*)

FIRST GUARD: Well, I better get busy on that certificate—old Doc McLaughlin might want it today. Uhm—And then some sleep. (*He starts out at the left rear, then stops and calls back.*) What was Runt's name?

COOK: (*Still intent on his scrubbing.*) Just Runt, I reckon.

FIRST GUARD: I remember now—Johnson—(*With a snicker.*) Vanderbilt Johnson. What you reckon he died of? (*The cook makes no answer.*) Heart failure maybe—(*With certainty.*) Sure—his heart give out on him—weak heart—natural causes. Hum—(*Looking off towards the east.*) Golly, today's gonna be another scorcher.

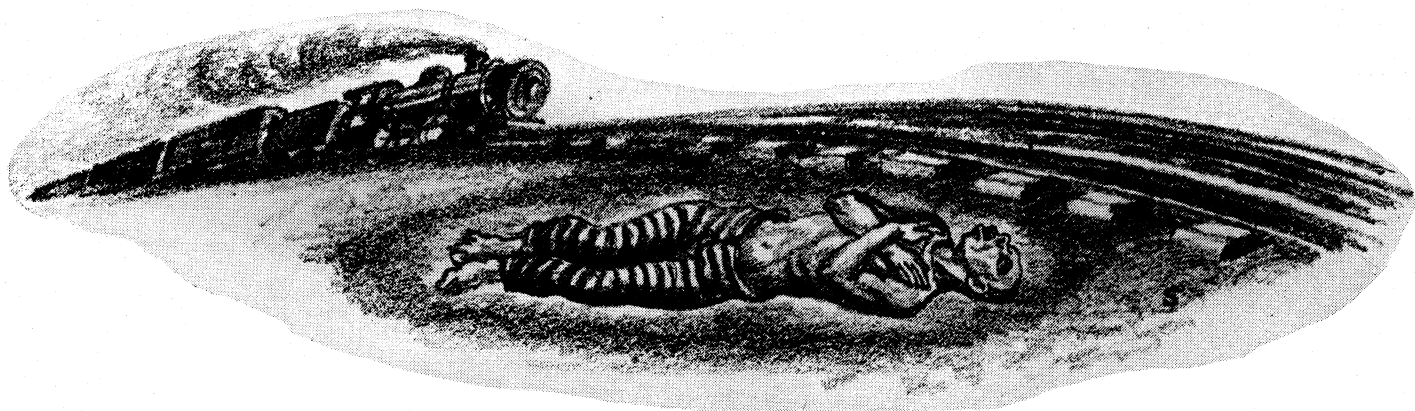
(*He goes on out. The cook finishes scouring the table, then brings his utensils over to the sweatbox. Dipping his mop into the pail, he starts cleaning out the fouled insides. In the distance the faint sound of the Captain's "hep-hep" is heard dying away.*)

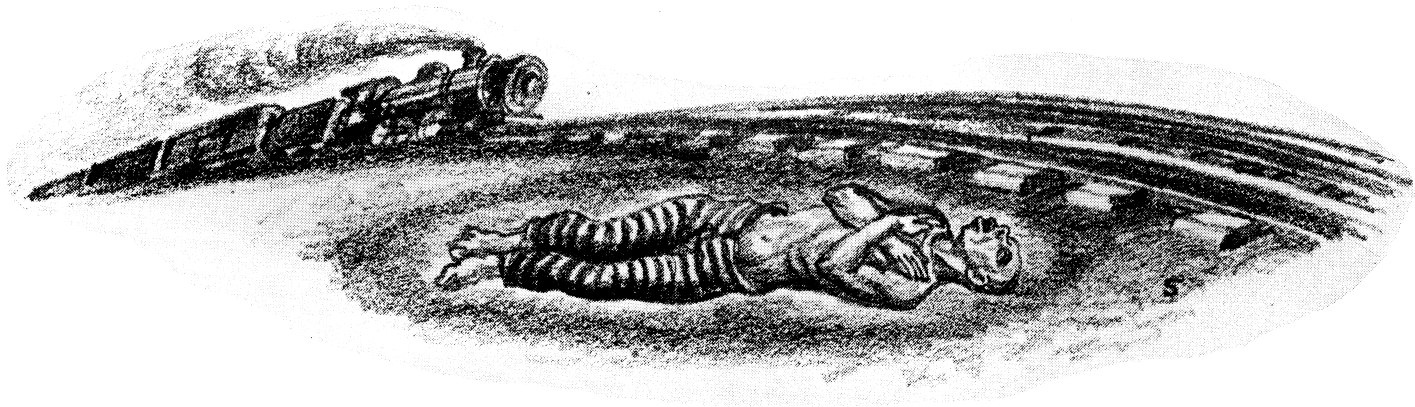
COOK: (*Suddenly beginning to sing in a flat frog-like voice as he works.*)

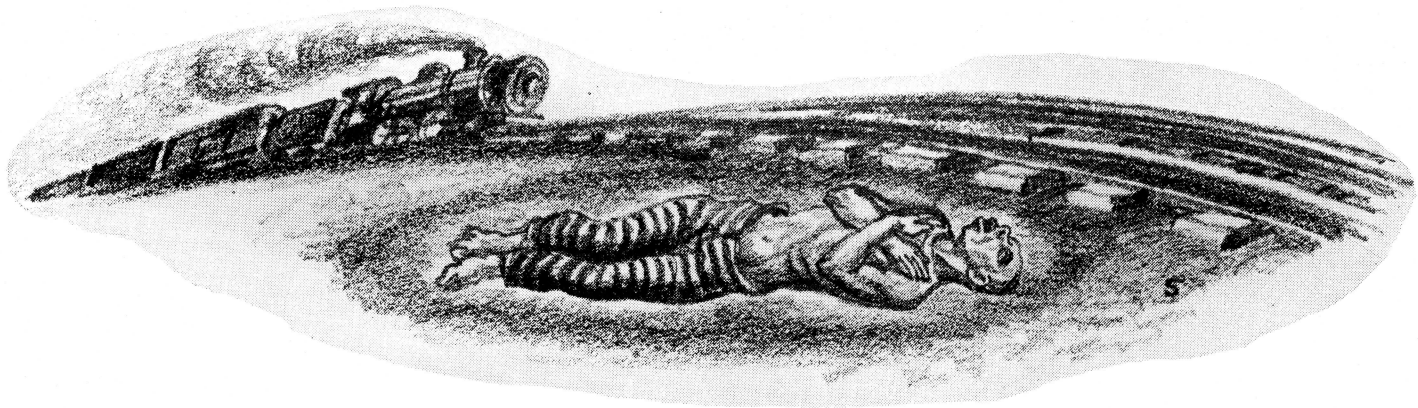
"Land where—my fathers died,  
Land of—the pilgrims' pride—"

(*And now peering up over the rim of the world at the back comes the smiling face of the sun.*)

CURTAIN.







# Interpretation and Characterization

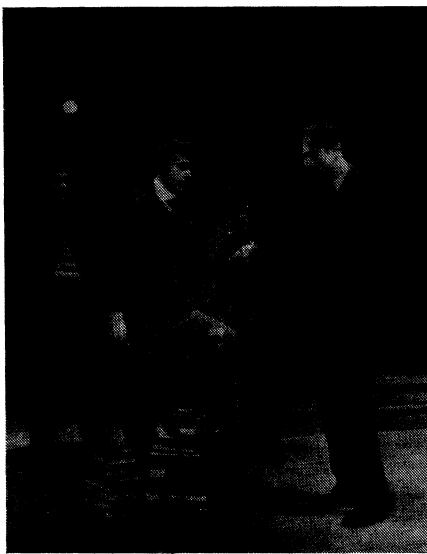
A THEATRE WORKSHOP DISCUSSION BY HAROLD CLURMAN

When I returned from the Soviet Union last June, New York had a strange effect upon me. Nothing had changed in the eight weeks of my absence, yet everything had somehow altered its meaning. To sum up my impression: my whole environment—my good friends and intimates, the plays I saw, the books I read, the newspapers I scanned, the conversations I heard—all seemed a bit mad! People complained about woes that were mostly imaginary, overlooked conflicts that were immediate, belied their thoughts by their acts, explained their acts by ideas they professed to scorn. Many spoke of saving and spent beyond their means, others talked of sacrifice to ideals and wasted their time, still others clamored for things they had no real interest in, and waxed sceptical over struggles that were essential to their happiness.

When I came to direct Clifford Odets' new play *Paradise Lost*, the contradictions that are at the base of almost every scene became clear to me through my own experience of a few months back. This crazy world that Clifford Odets had wrought out of sheer artistic perversity, as some might believe, or out of a desire to emulate the great Chekhov, as many have said, or even out of a "Marxian prejudice" as the ignorant would have it—this crazy world was simply the world we live in—or to be more exact the middle-class world of our daily experience.

All the characters in *Paradise Lost*—excepting only Clara Gordon, the mother, and two of the workers from the shop delegation—are a trifle "touched." This does not make them "exceptional"—on the contrary, it makes them like us—but it was my job as the director to make the characters' madness clear not merely as "realism" but as a comment. Beyond this, there was the problem of making an audience feel what it was that all these characters were doing in their madness, what possibly caused the madness and how it was connected with the life of the spectator. The main problem in the direction of *Paradise Lost*, in other words, was the problem of finding characterizations that were true to the individuals, yet part of an organic conception which made their world, despite particular differences, a common one.

Why are the characters in *Paradise Lost* funny? Why are they bewildered, tragic, gothic, violent as the case may be? They are all looking for reality in a world where nothing is altogether real,



"PARADISE LOST"

Vandamm

where there is something insubstantial and dream-like in the most ordinary processes of behavior. . . . The world of the ruling class is real in the sense that the rulers know where their interests lie, work hard and fight systematically to protect them against every possible enemy; the world of the working class is real because its struggle is so primitive and plain that there is no mistaking or avoiding it. But the middle class carries out the orders of the ruling class with the illusion of complete freedom, and it is sufficiently protected from the terror of material nakedness to believe in transcendental explanations of human woe that keep it "calm" without really satisfying it. There is no "enemy" in the middle-class world except an intangible "fate"; there is no fight except with one's own contradictions—and real life (the life that both the upper and lower classes know in their opposite ways) enters upon the scene like a fierce, unexplained intruder.

Though this interpretation may be regarded as "personal" it is the director's job to proceed from some such general conception to the minute details of the production. A more Chekhovian—that is, a less social view—might be taken of the play which would tend to make it "sadder," more fatalistic and generally "true to life" in the meaningless sense of the word! The "reading" I have given the script gives the play a definite line or what certain reviewers would call a propagandist slant. Also the comedy has been made organic with its tragedy, whereas in relation to the rest it might

easily seem a forced whimsicality. Certain tragic characters like Leo have been treated more humorously than the text indicates; the musician Felix has been made less "sympathetic" than the author intended, the daughter of the house is taken a trifle less heroically in the production than in the script. In the following notes I sketch some of the character interpretations but a comparison of my statements with the published book will show throughout the addition of "business" and motivations that are distinct from, though compatible with, the play's lines. The text (the author's work) and the sub-text (the director's treatment) in these remarks are given as a unified whole.

Leo Gordon, the "hero" of *Paradise Lost*, is an unusual man only in the sense that few middle class people are so aware of their own subtle misery or so fervent in their desire to cure it. He is always trying to remedy the suffering he sees about him, but being typically middle class he does not know how to do it. He would like to make war on injustice but does not know what weapon to use and any weapon more concrete than ideas frightens him.

How do we portray such a character in the theatre? We see his kindness not only in the actions given him by the author but in such a detail as his instinctive caress of the girl worker whom he wants to reassure. We visualize his confusion before simple objects and his inadequacy even in trivial situations. When the workers come to visit him, he is embarrassed and clumsy: He offers one of them a chair when there is none to sit on; at another time he serves brandy which he thinks is the same as wine; he dashes after his partner to convince him that wages in the shop must be raised, but he hesitates at the last moment, retreats to his own apartment, sits down, rises impetuously again, hammers his resolve on the table and then proceeds to get drunk! He traces imaginary figures in the air as he listens to memories of the past; he rarely completes any movement. As each act develops the character becomes soberer and more direct. Only in the end do we establish a stronger tone for him—something to suggest that now at last he may become an integrated person. Yet even his eccentricities in the first two acts are made to arise from a vital sensibility, a capacity for love and

(Continued on page 44)





"PARADISE LOST"

*Vandamm*



CHICO AND HARPO MARX IN "A NIGHT AT THE OPERA"

# Love 'em

BY ROBERT STEBBINS

The cumulative effect of the recent cycles of gangster, G-Men, and vigilante films appears to this reviewer to have resulted in an actual cult of violence. Little better proof could be desired than the ecstasy with which the New York film critics greeted the gangster G-Men film, *Show Them No Mercy*. To begin with, no critic failed to mention that the original title of the film had been *Snatched*, an instance of bowdlerization that one might think comparable to removing the love scenes from *Hamlet*. Mr. Sennwald of the New York Times, for example, found *Show Them No Mercy* "a brutal and fascinating melodrama . . . a photoplay that you might easily make the mistake of neglecting unless it were forcibly called to your attention." He gloatingly lingers over "the nice variety in the way death visits these hunted killers . . . Mr. Cabot himself, the most fearsome . . . goes to his deserved reward when a machine gun slices a stream of bullets across his chest. There is a clever illusion here which persuades you that you see blood bubbling from the perforations." Apart from the fact that the illusion referred to was incredibly obvious and decidedly inferior to the ordinary run-of-the-day tricks we see in trailers, Mr. Sennwald's approval of a deliberate effort to render the public mind more insensitive than ever to violence and brutality remains incomprehensible. I must confess that seldom have I experienced greater loathing than during the moment following Rochelle Hudson's extermination of Mr. Cabot. Miss Hudson drops her machine gun and runs to her husband whom Mr. Cabot has very considerably refrained from wounding very seriously. Her husband's eyes flicker open and as they shower love light on one another he asks, "Did you get him, honey?"

At this stage it may seem repetitious to point out the true purpose of the

G-Men organizations. The fact that the G-Men constitute a body that possesses extra-legal powers has already been pointed out in other journals of thought, if not here. In times of social and economic turmoil the G-Men could undoubtedly be employed as instruments of terror against all liberal elements in the nation. Already in such films as *Red Salute* and *Fighting Youth* it has been suggested that G-Men be used to root out the foreign "agitators" lying hidden serpent-like in the body collegiate. But the proprietors of the Rivoli Theatre, which is housing *Show Them No Mercy*, give the tip-off on the potentialities of the G-Men more clearly than anything previously mentioned. In a showcase outside the theater there is a display of "the weapons G-Men employ to crush public enemies."—A pretty collection comprising riot guns, billies, tear gas and nausea gas-bombs, in short, a complete arsenal of strike equipment. My previous reading has failed to disclose one instance of nausea gas used against gangsters.

The theme of mob vigilante violence runs a brawling course through *Frisco Kid* starring James Cagney. If anything, the hangings in *Frisco Kid* are a decided advance over *Barbary Coast* in their ruthless and gruesome horror. Again the vigilantes make short shrift of the contradiction involved in safeguarding the institutions of democracy by means of the hangman's noose. Mr. Cagney, as the bad boss of Frisco's famed red-light district, bows very wisely and with a show of great contrition to the superior arguments of the aroused citizenry. True, all his histrionics would be of no avail if that paragon of womanhood, Miss Margaret Lindsay, had not interceded for him. Fortunately, the love of a good woman is something to melt the heart of even a vigilante though his cause it is just. The scene of the film is California of the '49

gold rush although it is quite apparent that the producers have an eye to the future. What worked in '49 might be resurrected to wipe out undesirable elements in '36.

If it is true that films like *Show Them No Mercy*, *Frisco Kid*, *Men of Iron* exhibit unmistakable leanings toward fascist doctrine at least they are more or less the brain-children of individual producers. This month, however, Germany has sent us an official cinematic embodiment of fascist philosophy and ideals in *The Making of a King*, featuring Emil Jannings. Mr. Jannings, as Frederick Wilhelm I, father of Frederick the Great, is the personification of all the Aryan virtues. He is a stern father who canes his son, breaks his flute, destroys his library and executes his best friend, but all for Prussia's sake, you may be sure. Wilhelm I waddles through the film reminding us very much of his modern counterpart, Herman Goering, Prime Minister of Germany. No doubt, the similarity was intentional. Mr. Goering's unscrupulous lies during the Reichstag trial are not unlike the king's hearty indifference to the plea of one of his hussars who has been kidnapped into the service. What is remarkable about the film is that these qualities are deliberately held forth as worthy of emulation. Another fact that escaped mention in Mr. Richard Watts' superb analysis of the film in the New York Herald-Tribune is its complete and profound anti-French bias. Continual reference is made to French fripperies, French perfumes, and "the treacherous air that comes over from the French side." To be brief, *The Making of a King* furnishes a complete category of fascist tenets—hatred of other nations, male-superiority, destruction of culture, suppression of individual rights, a total minimization of human life and an insane glorification of the military.

# With Bullets

While on the subject of the military we ought to mention a dainty bit of poison-pie, *The Perfect Gentleman*, which M-G-M has concocted. It reminds us that no nation has a monopoly on jingoism. M-G-M has very thoughtfully provided Miss Cicely Courtneidge with a pretty setting for her specialty—the art of recruiting soldiers. Miss Courtneidge is quite one of Albion's best recruiters. In fact, quite the best one if we are to believe the interview she granted the *New York Evening Post*, July 17th of last year. On that occasion she told of her having "appeared on the London stage with real soldiers in her support (in violation of British Army regulations), and of being informed by gentlemen from the War Office, no less, that her act was the finest 'leg up' recruiting has received in years." The comedienne was told that the United States Army, which was not having much luck with its recruiting campaign at the moment, might welcome her service. "That would be the jolliest lark," Miss Courtneidge laughed. A very pleasant sort of person, undoubtedly! One that American audiences can dispense with and with little loss! When the history of our dark ages is written it is questionable whether any person will appear more repugnant than the professional recruiter who makes a career of luring men to death in false causes. Miss Courtneidge has, it is true, a rowdy sort of humor but it is hardly sufficient to make up for her avowed purpose in life.

*The Perfect Gentleman*, a flaccid melange of ancient gags also offers us the thousand times over-familiar Mr. Frank Morgan, who, although an actor of some parts, is just as likely to be remembered by posterity as the vice-president of the Angostura Bitters Corporation who informed his stockholders that "the depression would soon end if people laughed enough."

If Mr. Morgan's analysis had been correct only the Marx Brothers' picture *A Night At the Opera* could make people

(Continued on page 41)



CESAR ROMERO AND BRUCE CABOT IN "SHOW THEM NO MERCY"



FROM "MEN OF IRON," WARNER BROTHERS' ANTI-LABOR FILM



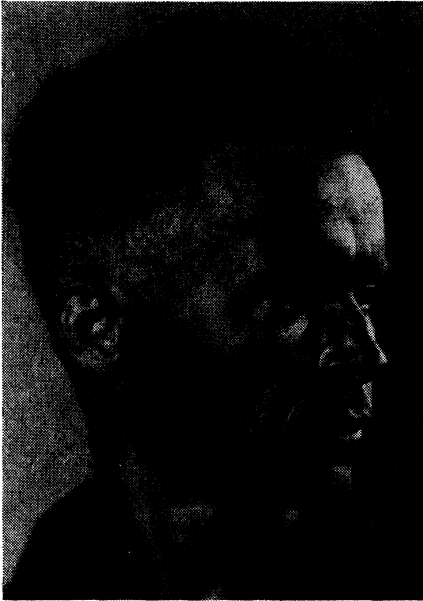
PIERRE BLANCHARD AND HARRY BAUR IN "CRIME ET CHATIMENT"



FROM "SOAK THE RICH," A HECHT-MacARTHUR PRODUCTION

# Dovjenko's "Frontier"

BY PETER ELLIS



ALEXANDER DOVJENKO

Alexander Dovjenko's *Aerograd*, released here as *Frontier* (Amkino), cannot be isolated from the earlier films of that extraordinary Ukrainian director. *Arsenal*, *Soil*, and his first sound film *Ivan* have all been shown in the United States. All of them provoked discussion both here and in the Soviet Union. They were difficult to understand because of their extreme complexity, their intense subjective quality and their original directorial technique.

Dovjenko's people are unusual and his themes are not petty every-day ideas. His film heroes represent social groups, and also express the director's personal philosophy. All his films lack solid story sequence, but they are rich in ideas, facts, and theories. A Dovjenko film is a synthesis of an enormous quantity of rich observation of natural phenomena. In *Soil* and *Arsenal* he attempted to express, among other things, the complexity, the manifold richness (material and human) of contemporary Soviet life. *Soil* was too mystical and steeped too deeply in obscure Ukrainian folklore. *Ivan* was a determined effort to get rid of that trend. It represented the Ukrainian agrarian and his gradual adjustment to industrial life; but the film displayed a tentative quality that was symptomatic of Dovjenko's personal development, at that time still confused. Nevertheless, *Ivan* was the brilliant work of a genius. Even though it

was a failure from the popular point of view, Dovjenko was presented with the Order of Lenin for merit. It was Karl Radek, I believe, who remarked on the occasion of the award that *Ivan* was a magnificent failure. *Frontier*, however, is mature and firm and is a tribute to the director's increasingly creative powers.

Like *Ivan* and *Soil*, *Frontier* is an analysis of the old and the new. The new life is not only epitomized by the youth, by the Communists, the Red Army men, but by the ancient taiga, the great Siberian forest; by the militant partisans and revolutionary traditions; and finally by the symbol of Russia's great industrial and defensive development, the airplane. The old is symbolized in the kulak, the clergy, the Japanese imperialists who attempt to incite an uprising in Soviet territory.

Not only is there the new life of the present, but the *future* in the person of the young Chukchi native who hears of the new city of the Far East, Aerograd, where one will be able to learn and study. Hundreds of miles he travels: on foot, on skis, over snow and ice, through streams, following the roar of the airplane motor, only to find upon his arrival no city, but a ceremony: "Hail to the city of Aerograd, which we Bolsheviks are founding today on the shore of the Great Ocean."

"That means," says the native, "the city is not yet. I came to study in the city. I heard, I went eighty suns. I understand, it must be built. Good, and when we build it, then I will speak. There will be many, many people, like the trees in the taiga."

The films ideas are embodied in a simple and tenuous story. The old partisan, Glushak, known as "The Tiger's Death"—now a member of the collective—and his lifelong friend Vasil, the animal breeder who turns traitor, are the two protagonists. Vasil is a staunch individualist and is opposed to collectivization. He assists a Japanese officer in the organization of the Kulaks for an armed uprising. The uprising fails. When the two old friends meet in the enemy's camp it is the occasion for the film's most dramatic sequence and one of the most memorable that has ever been recorded.

The screen is silent as Glushak leads his prisoner, Vasil, into the forest. During this death-walk, which is similar to the walk of the mother whose son is

killed in *Ivan*, the emotional tension is so great that time seems suspended. Finally the silence is broken with Vasil's "Here." He fixes his shirt, smooths his coat, adjusts his hat. Glushak simultaneously adjusts his rifle and says, "Good-bye." Then he addresses Vasil through the audience: "I am killing the traitor and enemy of the workers, my friend, Vasil Petrovich Kudiakov, sixty years of age. Be witness to my grief, Vasya." Then just before the shot is fired Vasil utters three terrific cries, each time waiting for the echo to answer: hearing for the last time his voice in the great forest where he and his friend lived for more than half a century.

More important than the story is the progress of the various moods. They determine the structure and style of the film. The opening is joyous and lyrical. It serves to establish the general theme: that life is beautiful. Off-screen voices sing the Song of the Aviators as the plane weaves its way in and out of white clouds,

(Continued on page 42)





ALEXANDER DOVJENKO

BY PETER ELLIS

killed in *Ivan*, the emotional tension is so great that time seems suspended. Finally the silence is broken with Vasil's "Here." He fixes his shirt, smooths his coat, adjusts his hat. Glushak simultaneously adjusts his rifle and says, "Good-bye." Then he addresses Vasil through the audience: "I am killing the traitor and enemy of the workers, my friend, Vasil Petrovich Kudiakov, sixty years of age. Be witness to my grief, Vasya." Then just before the shot is fired Vasil utters three terrific cries, each time waiting for the echo to answer: hearing for the last time his voice in the great forest where he and his friend lived for more than half a century.

More important than the story is the progress of the various moods. They determine the structure and style of the film. The opening is joyous and lyrical. It serves to establish the general theme: that life is beautiful. Off-screen voices sing the Song of the Aviators as the plane weaves its way in and out of white clouds.

(Continued on page 42)



STILLS FROM THE FILM *AEROGRAD*, RELEASED IN THIS COUNTRY BY AMKINO AS *FRONTIER*. THIS REMARKABLE CINE-POEM IS THE LATEST WORK OF THE CELEBRATED SOVIET DIRECTOR, ALEXANDER DOVJENKO, CREATOR OF *ARSENAL*, *SOIL* AND *IVAN*.

# The Dance in Mexico

BY SOPHIA DELZA

It was fitting that, after having traversed a territory of such dynamic proportions and almost alarming geographical contrasts as is Mexico, the first event to be encountered in its largest city should have been one of breathtaking size. A pageant of dance and music, set in the historic Chapultepec Park, was staged on its lake where dozens of floating ramparts carried dancing groups in action before an audience of 20,000; a few hundred perched on balustrades, the remaining thousands lining the shores. Brilliant flood lights revealed the regional dances of the country as the gay barges made a continuous procession of active figures from Yucatan, Michoacan, from Tehuantepec, Sonora and Nyarit. The park was open to the entire community—with no admission charge.

The next event took place in a stadium filled to its 8,000 seating capacity, free to the public. A spectacle, a pageant, an "escenificacion musicada" in 8 parts and 23 scenes commanded a cast of hundreds. Witness this partial enumeration of participants in one scene only: 80 workers, 40 revolutionists, 20 slaves, 20 children, 50 townsmen, 40 farmers, besides officials, dancers, aristocrats, Indians, Chiefs, etc. by the dozens.

And yet another: for an audience of 25,000, a cast of 2,000 enacted with dance, music and speech a legend of Aztec lore on the pyramidal remains of Toltec civilization, an area of more than half a mile square. This took place one weekday morning, the 26th of July, the first day of the Aztec year. The community was invited.

Another and still another for the people: at the Theatre of Fine Arts, a ballet *Treinte-Treinte* depicting the success of the revolution; *Clarín* depicting a phase of the revolution; ballets *Barricade*, *Land and Liberty*, *Liberation*, all with enormous casts including men from the Army and Navy Departments, Public and Private Welfare Bureaus, from the Police Department, as well as members of the School of the Dance and Department of Education; ballets in memory of the hero Zapata, ballets in commemoration of significant events and struggles for freedom; ballets in which the entire history of Mexico from the entry of the Spaniards to the last and what is considered satisfactory revolution of the present day. . . . Such material! a rich and

turbulent past so evident in the present that it is not merely a simple case of raking up dead material for use but a matter of stirring up the present in terms of a still persistent past. For it is through such manipulation that the authorities bring to their world an understanding of a dynamic history, and by such means awaken consciousness toward future directions.

The Mexican offers his art (as well as his life) with a gesture, a generous and grandiose gesture. In the case of painting we see miles of murals, tier on tier; in education thousands of projects are planned; in politics elaborate and formidable promises are made which too often remain gestures without fulfillment. The land itself presents a fact of magnificence, power, strength, and withal, restraint. Such environment offers the promise of lavish accomplishments, and oddly is also conducive to simplicity and unaffectedness. These elements of lavishness and simplicity we see in many of the dance productions of modern Mexico: elaborate and colossal direction combined with simple and almost naive relationship of parts, never pretentious, without artificialities, unadorned movement rarely dull, with feeling but no abandon, with warmth but no heat. I have witnessed most satisfactory renditions of regional dances presented with utmost artlessness, and the above mentioned modern pageants have excitedly moved me by their complete artistry in form and design, by the extraordinary identification of the performers in their roles, and by the integrity of production and execution.

So far I have merely mentioned—not criticized or explained—a few current examples in the modern field of the dance. Other types of dance expressions are of Mexico and exist today in a very active form. There are: (1) category of dance which came from Spain in the forms of Jotas, Fandangos, Garrotins, and remained to become definitely transformed; (2) the dance that is still done with all its ancient significance by tribes as yet unconquered and untouched by white interpenetration; (3) that form of dance which is a fantastic hybrid of Indian psychology and European domination and dress. In these three types we see Mexico in all her variety, incongruity and complexity: first, modern Mexico awake to her century, her problems; second,

Mexico of the urban Mestizo (mixed blood, Indian and Spanish), adapting inherited European forms to suit a new environment, childlike in its responsiveness, containing within its spirit a potential for future culture; third, ancient Mexico, dynamically retaining its past and resisting a future; and lastly, that Mexico of thousands and thousands of peon Indian-Mexicans, swept, dominated, confused by a system of antagonistic customs and beliefs which have been grafted onto a seemingly resistant nature.

Anyone who stays in Mexico even for a very short time is certain to see the folk dances of the regional districts, for in Mexico City there are sure to be "fiestas" honoring with song and dance some visiting educational group, ambassador or other dignitary. These performances, free to the public, include various types of dances given by students of the government dance school or (all too rarely) by representatives of the different states or racial groups. The dances brought from Spain by the conquering peoples have acquired Indian elements which, naturally color their quality. In the warm regions of Vera Cruz a *Fandango* has become a *Huapongo*, at one time danced by the higher classes (i.e. Spaniards) but now danced by Mestizos and incorporated into weddings, festivals and ordinary Saturday night dances. The steps are mainly "zapateados" (heel steps), strongly rhythmic in musical accent. Although the dance is gay and flirtatious, in Spanish spirit, there is no doubt that since the name itself is Aztec the dance must have been accepted early by the Indians. A lively *Jarana* of Yucatan has its source in a *Jota*, where any number of couples facing each other dance "zapateados" and exchange flirtations. Here there is a simple group pattern and elaborate and fanciful steps; the arms are kept upraised and the hands imitate castenets. In a *Jota* the dance is interrupted by song; in the *Jarana*, the musicians stop playing at intervals to permit the men to recite improvised compliments to their partners.

Another example from the southern regions in Mexico (where most dances are persistently Spanish) is the elegant *Sandunga* from Tehuantepec in which the women remain alluringly aloof, moving in slow waltz time while the men dance rapidly around them.

From the time the *Jarabe* was intro-

duced into Mexico at about the middle of the 18th century, it has been one of the most popular dances done both by Indians and City people throughout the country. These may last hours, danced at weddings and even at wakes. These dances (there are others) illustrate the theme of the Mexican folk dances—which is concerned with the quest and desire of a man for a girl—dances which have had their source in a sophisticated society (Renaissance Spain).

The folk dances of Indian source and Spanish infiltration have, too, the concentration on the "love theme." These dances have a greater "ensemble" feeling than those above mentioned, the pattern of the group being more important than the simple individual steps. *Las Mascarnitas* from the region of Oaxaca, consists of a series of chain formations, circular patterns executed with plain walking, running or skipping steps. *Los Mantlanchines* is in the form of a quadrille, with partners active in a straight line design. *The Sword Dance* of Nyarit complicatedly uses design in much the same fashion as some of the English folk dances do.

The justly famous *Canacuas* of Michoacan, now a ceremonial of weddings and gesture of hospitality, was once a deeply religious rite transmitted from father to son. As a result of an effort to unite scattered tribes, the Spaniards cleverly used these important religious dances as a basis for teaching their own ideology and thus, by altering music and idea, transformed the dances.

Of the few unadulterated dance survivals of the pre-conquest days, the Deer and Hunter Dance of the Yaqui Indians are the best examples. For more than four hundred years, these tribal-conscious Indians have been able to withstand the onslaught of the whites and thus, in maintaining an autonomous society have preserved the customs of their ancestors. I was happily present at a rehearsal of the Chapultepec pageant, where at close quarters I was able to see the dances of their ancient culture, rendered by seventy-five-year-old Yaquis with all the impersonal intensity and reality with which primitive peoples imbue their art. To celebrate a victory, to mourn a death, the proud stony faced Yaqui releases himself in dances of lightning speed and high tensions, amazingly controlled. Trembling rhythms are emphasized by the rattle of dried cocoons wrapped to their legs. Sticks and hand gourds, masks and head decorations are a part of the exciting dance. Pale whistling of a flute, a few-noted melody from a one stringed bow, hollow tappings from a gourd swimming in a bowl of water, powerful drum beats help the hypnotiz-

ing effect on both dancer and observer. This too is part of Mexico, a real part. What, we must ask, if any, of such expression can be incorporated into contemporary Mexican dance (and life)?

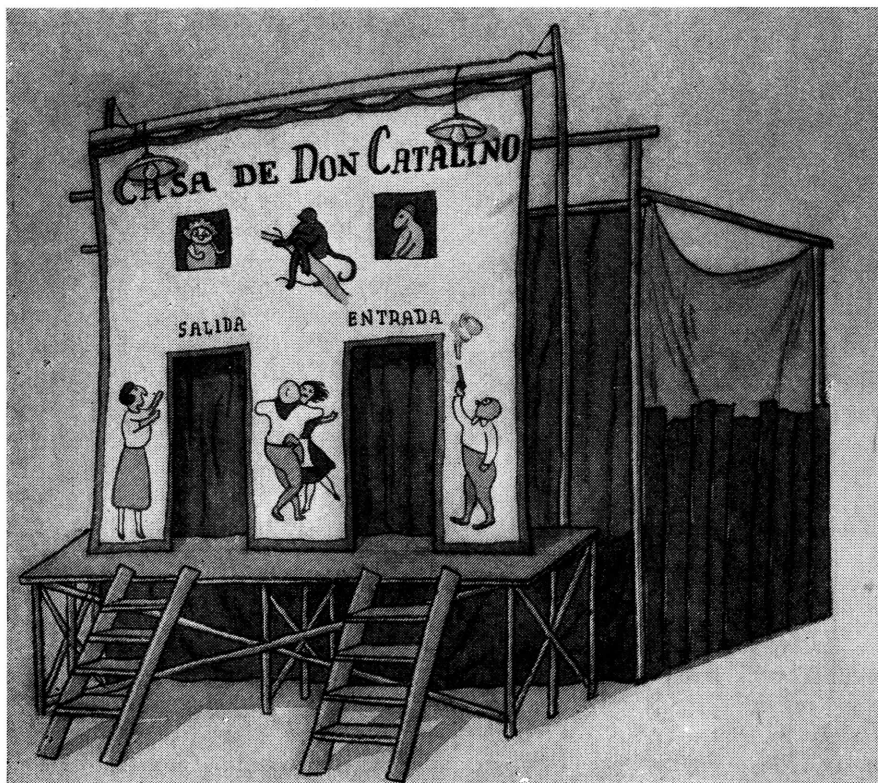
Those who do not happen to be in a Mexican village on a specific calendar holiday will be denied the experience of witnessing a fiesta, for religious fiestas, unvaried in form and content these past few centuries, take place on definite days for special occasions. The western conquerors, agents of Christianity destroyed the ancient religious temples and erected on these very same foundations edifices to their God. And these same messengers of peace grafted their ideas onto native expressive forms. Indian regimes, originally tribal-communal had produced a system of life and culture which was intricately organized and firmly instituted. The process of destroying "teocolli" (temples) and constructing churches in their stead is comparatively simple, but the persistence to the very present of inherited "mores" and ancient rites proves that imposing external symbols and substituting a different set of words is ineffective and impermanent. For among the Indian Mexicans, through all the forms of Christian ceremonies there persists a fixed though jumbled expression of pagan intensity which harbors moons, suns and harvests along with virgins and saints. And in the tortured

Christ we see the bloody reminders of sacrificial victims. However, for all practical purposes (for the church has had the power of wealth) the Catholic fathers succeeded in externally converting the primitive religion into a Christian one . . . and permitted, to distort the phrase, "anything to be called a rose." Dances of these Indian Christians display a strange grotesqueness that would be sadly humorous if it were not for the fact that they are executed with the most profound sincerity and seriousness.

I was in Milpa Alta on its festal day. Only twenty miles from Mexico City, perched on a green-gray mountainside, this Indian village until recently remained a world apart, speaking its own Nahuatl language and living its remote life. I say "until recently" because, though the older people carry on their lives in much the same way as their ancestors did, the new education introduced by the rural school system is effecting a marked change.

The day was an extraordinary illustration of Mexico in several roles. Amidst a mass of men, women and children, dogs and burros, more closely packed than a Times Square crowd on election eve, amidst almost silent vendors of pottery, food and embroideries, a fantastically dressed group of men were enacting in the pantomimic dance, a traditional *Battle of the Christians and the Moors*.

THE CARPA IS A MEXICAN DESCENDANT OF THE COMMEDIA DEL' ARTE. THEATRE, DANCE, PANTOMIME AND SINGING, COMBINED WITH TOPICAL POLITICAL SATIRE MAKE THE CARPA A REAL PEOPLE'S THEATRE IN THE URBAN CENTERS.



Mordecai Gorelik



This dance (with service in an adjoining church to supply the necessary religion) is a rendition of the historic war between the Moors and the Spaniards which was impressed upon the Indian as being relevant. Naturally each impassive Moorish king was overturned, each Spaniard triumphant. Action was sometimes symbolic, sometimes real and proceeded with the utmost studied continuity though never forgotten dialogue, music, dance, combat, death, and triumph. The actor-dancers were rigged up in a hodge-podge of Renaissance regalia, contemporary brass helmets, imperial French capes, red coats and wild artificial beards, making otherwise mild faces look oddly mad. The intensity, sincerity and belief which these actor-dancers conveyed was in spirit caught by the crowding onlookers. This same concentration in action is unaltered and extremely characteristic of all the current art expression of Mexico. (This dance without any break lasted for five hours.)

Outside on another square near the well-filled church, the rural school, modern and alert, was holding *its* celebration. Obviously that day was chosen to draw the people away from the living church on the one hand and from the insidious and stultifying traditional past. With basketball being played on a side court before an impassive Indian group, the entertainment on the outdoor stage proceeded to "entice" the large crowd, among whom were many who quite unsuspectingly had just emerged from the church. Dances of folk genre were appealingly presented by children as well as adults. Little girls in *modern* dress (not Indian) performed flower dances (not rites); grown men in historic costume performed (not lived) legendary situations. Nationalist speeches, secular recitations, guitar selections and dances of a new generation were competing with, on the other square, wailing music, clashing ancient blades, stamping feet of bespangled and skirted children living a series of remote situations. The entire day was a living drama of the centuries, expressed through dance and music.

Throughout ancient Mexico, religion was the impulse and force of social and political life; warriors and priests dominated the community. The Spanish soldiers and fathers had ready material to manipulate for their purposes, building thus on existing forms, reconverting dances that were symbolic and stylized (as the Yaqui dances still are) by changing the "narrative idea," by giving different content to a constant form. All the Christian dances based on pure Indian structure are now really dance dramas. They serve the purpose of the Church—to enslave the people by means of art.

Of the form of modern dance in Mexi-

co there is little to say. At the beginning of this article I wrote of *what* is said in their pageants rather than how it is said. There is as yet no awareness of any personal dance movement technique, or of the plastic structure of which dance is made. The movement employed in the ballets mentioned is strangely simple and unimaginative, containing nothing of the existing form so dynamically and intensely in the historic dances which are included as episodes in most of these ballets. In other words, the ideas of today are not being expressed in choreographic forms, as were the ideas of past ages. Is it because there is too much emphasis on the study of past dances? Is it that there is no need at the moment for such an expression? Or is their expression to be the rendition of ideas through the large scale of drama-dance, where story is portrayed in masses and massive movement, and dance gesture is

incidental to the arrangement of action for idea?

The problem of a new dance in Mexico is a profound one. Consider the heritage of mixed bloods—mixed but not yet mingled; consider its rich, full, copious folk expression, its dance tradition of a once deeply cultured race. How much of past folk dance can and should be utilized; what of the structure of indigenous dances? What fundamental body movement is theirs? How arrange their rhythms, their patterns, their dynamics so that their dancing can be as "modern" as their painting; so that their art-dance can be a vital part of Mexico? Mexico's great social problem is the education of a long enslaved peon class, the building of an integrated community. To what extent and in what fashion can a modern dance form be created from this diverse heritage, that will be expressive of Mexico's social aspirations?

## Dance Reviews

BY ELIZABETH RUSKAY

Yvonne Georgi returned to New York after an absence of five years in a series of two recitals on December 1st and 8th, at the Guild Theatre. Not seen here since her last appearance with Harold Kreutzberg, Miss Georgi was welcomed back with a great deal of enthusiasm by an audience sincere in its admiration of a mature and finished artist.

Miss Georgi's programs consisted of lyric and dramatic dances, slight pieces characterized by a gracious projection, a well-controlled and elastic technique, and a gaiety of spirit that was at once delightful and annoying.

The lyric dances, of which *Suite*, *Minuetto*, and *Waltz* are typical, were concerned chiefly with design and space patterns, and were all in much the same style of movement. The dramatic dances, except for *Electra* and *Cassandra*, two excellent mood-creating characterizations, were frankly little more than character dances. *Penthesilea*, *Queen of the Amazons*, was almost straight impersonation; *Ce qu'a vu le vent de l'ouest*, a dramatization of the wind in an impressionistic style, with veils and blue lights, was somewhat old-fashioned; *Girls Dancing* were four slender pictorials, charmingly executed.

Miss Georgi's sojourn in Holland and her frequent appearances abroad have helped to stimulate a more widespread interest in the dance. In Holland her

new ballet with Mengelberg is being subsidized by the city—indeed a great step forward. But it is undeniable that however satisfying European cities have found Miss Georgi's dancing, we in New York have come to demand a considerably broader scope, a deeper and more analytical approach toward vital experiences than she has given us.

### Angna Enters

Although the actual status of Miss Angna Enters is a moot question for dramatic and dance reviewers, her recent series of three Sunday evening recitals at the Masque Theatre, November 24th, December 1st and 8th, has made it evident that, despite the subtling *Episodes—in dance form*, any true survey of her work should be made from a dramatic standpoint.

Miss Enters is well known as a dance-mime, and as such she has been evaluated by the dance critics in accordance with the standards set by other dancers. Miss Enters' most satisfying numbers, however, are those in which movement, in the kinesthetic sense, is secondary to the dramatic theme, and in which she has allowed a free range of expression to her pantomimic abilities. *Pique-Nique*, *Auto-da-Fé*, *Vienna Provincial*, and other straight dramatic pieces seem to be more suitable for her talents.

It is in those sketches, satirizing the dance, that Miss Enters is least effective. Having no technical background in movement, her attempts to parody it, however good the ideas in abstraction, fall flat in execution. Whether it be the jazz dance, as in *Red Hot Mama*, the modern dance, as in *Oh! the Pain of It*—the comment is weak and ineffectual.

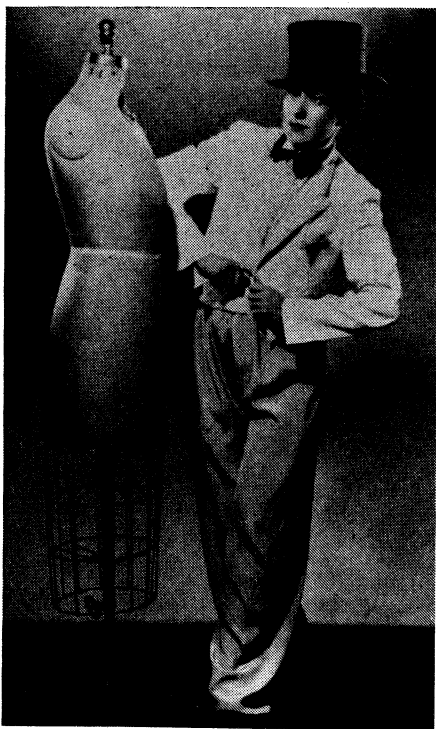
Miss Enters' contribution to the field of dramatic impersonation in mime form is invaluable. She has a wonderful sense of the ridiculous and the impressive, and her ability to set them off in contrast to one another so that each becomes more pointed, achieves an artistic and human unity that has as yet been unequalled.

### Berta Ochsner

In a debut recital at the Guild Theatre, November 24th, Berta Ochsner, a dancer who has appeared in the West and abroad, exhibited much of the same lack of content and awareness of life that were evident in Miss Georgi's work.

Looking at Miss Ochsner's repertoire, we find her concern is chiefly with the art-forms of the past; five out of eleven dances were from the pre-classic period; two from the Renaissance. The remaining four dances were of a contemporary nature, but done in so light and inconsequential a manner as to insure nothing more than pleasant diversion.

The question must then be asked if a dancer of today can with success present, at a formal recital, dances of a re-



ANGNA ENTERS IN "VODVIL"



BERTA OCHSNER IN "WHISKEY JOHNNY"

search nature, dances, which however good in form and true to the authentic spirit, remain studies in that they offer no new material and no comment from the dancer. With the exception of *Courante*, Miss Ochsner's period dances lack interpretation. Undoubtedly it is well for the dancer to study these earlier dances, to learn from them what precision and clarity of form really is; to know them as a part of the historical development of the dance, as a background for the modern dance; and to do them, not in a formal recital, but in the confines of the studio.

By far the strongest part of Miss Ochsner's program were her satirical numbers: *Dove-Cote*, a humorous take-off on the sentimental dance; and a group of short *Comments*, of which the best were: *Lament Opus 1*, a tremulously close burlesque on Martha Graham's *Lamentation*, and the *People's Choice*, a clever insight into political demagoguery. In these satirical dances, Miss Ochsner reveals her true skill: pantomime and a fine sense of comedy. Though Miss Ochsner has given little indication to her audiences of a perception of realities, it is to be hoped that in the future she will direct her pungent humor at those things in our present society which need to be satirized.

### Sophia Delza

Sophia Delza appeared in a solo recital at the Young Men's Hebrew Association, on Saturday, December 7th. Her program, which consisted of five dances of a cyclorama nature, was somewhat disappointing following as it did on her

recent extensive participation in lectures, demonstrations, and symposia on the dance, throughout the city, in which she proved herself sensitive and well-informed about the dance.

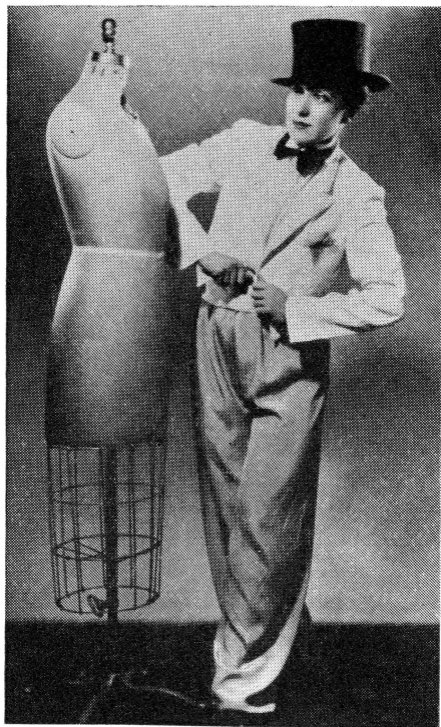
There are, and probably will always be, two types of dancers: the creative artist, forever changing the art expression of the times; and the intellectual, whose sensitivity and understanding of the established art-form, spreads that art by making it clearer. Miss Delza's position is a case in point. As an exponent of the modern dance, she is well-schooled in its philosophy, she is awake to its problems and mistakes, and she is conscious of the link between the dancer and life. Though one cannot doubt the sincerity of her creative impulses, one questions, however, the strength with which her dance convictions transmit themselves to an audience.

Specifically, Miss Delza's performance lacked projection power. In both of her larger dance-forms, *Prelude to Departure* and *Challenge to Defeat*, the movement, which is static and over-studied, fails to unite the individual parts of the compositions in a congruent whole. Without that integration in movement, the dancer's motivating idea becomes obscured, and the audience is left to grapple with an intellectual concept. In *Surrealiste Solennite*, a satire on Psychological Realities, profuse program notes somewhat clarify the problem.

There is so great an urgency today for a person of Miss Delza's theoretic abilities for the spreading and amplification of the dance movement along wider channels, that we cannot hesitate in urging her to continue her "pioneering" efforts.



BERTA OCHSNER IN "WHISKEY JOHNNY"



ANGNA ENTERS IN "VODVIL"

# Uncle Tom, Will You Never Die?

BY ARTHUR DRAPER

What Hollywood thinks of the American Negro is best expressed by the roles given him in the motion picture. He may be the lazy, good-for-nothing comedian, exemplified by Stepin Fetchit and Sleep'n Eat; the simple-minded child of *Green Pastures*; the servile, "good nigger," Uncle Tom; the pop-eyed distortion of a hotcha performer in a Harlem night-club interpreted so many times by Bill Robinson, "Fats" Waller and Jennie LeGong; or the viciously antagonistic threat to white supremacy, cause of "race riots" and "lynching parties." It is this latter distortion with which the films are just beginning to deal, appropriately enough at a moment when, throughout the Deep South, Negro and white workers are beginning to get together jointly to fight for better living conditions in such organizations as the Share Croppers' Union and that of the mine and steel workers in Birmingham.

Paramount's *So Red the Rose*, the film version of Stark Young's best-selling novel, with Margaret Sullavan, Walter Connolly, Janet Beecher and Randolph Scott in leading roles, deliberately portrays the Negro masses of the South as stupid, sullen rioters. At the same time, it presents Daniel Haynes, the Adam of the stage version of *Green Pastures*, as the loyal Uncle Tom who is supposed to win the audience for the producer's conception of the Negro's place in American life.

The story is a libelous presentation of Southern Negroes of the Civil War period. It pictures their revolt from their owners as based only upon laziness, greed and hysteria. In the picture, its leaders are opportunists, misleading a simple-minded people.

The hope that this picture of the Negro will be popular throughout the Jim Crow South led Paramount to send its director of advertising and publicity, Robert M. Gilham, on a tour of the Southern states for the purpose of enlisting the aid of such organizations as the Daughters of the Confederacy to assist in the exploitation and publicizing of the picture. This cooperation was not difficult to secure and, as a result, the picture had a simultaneous "preview" opening at each of the eleven capitals of the original states of the Confederacy. The "patriotic" organizations sent letters to all of their members, no less than 60,000 such promotional letters being

sent out by the Daughters of the Confederacy alone.

Paramount knew what it was about when it started making this picture. One of its publicity stories pointed the problem succinctly: "Sociological experiments are by no means the purpose of film making and the few daring souls who have invaded this most controversial of all fields have met with disastrous failures." Paramount was already beginning to worry about this "sociological experiment."

"Yet there is a tendency in 1935," the release continued (and it has been published in scores of newspapers throughout the country), "to depart somewhat from the standardized forms of screen literature and to liberalize this media to conform to modern tolerance and thoughts." Thus, Hollywood must believe, and is passing on this belief to the American public, that *any* portrayal of a Negro in an American film is "a modern tolerance" and that the cinema's vicious conception of Negro characters is "a modern thought."

In the same publicity release, Hollywood takes pride that "there has been a marked decrease in that form of intolerance which specializes in the drawing of color lines and your colored performer of merit now shares marquee distinction with the whites." Yet, in Hollywood, his salary is lower; he is discriminated against on a Jim Crow basis, and you have never yet seen the photograph of a Negro actor, other than an artist's drawing or a cartoonist's caricature, displayed in a newspaper ad created in the offices of either the studios or the film distribution companies. Think back on the advertising campaign that sold *Emperor Jones* and *Sanders of the River*. No photograph of Paul Robeson was ever used in the advertising of either of these pictures.

*So Red the Rose* was directed by King Vidor, maker of *The Big Parade*, *Hallelujah*, *Our Daily Bread* and *The Wedding Night*. It was his expert handling of large groups in these pictures that have made them outstanding American films. But, how did King Vidor get the two hundred Negro members of the cast of *So Red the Rose* to depict the portrait of their race which he wished American audiences to see—a portrait, by the way, which is completely at variance with the historical documents of DuBois and Beard. Another

of Paramount's own publicity stories tells the tale:

"It is in the slave quarters that most of Vidor's large group shots are taken. Hundreds of dishevelled negroes were photographed there. Negroes in jubilee spirit, chanting and singing the spirituals and folk songs which today are classics in musical history.

"But this scene of jubilee and happiness filmed early in the morning took on a grimmer aspect in the afternoon's work. The slave quarters were the scene of rebellion; the chants changed to ominous growls as the negroes, goaded on by a leader, left this peaceful plantation scene to answer Marse Lincoln's call to liberty.

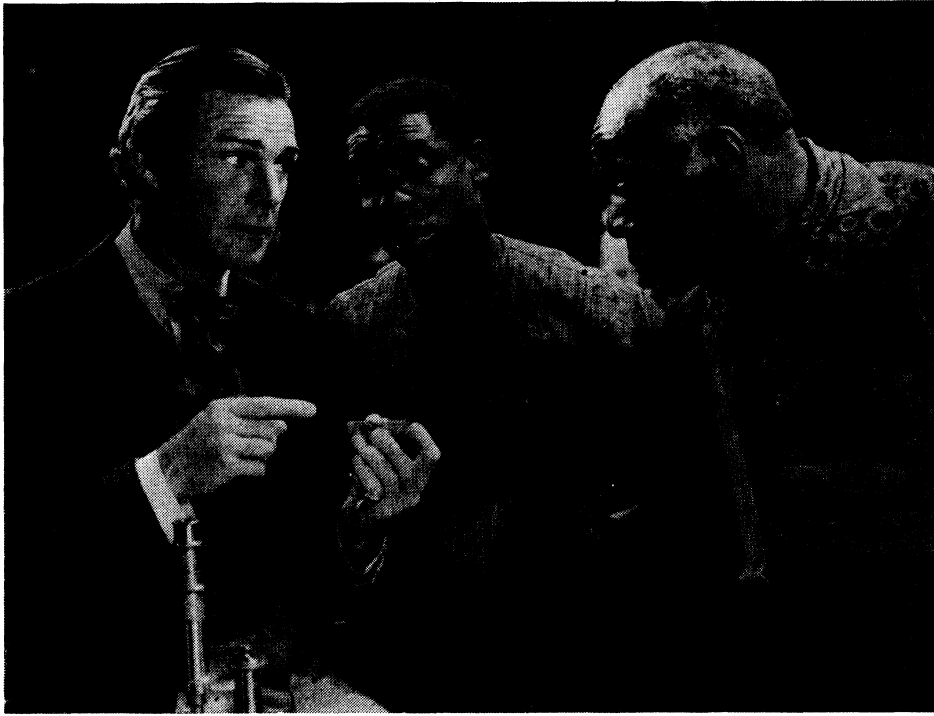
"Vidor is familiar with the colored mind, and sympathetic as well. This perhaps accounts for his unusual interest in the black man and for his understanding of his likes and dislikes. And so, before he turned his cameras, he spoke to this mob for at least fifteen minutes, giving them a simple word picture of negro life during the period of slavery, stressing too the significance of the event which gave them their freedom.

"The director holds the opinion that the colored race is the most difficult of all people to handle as a group in the making of motion pictures. Fundamentally living only for the joy they get out of life, they are inclined to laugh at serious things and this native comedy sometimes is difficult to overcome when sheer drama is necessary.

"King Vidor took this day's work most seriously. He outlined his story to his colored group and made some of them cry through a somewhat maudlin presentation of the evils which their ancestors were supposed to have suffered. This had the effect of putting them in the proper mood and the rapid change from happiness to a sullen anger was accomplished without delay." (Author's emphasis—Editor.)

To placate the Jim Crow Confederacy, the publicity stories go on to point out that ". . . the director has constructed a large camp at Sherwood Forest for the blacks. They have their separate mess tents, their hospital and sleeping quarters and a huge entertainment tent where they congregate at night to put on a remarkable impromptu show."

To this tent at night, "most of the stars of the company go for relaxation.



FROM PARAMOUNT'S "SO RED THE ROSE," DIRECTED BY KING VIDOR

Margaret Sullivan, Randolph Scott, Walter Connolly, Daniel Haynes and the supporting cast sit at a front row bench and watch long-legged Darby Jones dance until he falls into a state of exhaustion—a performance of primitive fervor that would panic a sophisticated Broadway audience."

It is entirely possible that King Vidor may have had little to say about the writing of the screen play for this picture. The film was given into the hands of Producer Douglas MacLean, now off the Paramount lot, himself Southern born, raised by his "mammy," and many lines in the picture were drawn out of his own "experience."

The picture tells the story of an old feudal Southern family during the Civil War. Its treatment of its slaves is humane, understanding from the "white God" point of view. At no place in the story is hinted the encroachment of the industrialists who turned feudal plantation life into the "outdoor factory." Such a picture might have shown the speed-up, beatings, starvation of the slaves, might have given American audiences an honest clue into the "revolt of the slaves" that took place during the Civil War. Thus, when the slaves on the Bedford plantation revolt, there is no sympathetic basis upon which they may turn against their white masters. One sees only crazed Negroes turning against the gentle hand that has cared for them so many years.

They revolt simply because Clarence Muse, in the role of Cato, a slave, holds before them the possibility of a life of

laziness and greed; because he fans a hatred for the white folks that has no foundation in the motivation of the picture.

Thus, the first Northern cannon ball that falls on the plantation is the signal for the hysterical scream from a "Kitchen Negro": "A message from Abe Lincoln, dat's what dat is! Abe Lincoln done sent a cannon ball to tell us he ain't far away! Abe Lincoln done sent the word!"

And when William, the "Uncle Tom" butler, played by Daniel Haynes, tells the coachman to walk the horses before stabling them, this is the reply: "I've unhitched horses for the last time. Let the white folks unhitch their own horses . . . I'se gonna be free—that's what I am." And hysterically shouting, he runs toward the slave quarters in an ecstatic frenzy, shouting "Free! Free! Free for true!"

In the slave quarters a scene of rebellion is pictured. Cato, the ringleader, is on a stump. The answers to his questions come like a choral response.

"You been slaves long enough, ain't ya?"

"Yes! That's right!"

"You want what belongs to you, don't ya?"

"Yes! Ain't it true? Thass right!"

"Are you going to take what belongs to you?"

"Yes! Yes! We sho' is!"

"Or wait until somebody else eats it up?"

"No! No! No we ain't!"

"All this is yours! Go and get it!"

Then is pictured a scene in the barns,

stys and pens, with the Negroes greedily lunging for pigs, nabbing squawking chickens, driving off horses, shouting, "I got mine! I got mine!"

And Cato declares, "Before long we'll all be sitting in the golden chairs in the big house . . ." He gets into the carriage. "Now we're goin' to the warehouse and gets ourselves things. It all belongs to us now! We're the kings!"

And there he builds up the frenzy that possesses them. "We are free! No more work! Marse Lincoln has given us de land! Has given us de houses! Not another day's work! Yankee army in blue coats coming down de road to give us everything to eat! No more plowing . . . no more breaking new ground . . . no more planting . . . no more chopping cotton! Just sittin' in the sun!"

It is the daughter of the house of Bedford (Margaret Sullivan) with her little brother (Dickie Moore) who breaks the revolt. She is worried lest sound of the shouting be carried to the manor house where her father is dying. And the methods she uses are so simple that they deny the seriousness of the slaves' rebellion. It is the old, sentimental, "Uncle Tom" attitude that ends the riot; after shaming one of the ringleaders with a single slap in the face she reminds the rioters that they are all her friends, the friends who raised her from childhood, that she is their "little white bird," that they must continue to be "good." Chanting a hymn they follow her to the manor. When Malcolm Bedford dies, the slaves quietly disperse and leave the plantation.

It would be manifestly unfair to King Vidor to ignore some of the splendid directorial touches upon which his reputation is based. One of the most amusing scenes in the picture is the satire on Southern pride marching off to war, personified by Walter Connolly, as head of the Bedfords, who doesn't believe in the South's cause until he is wakened one night by the flat of a Union sabre on his broad posterior. Then, suddenly, the cause becomes alive and he turns the house out to find the beautiful uniform he once wore to a Governor's reception. For Marse Bedford is going off to war, attired as a Southern gentleman.

On the other hand it would constitute a negligence not to point out to Mr. Vidor that if *So Red the Rose* succeeds at the box office in the South it will be at the cost once again of provoking even sharper racial lines than exist in these states at the present time, of provoking an even greater hatred by the whites for the Negroes, of breaking the solidarity between workers of all races that is today beginning to change the Old South of infamous reputation into a New South built on workers' pride.



FROM PARAMOUNT'S "SO RED THE ROSE," DIRECTED BY KING VIDOR

# SHIFTING SCENES



FROM THE NEUE THEATERGRUPPE'S PRODUCTION OF "THE MOUSETRAP"

## "The Mousetrap"

The Neue Theatergruppe, with its production of *The Mousetrap*, by Gustav Wangenheim, has given us another example of what a well coordinated group, gifted with creative daring and imagination, and writers and a director who will not hesitate to adapt a script for his cast and stage, can do with the social theatre. Last year they presented Rudolph Wittenberg's *So Leben Wir*, an agile revue, and now *Die Mausefalle* launches the group into serious sustained drama, with a well-developed narrative of the confusion that breaks down Heinrich Fleissig, the "typical individual case." He is the little bourgeois, timid, gentle, muddle-headed, a Caspar Milquetoast with pictures of Goethe and Napoleon set up proudly on his desk, a pompous reader of *Hamlet*. Having listened to the false pleading of the factory boss (whose tragic and comic masks both hide Taba, the shoe-factory) who "socializes" his plant, reduces his workers to their lowest level, and rejects Fleissig, he is picked up in the street by a troupe of actors who ask him to appear with them. Appear as whom? As Fleissig, of course! The "individual case!" He refuses at first; after all, he is Fleissig, with the sacred dreams—he has, ambitions; given enough rope, he may get to be a lieutenant, or at least a boss.

The players set out to show him: They take him to the Taba Shoestore, where

the Magician, with his remarkable five dollars—"snap it, it's real!"—transforms a worker in overalls, a candidate for any cop's billy, into a Respectable Citizen with Purchasing Power—long enough to turn the five dollars over to Taba. Fleissig and his wife go to a picnic-grounds, and the children, who have learned that what they have been taught is not altogether useful, sing, tremendous in their youth and knowledge,

"Wir sind ganz gross, ganz gross, ganz gross,

Und Ihr seid noch so klein!"

But factory life is organized differently. Fuehrer and stopwatch—Berlin 1932, New York 1935—these are hardly distinguishable each from the other. Fleissig begins to understand who he is, where he belongs. He turns to the group, he will not belong anywhere else. "And what Fleissig has begun . . . that—will—go—on!"

The play has many brief scenes: realistic ones between Fleissig and the players, and stylized scenes in which the episodes of his life are illustrated. The movement is kept fluent and continuous by skillful planning, perfect discipline and timing. A slight change of significant properties and costume detail and the actors are ready to move from a scene to its sequel. Three rectangular boxes give, in turn, the illusion of chairs, pedestals, sidewalk, grocery box, display window. The actors, still untrained in emotional scenes, are increasing in flex-

ibility and imagination. It would appear that the director, John Bonn, is still largely responsible for most of the inventiveness of the production. The actors maintain the vitality they showed in their production last spring, they play more fully and confidently with each other, and the advance which they have made through experience and training is shown by the superiority of the old members of the company to the new ones. Other foreign language theatres should learn from the German theatre that their productions can have an appeal even for audiences not familiar with their language, if they will use movement and music and quickening changes of the stage picture. And English speaking groups would have many times superior productions if they would apply a similar test of eye-and-ear interest. Meanwhile, at the Culture House Theatre, 268 East 78th St., N.Y.C., afternoons and evenings of January 26th and February 2nd both German and English audiences will have an opportunity to enjoy one of the liveliest of theatre performances.

MURIEL RUKEYSER

## "Private Hicks"

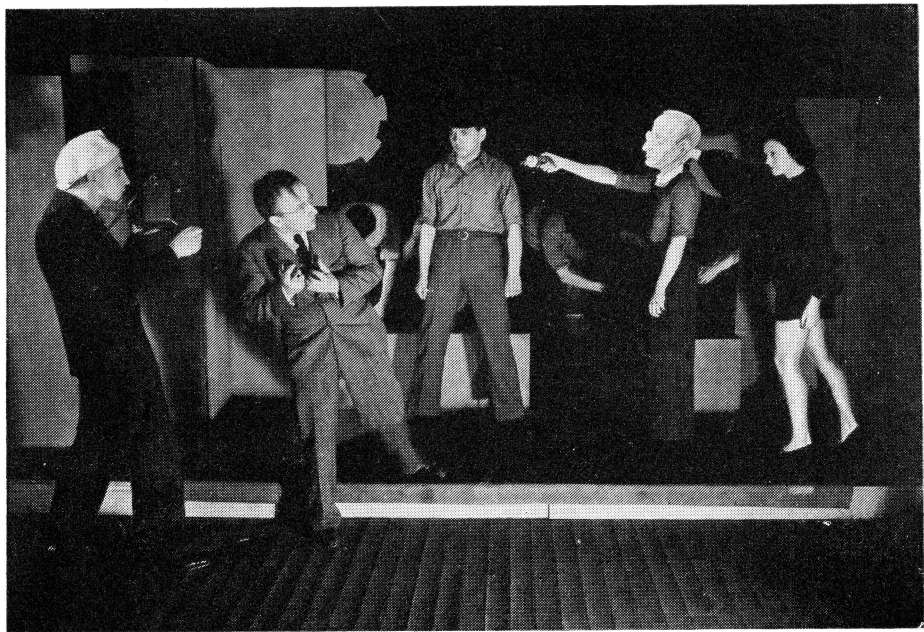
Nothing since the appearance of *Waiting For Lefty* has created so great a stir in new theatre circles as Albert Maltz's prize-winning play *Private Hicks*. Published in full in the November issue of *NEW THEATRE*, this play was put into rehearsal immediately by theatre groups the country over. Judging from its reception at the first performances in Chicago, Detroit, and Philadelphia, *Private Hicks* seems destined to prove as exciting and stimulating to audiences the country over as was *Lefty*.

The New Theatre Group of Detroit has this to report:

"*Private Hicks* took our audience by storm. They actually whistled, cheered and bravo-ed at the close and there was spontaneous applause throughout the play. We have never had such a response to a play before—not even for *Lefty*. Of course Maltz deserves most of the credit but in addition to the quality of the script, it was well played by our youngsters.

"Many of us feel that *Private Hicks* is even more valuable than *Lefty* because it is broader—straightforward and much needed propaganda against the use of militia on the side of the employers in strikes, yet beautifully written, fast-moving, clear-cut and easy to produce. It is just the thing for our theatres—small cast, one-set, simple lighting and easy to stage either in regular theatres or on bookings before trade-unions, neighborhood groups, etc., regardless of back-





FROM THE NEUE THEATERGRUPPE'S PRODUCTION OF "THE MOUSETRAP"

stage difficulties. We are planning on handling many bookings and predict that Maltz's play will have a wide influence."

In Philadelphia, the New Theatre Studios performed Albert Maltz's anti-fascist play for the first time on December 14th before an enthusiastic capacity audience, mostly American League Against War and Fascism members.

Although I did not get to see the Detroit and Philadelphia productions, I was fortunate enough to see the Theatre Collective of Chicago give the play for the first time in that city. *Private Hicks* was presented at Foresters Hall before an audience composed mainly of delegates to the Cook County Congress Against War and Fascism. Maltz's stirring protest against the use of militia in the interests of employers against striking workers received a response that would gladden the heart of any playwright. As in Detroit and Philadelphia there was spontaneous applause throughout the play, and a sincere, enthusiastic and impressive ovation at the end.

Although they gambled with fate by putting on the play after only ten brief rehearsals, the young actors of the Theatre Collective succeeded in the main in giving a creditable though not a distinguished performance. Fortunately, a young red-headed actor named Edward Allen raised the whole level of the production by giving a stirring performance as Hicks. Playing with effective restraint throughout most of the play, he carried his "big" scenes with the nurse and the Major despite some indifferent acting in these parts, and built his part up to a thrilling climax when Hicks finally, after wavering for a moment in fear of a pending prison sentence, risks imprisonment rather than agree to accept orders to shoot down workers he believes have a right to strike. Milton Burnstein turned in a fine performance as Lee and Jack Repkin half-mastered an interesting characterization as Cavanaugh. Robert Gomze's heavy underscoring of his role as the Major, and Bess Sampson's ingenu quality as the "nurse" were unconvincing. The Major became too much the traditional villain and the nurse looked very charming but one couldn't believe that such a sweet girl really had schemed with the Major to betray Hicks into telling just who gave him the leaflet that persuaded him not to shoot at the strikers. Although the director, Irving Tombach, did a good job, considering the circumstances under which the play was given, the production suffered somewhat from diffusion in the direction which failed to maintain the tense, concentrated drama inherent in the play. With all these criticisms, the Theatre Collective of Chicago deserves to be congratulated

for its development during the past year. Together with the Chicago Repertory Group, it constitutes the main hope for the building of a strong new theatre movement in Chicago.

One thing is clear. The importance of staging *Private Hicks* cannot be overestimated. In a sensational exposé in the *New Masses* of December 26, George Seldes reveals that U. S. Army officers have received instructions to order their men to "shoot to kill" in industrial disturbances. Thus Albert Maltz's play takes on additional significance at this time.

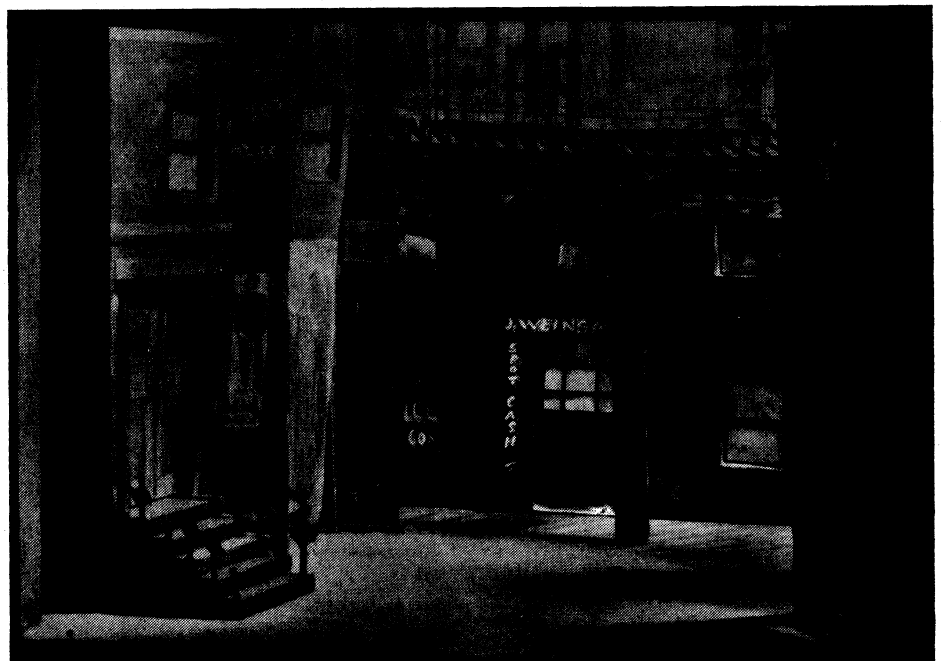
A coast-to-coast survey shows the following theatres lined up to produce *Private Hicks* this month: Minneapolis Theatre Union; Progressive Arts Club, Vancouver, B. C.; Toledo New Theatre League, (Toledo incidentally is the original scene of the play); Seattle Group Players; Los Angeles Contemporary Theatre; Duluth New Theatre; the New Theatre Group of Cincinnati; the Southern Tenant Farmers' Association of Tennessee, and the Washington, D. C., group.

New York's premiere of *Private Hicks* will be seen on the January 12th "New Theatre Night" at the Civic Repertory Theatre along with two one-act plays by Paul Green, *Hymn to the Rising Sun* and *Unto Such Glory*. This program, and similar ones throughout the country, should be an inspiration to other playwrights to follow the examples of Albert Maltz, Paul Green and Clifford Odets in writing short plays for production by new theatre groups. Hundreds of theatres and audiences extending far beyond the narrow confines of Broadway await their work.

HERBERT KLINE

Albert Bein's *Let Freedom Ring* has happily moved downtown under the auspices of the Theatre Union, whose low price policy makes it available to the audience to which it rightfully belongs. The contradiction of trying to run a workingclass play in a high-priced set-up, where success depends upon the support of an orchestra audience with whom the play has no connection, was sharply illustrated by the experience of the producers uptown. Middle class plays perhaps, but purely workers plays (however supported, as this play is, by beauty of language and conception, and sincerity of production) need audiences which understand their full meaning. And that audience cannot pay \$3.30 or \$2.75 or even \$2.20 for a seat in a theatre. Let other producers learn. And let theatregoers take advantage of this second chance to see as fine a play as has come out of the new theatre movement. The Theatre Union reports that *Let Freedom Ring* should run many months if given immediate support.

The Artef is to be congratulated upon its choice of Samuel Ornitz's *Haunch, Paunch and Jowl* for their second production of the current season. This play of life on the lower East Side, a dramatization from the novel by the talented Khaver-Paver, is by far the most appropriate vehicle for the extraordinary gifts of the Artef that the company has come upon to date. In rehearsal it has shaped up so splendidly that it has been decided to temporarily drop the company's repertory system and run *Haunch, Paunch and Jowl* every night. NEW THEATRE advises its readers to make their attendance obligatory.



A SCENE FROM THE ARTEF'S NEW PRODUCTION, "HAUNCH, PAUNCH AND JOWL"



A SCENE FROM THE ARTEF'S NEW PRODUCTION, "HAUNCH, PAUNCH AND JOWL"

# Ukrainian Drama Conference

A congress typical of the development and activity of foreign-language theatre groups in America took place recently when the National Ukrainian Dramatic Competition and Conference was held at Cleveland.

The group has its story: the first cultural activity of the Ukrainian people in this country was the formation in 1887, at Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, of a chorus, under church auspices. For many years, the church dominated theatrical and cultural activities. Early productions generally about the home country, played on old-country prejudices dealing with the peasant as a fool, and butt for soldiers' jokes or were frankly anti-semitic, portraying the Jew as a saloon-keeper always trying to cheat his neighbor, invariably a gentile. The rest of the plays were mostly religious, *Bethlehem Night*, *Visit of St. Nicholas*, etc. Even the few independent groups were not removed from church influence.

It was in the years before the war (1907-1912) that the progressive movement began to grow among the immigrants. Those years gave birth to small circles, mostly youth organizations with socialist leanings.

A struggle took place: on one side the clergy defended the old forms, and on the other the progressive groups discarded the old, and were searching for new material, to speak for the people.

The slow growth of this theatre movement was due largely to a lack of plays, and it wasn't until the overthrow of the Czar that a few authors were developed among the immigrants; and these plays, dealing with the struggle against the Czar and against the landlords, while revolutionary in content, nevertheless did not reflect the lives of the Ukrainian people here in America.

The Second National Conference and dramatic competitions of the League of Workers Theatres, held in Chicago in April 1934 (which gave second place to *Oh Yeah*, a satire on reactionary American Ukrainian leaders, by the Ukrainian Dramatic Circle of New York) was the greatest impetus towards developing an Ukrainian workers' theatre movement. There has been a flourishing period since then. At the present time they have forty dramatic groups throughout the country. They have in their repertory twenty original plays written by members of the various organizations, five translations from the English, and five adaptations.

The competition held in Cleveland on December 1st, 1935 was the first Na-

tional Ukrainian Competition held in this country. There were seven regional competitions before Cleveland. The winning groups were from New York, Newark, Binghamton, Pittsburgh, Grand Rapids, Chicago, and Cleveland. The plays were chosen by the National Office which keeps in very close contact with its group. The judgment of the jury therefore could be based only on acting, staging, direction, etc., not on choice of plays or subject matter.

Most of the plays suffered from a lack of good direction and staging. The worst fault of most of the groups was the dependence on the prompters. The oratorical speeches made directly to the audience constituted a shortcoming that smacked of the old legit stage. These speeches generally came at a climax of action, cancelling a great many effective bits. Only the winning group avoided these faults completely. First place went to Newark, rightfully, for its presentation of the one-act play, *Forgotten Men*.

This little play with its simple plot telling how the unemployed men in a "Hooverville" came to an understanding of their plight was beautifully staged, giving a true picture of the lives of these "forgotten men." The characterizations were splendid, from the man who was picking lice from his shirt to the one who was busy cleaning a herring. There wasn't a dull moment in the play. Every action of the players was intelligible without an understanding of Ukrainian.

Second place went to New York for a symbolic play called *We Prosper* depicting Wall Street before the crash, the gradual sinking of the small business man into the working class, and the struggle of the more militant Socialist workers for the United Front. This production was beautifully acted, but lacked unity.

The actors seemed like individuals who had nothing to do with one another. This was mostly the fault of the play itself, which was very schematic, jumping from one scene to another without giving any scene a chance to develop. It was a pity to see so much good acting wasted on such an inferior play.

Binghamton was placed third with a play called *Everyday Life*, a short folk comedy about a Ukrainian immigrant and his wife whose constant nagging almost drives him to suicide. This group did a splendid job with this insignificant little play. What made this comedy stand out was the superb acting of Rose Tkachuk as the nagging wife. I don't understand Ukrainian, but watching Miss Tkachuk use a potato peeler and a knife was enough to give one an understanding of everything she said. She, above all others, showed the meaning of objects on the stage.

The day after the competitions, the National Conference was held in the Ukrainian Hall. The problem of organizing dramatic groups among the Ukrainian English-speaking youth was a very important question raised at the conference. The speech of the New Theatre League representative and the appeal for membership of all foreign-language groups in the New Theatre League ended this very encouraging congress, a symptom of progress in this field.

BEN GOLDEN

## THE FORUM THEATRE, INC.

Presents

### "A MILLION TORMENTS"

A Satirical Soviet Farce

By Valentine Katayev, author of "Squaring the Circle"

Heckscher Theatre, 5th Avenue at 104th Street, at 8:40 P.M., Jan. 15-19. Tickets: 50c, 75c, \$1.00

## THE SCIENTIFIC SMASH HIT AGAINST HITLERISM!

### GENETICS AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

By MARK GRAUBARD, Ph. D.

(14 diagrams; cloth, 75c; paper, 50c.)

303-4th Ave. - TOMORROW, PUBLISHERS - New York

Have you read STRUGGLE? (Louis Adamic) 15c.  
Have you read THE MILITIA? (Walter Wilson) 15c.

# TAMARA DAYKARHANOVA'S SCHOOL FOR THE STAGE

THE MOSCOW ART THEATRE method of acting, adapted to the needs of the American stage, available to young men and women seeking thorough training for the theatre.

TECHNIQUE OF ACTING, stage make-up, voice, body development, diction, dialects. Private lessons available.

REHEARSAL GROUP for actors.

COACHING in parts.

SPRING TERM BEGINS JANUARY 20.

For further information

Frances Deitz, Managing Director,  
29 West 56th Street, New York, N. Y.  
Telephone: COLUMBUS 5-5834

Theatres close to the New Theatre League are being deluged with mail as plans for re-organization get under way. In order to make possible the centralized organizational and educational guidance desired by member theatres, and the distribution of social plays, membership rates for individuals have been increased to \$1.00 a year. Membership cards and charters to newly affiliated theatres will be sent out about January 1st. Readers of NEW THEATRE are urged to join the League and support this growing organization. Little theatres, student theatres, trade union dramatic groups, etc., should write for information on the benefits and procedure of affiliation. If the response of members is sufficient, the National Office will be able to carry out plans now being made for the publication of a monthly bulletin on craft and organizational problems, and of pamphlets on audience organization, the Stanislavsky system of acting, etc. It is also hoped that correspondence courses from the League Training School can be financed.

The Cleveland Peoples Theatre recently rented and renovated an abandoned night club on a main street to serve as their theatre. . . . *Black Pit* opened December 30th at the Erlanger Theatre, Philadelphia. It is produced by the Philadelphia New Theatre. . . . A new theatre called the Moberly Little Theatre has been organized in Moberly, Mo., by J. M. Hill, Jr. and Jack Conroy, the novelist. Another new theatre is projected for Sioux Falls, S. D., under the auspices of Local 304 of the Meatcutters Union, A. F. of L., the Students League for Industrial Democracy, and the Farmers Union. *Lefty* will be the first production. . . . In San Francisco the New Theatre Group have produced *Newsboy* and *Home of the Brave* in their new headquarters. The Chicago Repertory Group is at work on a one-act version of *The Young Go First*, the C.C.C. play. . . . The Minneapolis Theatre Union did three performances of *Black Pit* in November, for enthusiastic houses. Next they do *Sailors of Catarro*. . . . The New York Theatre Collective announces limited classes in fundamentals of acting technique and in body and voice

development under the instruction of Lasar Calpern, John Martin, Mary Virginia Farmer, Doris Sorel, and Ruth Bluestone. Second semester begins Feb. 15. . . . Earl Robinson of the N. Y. Theatre of Action is the winner of the competitive Aaron Copland Scholarship in composition at the Downtown Music School. He is the author of several mass songs, including the famous Flying Squadron. . . . *A Million Torments*, by Valentine Katayev who wrote *Squaring the Circle*, will be produced in New York by the Forum Theatre which did Bruchner's *Races* last year. . . . The Yonkers Art Group who recently presented *Intervention* by Leo Slavin is now preparing Ernst Toller's *Man and the Masses*, with music by Aaron Rosenberg. Masks and motion pictures will be introduced into the production. . . . Ben Ari, once a member of the famous Habima troupe, Ivan Sokoloff, playwright, and Lew Arlen, are organizing a new cooperative group to be called United Theatre. Its object is to apply the stage traditions and technique of the Habima to the American scene. They may be reached at 2257-84 St., Brooklyn. . . .

The Vancouver Little Theatre Association are following up their successful production of *Fear* with another Soviet play, *Squaring the Circle*. The Progressive Arts Club of the same city is having censorship trouble with *Lefty*. Mr. Garfield King of the Club reports that the Chief of Police was rumored to have liked the play but objected to its strong language. "I have an appointment with the chief this afternoon," writes Mr. King, "and we will discuss in detail the use of dirty words. I feel sure we will be able to find the right words as the Chief was overseas during the war and I am counting on being able to draw on his experiences." The Club intends to enter *Lefty* in the Dominion Drama Festival, if the authorities permit. . . . From the Theatre of Action of Toronto Jim Watts reports, "We scored another success in our second studio production. We have sold over a hundred associate membership tickets for admittance into our monthly previews, thus netting ourselves a working capital of \$100 . . . and a permanent critical audience.

*Two of the most important works on the subject at Bargain Prices*

### THE DANCE

By Troy and Margaret West Kinney. A history of the dance and its place in art and life. Based on a life long interest in the subject, it is both authoritative and written with enthusiasm. Illustrated with reproductions of six etchings by Troy Kinney. 148 line drawings and 78 photographs. Originally published at \$6.00, now reprinted in exactly the same form at . . . \$1.69 plus 10c postage

### THE THEATRE

Three Thousand Years of Drama, Acting and Stagecraft by Sheldon Cheney. The whole adventure of man with the theatre is written in this book for the first time. The growth of the physical stage, the changes in acting, the story of the writing of plays is blended into one fascinating panorama. The book is illustrated with 204 reproductions and is beautifully printed and bound. Originally published at \$5.00, now reprinted in exactly the same form at . . . \$1.69 plus 10c postage

Eureka Book Corporation  
418 West 25th Street  
New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

Please send me postpaid  
 . . . . . Copies of *The Dance* @ \$1.79  
 . . . . . Copies of *The Theatre* @ \$1.79  
 Payment is enclosed.

Name . . . . .  
 Address . . . . .  
 . . . . .

# NEW THEATRE NIGHT

Let Freedom Ring Actors Troupe in

**PRIVATE HICKS**

prize-winning play by Albert Maltz

**HYMN TO THE RISING SUN**

stirring new play by Paul Green

**UNTO SUCH GLORY**, a comedy by Paul Green

**ANGELO HERNDON**, a chant by E. England and Joseph North

at the **CIVIC REPERTORY THEATRE**

103 WEST 14TH STREET

Tickets: 35¢-\$1.50 at New Theatre, 156 W. 44th St., BRyant 9-8378; New Theatre League, 55 W. 45th St., LOngacre 5-9116; Bookstore, 50 E. 13th St., and Midtown Bookshop, 112 W. 44th St.

at 8.30

# SUNDAY, JANUARY 12

# Dance Front

New Dance League groups throughout the country are sending in letters to the national office about their activities. They indicate, besides growth in membership an enthusiastic interest in the work they are carrying on, a vigorous youthful force in the fight against war, fascism, and censorship through the medium of the dance.

PHILADELPHIA: The New World Dancers have a membership bulletin which provides us with the following news: In relation to the WPA project funds, the New World Dancers helped call a city-wide dance conference. A continuation committee was elected which took up the work of pressing the authorities to open a WPA project for dancing teachers and students. They are also fighting for relief exemptions since there are too few dancers on relief who nevertheless need jobs. Affiliation with the WPA Recreational and Educational Workers was proposed. The New World Dancers sent \$10 in response to the League's call for funds.

WASHINGTON, D. C.: Katya Mirkin of the New Dance Group writes: "We are enclosing \$10. We had great fun raising this money for the League by giving an Amateur Show Party. The announcement of League classes during the Christmas week was read with great interest. Several of our members will attempt to take advantage of the classes.

(Note: The New Dance League classes spoken of by the Washington Dance Group are part of the intensive two week Christmas course in the dance from December 22nd to January 5th. The courses are being given by Jane Dudley, Anna Sokolow, Nessie Breines, Ruth Allerhand, and Winifred Widener, and are in modern technique, Dalcroze Eurhythmics, dance composition, percussion accompaniment, and the mass dance. According to the school's announcement, this is a preparatory course for the more specialized dance studies of the forthcoming Spring term. In addition to classes, evening forums will be held on dance subjects, such as the approach to the revolutionary dance, music for the dance, anatomy and analysis of movement.)

CHICAGO: The Nature Friends Dance Group reports that the original nucleus is developing into an acceptable dance group. They are pressed on all sides to give performances but do not as yet feel capable. Their idea is to increase their numbers so that their supply of dancing material will be of higher calibre. (The group is composed of needle-trade workers, students, one cabinet maker, a stenographer, a housewife, etc.)

The Chicago Dance Collective recently gave its first performance. They reported that they were "pretty scared" before the curtain arose. "Our debut was a success! The audience did not stop its applause and asked to be notified when we perform again and where our group is so that they could join. This first performance has given our group remarkable spirit. We feel our work is being recognized and appreciated."

NEWARK: Members of the Contemporary Dancers of Newark have organized and are teaching the following groups: Contemporary Dancers of New York, Contemporary Dancers of Elizabeth, and Contemporary Dancers of Passaic.

BOSTON: The opening of the new studio and school of the Contemporary Dance Group on September 14th has marked the turning point of this group. They now have permanent headquarters of their own, and a full schedule of classes: intermediate, beginning, and advanced classes in modern technique—also a tap class. In less than two months, registration has increased from 12 to 90. Most of the members have had no previous dance training, although a few dancers have been drawn from the already existing schools in Boston. The Social-Educational Committee is planning a series of lecture-demonstrations by

the leading teachers of Boston, also lectures on technical subjects pertaining to the dance as well as discussions on the dance as an art form and a social force. The Contemporary Dance Group also has the privilege of sponsoring a New Dance League recital in Boston this coming season.

PITTSBURGH: Marie Evans, who is organizing a New Dance League group here writes that it danced on a New Theatre League program on November 10th. "We gave *Flying Squadron*. Since this is a mining town the audience understood the spirit of the dance and really stamped and shouted, despite the fact that the stage was like a box and the dancers hardly had room to move."

LOS ANGELES: The New Dance League of Los Angeles presented as its first activity a series of lecture demonstrations by prominent West Coast dancers. The purpose of the series was to show the status of the dance there and to relate the dance to the movement against war, fascism, and censorship. All points of view were vigorously represented by following artists: Lester Horton, Paul Slany, Agnes De Mille, Warren Leonard, and Thurston Knudson (demonstration of growth of rhythms from the original beginning). A series of recitals will be presented by the New Dance League in the middle of January.

TORONTO: At a general membership meeting of the Toronto Dance Center, held on October 13th, it was decided to affiliate with the New Dance League. The performing group of the Toronto Dance Center danced on International Youth Day and was received with great favor. On their anniversary in March, they will give a dance recital, in which every member of the Dance Center will take part.

Finally, we should like to reprint in full, the report of the New Dance Group of Detroit. This is the group with which Edith Segal, our Field Organizer, is now working:

The New Dance Group of Detroit marked a milestone in its development with its first studio demonstration on Sunday, December 8th. An enthusiastic audience crowded the studio to capacity. An encouraging fact about the audience was that it was composed not only of students of the dance and several important dancers, but of people who know very little about the modern dance, but who are anxious to learn.

The program was opened by the children's group led by Fay Arnold. The children displayed remarkable rhythmic and creative ability. One of the children led the group in an original composition. The Production Group presented a half hour of difficult technique in an orderly, well-disciplined manner, being preceded by a short explanation of its basis. The group also presented a study for a new dance called *Censorship*,—an interesting study in group movement and focus. The program also included *Depression*, a solo number by Fay Arnold, which was remarkably well executed and enthusiastically received.

One of the members gave a short history of the group, tracing its development from a group of five girls who did only folk dancing to the present well-functioning group which centers its creative work around such vital issues of the day as censorship, anti-war, strike, etc. Edith Segal, Field Organizer of the New Dance League, explained the program of the League: *for a mass development of the American dance to its highest artistic and social level, a dance movement dedicated to the struggle against war, fascism and censorship*. She stressed the importance of all dancers and dance sympathizers vigorously supporting the Anti-Olympic campaign as a protest against fascism. This is of particular significance to dancers because of the Dance Olympics planned in conjunction with the Olympic Games.

The other dance groups represented in the audience, the Rebel Arts and Wayne University

Dance Groups, were invited to participate in future studio recitals, which the New Dance Group intends to make a regular feature. It was announced that plans were going ahead for the coming Mid-West Dance Festival to be held in Detroit within the next few months.

A feature of the demonstration was a fine wall exhibit of dance pictures and articles. A special display of leading dance articles which appeared in *NEW THEATRE* during the last year proved of particular interest to many of the dancers present, some of whom were heretofore unfamiliar with the magazine.

The demonstration was followed by a pleasant social afternoon, during which refreshments were served. The informal discussion which followed proved the value of such an intimate afternoon which helped in bringing us closer to our audience and gave them a chance to gain a better understanding of our problems.

Chen I-wan, dance correspondent from Moscow writes: The Leningrad Ballet during its visit to Moscow this summer presented revised versions of *The Swan Lake* and *Esmeralda*, with choreography by Vaganova who is the teacher of practically all of the outstanding Soviet ballet dancers. The Leningrad ballet is generally acknowledged to be the leader of the more than ten permanent ballet ensembles in the Soviet Union, and is a well-nigh classic ensemble. Attempts were made in both ballets to develop a more logical dramatic action, with less dependence on divertissement to sustain interest; however the results were not particularly striking. The mold set by the old music in both these ballets is too rigid to be easily overcome. But the dancers and the theatre gained valuable experience from these attempts.

## I. L. D. Dance Recital

Approximately this time last year, standing room at the Center Theatre was sold out for a dance recital given by the New Dance League for the benefit of the Daily Worker. This year, on December 15th, Carnegie Hall enjoyed the same prosperity when a dance recital, this time for the benefit of the International Labor Defense, enlisted the efforts of Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Tamiris, Charles Weidman and the Dance Unit of the New Dance League. The appearance of these outstanding dancers at this benefit indicates their increasing sympathy with the cause of labor, and the whole progressive movement against war and fascism.

Charles Weidman and his group of men did the one new dance of the program, *Stock Exchange*. Doris Humphrey and her group did sections of *New Dance*, Martha Graham and group performed *Celebration, Imperial Gesture and Course*, Tamiris and her group did *Harvest—1935* and *Work and Play* (all of which were reviewed in last month's issue of the magazine), and the Dance Unit presented *Strange American Funeral*.

Those who question the actual value of dance as an interpreter and depicter of social forces, should bear in mind that the existing audience for the dance, a constantly increasing left-wing audience, is rapidly growing more enthusiastic, as these recitals amply demonstrate. This interest is maintained despite the fact that the potentialities of the dance as a theatre form have scarcely been grazed. There are an increasing number of artists, however, who are drawing closer to the dramatic dance forms, to extended ballet works, the theatre dances. Rather than minimize their efforts, theatre as well as film workers and theoreticians should encourage and cooperate with the experimenters in dance forms. One need scarcely enlarge on the tremendous importance of rhythm and movement in all the allied arts. The theatre needs the infiltration of dance movement to give it freedom and power. It is high time that those who scoff at the abstractness of dancing, at the indefinite symbolism of dance movement, remain to study and reconsider the rapidity with which the dance is sloughing off these outworn integuments, and emerging as a potent force to reckon with in the theatre.

# Book Reviews

**THE DRAMA OF LUIGI PIRANDELLO.** By Domenico Vittorini. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania. \$3.00.

When Luigi Pirandello received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1934 there was the merest ripple of excitement in these parts. He had never made an impression outside of the sanctum of high-brow audiences. For the mass of people who have trouble enough keeping one personality fed and unhumiliated Pirandello's concern with multiple personality could only be an academic question. After a time it ceased to be even that. The volume of his work continued to increase, but far from exhilarating his admirers it seemed to alarm them. He was ringing endless changes on his theme of the illusoriness of reality. If the truth could be told, he was getting to be a bore—and, worse still, a persistent one. The charitable Stark Young opined that Pirandello "has transferred to the mind the legs and antics and the inexhaustible vivacity" of the *commedia dell' arte*. Perhaps this was so, but the boredom was there just the same. And then one fine day we learned that the gentlemen of the Arctic regions had awarded the coveted Nobel prize to the author of *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, and many of us were reminded of the existence of the latter. This resuscitation was bound to result in a definitive study, even if there were to be no other reverberations.

Mr. Vittorini's book, beautifully bound and impressively sponsored by one of our major universities, is a respectable monument to Pirandello. The latter has read the book and expressed his courteous gratitude. With good reason—because the book is a painstaking account of his work in the theatre, and with better reason—because Mr. Vittorini is not only respectful but eulogistic.

Those of us who are interested in Pirandello as a literary and social phenomenon must regret the lack of a really searching evaluation in this study, but will find its material grist for our mill. It is significant, for instance, that Pirandello's father was a wealthy owner of sulphur mines and that Pirandello lived comfortably on his parent's allowance until about the fifth year of his marriage when the sulphur mines became flooded and the future dramatist accepted an instructorship in a normal school for girls. It is instructive to learn that though a liberal in his youth, who was moved to indignation by the Roman Bank scandal of 1894 and the summary repression of a peasant uprising at Palermo in 1898, Pirandello is a devout believer in the inevitableness and the stoic acceptance of suffering. "I should not say that Pirandello is a kindly person," his biographer admits, and proceeds to attribute his subject's disposition and philosophy to his extreme unhappiness. The author's explanation that Donna Antonietta, Pirandello's demented wife, made life hell for her husband, who was considerate enough not to send her to a sanatorium but to keep her in his household for seventeen years, is believable but inadequate. It does not explain his obsession with questions of identity and personality; the constant concern with these questions argues a morbid compulsion in the dramatist himself.

In Pirandello we meet a familiar decadent type: a sensitive artistic scion of the middle class who loses faith in society and conventions, finding them oppressive and unjust. His peace of mind vanishes. Finding something distinctly rotten in the state of Europe, his next step is to indict all life—without making a distinction between society-made suffering and the inclemencies and accidents of nature. A further step, then, is to escape into the cave of despair and complex brooding, and the final descent is made when reality—all reality—is found to be illusory. This is Pirandello's course, and in its general contours, though with variations

in detail and specific character, this is a familiar phenomenon in a society like modern Europe whose rapacity alienates its most sensitive spirits. Pirandello—who has written "Society is a league of brigands against men of good will" and "Ask the poet what is the saddest sight, and he will reply 'It is laughter on the face of a man,' who laughs does not know"—has been one of those alienated spirits. This explains to a great extent, the persistence of his pessimism and passiveness. That these attributes have seriously hampered a writer of exceptional talent is transparent.

Pirandello has been forced into a single channel that has narrowed his talent and stagnated it. We can pay him our tribute for contributing toward the liquidation of the glib well-made play of the nineteenth century (though he has palpably substituted a glibness of his own) and for relegating the ornately vapid dramas of D'Annunzio to the garbage-can of ham histrionics. A certain historical importance pertains to this contribution, and it makes some of his plays decidedly superior to the trash that litters the Southern European theatre, but only a professional apologist can find the great majority of his work vital or even more than moderately readable. His passiveness and defeatism, which have made his plays casuistic and inconclusive, seem to have also scarred him as a man; his recent arbitrary support of Italian imperialism and fascist ambitions is an indication of this sad condition. From nihilism to imperialism is not a surprising course for the son of a mine owner whose unguided sensibility first drove him to a semblance of revolt but trapped him in the end into submission to a state of affairs that should repel him if he retains even a fraction of his genius. Pirandello is one of the casualties of the old order in Europe.

JOHN W. GASSNER

**PROLETARIAN LITERATURE IN THE UNITED STATES.** An Anthology Edited by Granville Hicks, Michael Gold, Isidor Schneider, Joseph North, Paul Peters, Alan Calmer. With a Critical Introduction by Joseph Freeman. International Pub. \$2.50.

This anthology, the first selection of the Book Union, sets out to be a comprehensive collection of the work of revolutionary writers in the field of fiction, drama, poetry, reportage, and criticism. The fiction, poetry and reportage are good cross-sections of their accomplishments and contain some splendid, individual contributions. Except for the fine critical introduction by Joseph Freeman, however, the criti-

cism is woefully inadequate and a poor selection. The drama section includes the entire script of *Waiting for Lefty*, passages from the plays of Albert Maltz, Peters, Sklar, Wexley and Kreymborg. This section proves to be most representative and attains a standard equal to the best, perhaps because its accomplishments have been so definite, unmistakable and popular.

Unfortunately there are works omitted, which, if included in the anthology, would have served to strengthen its contents and make it more representative. On the whole the book does present a fair summary of proletarian literature and a socially realistic picture of a new trend in American culture. It should be read by every person interested in the relationship of the drama of our time to the whole body of literature springing from the same stimulus—the American working class.

S. F.

## Recognition for a Revolutionary Poet

The Yale Series of Younger Poets

(Edited by Stephen Vincent Benét) has chosen for its 1935 publication

## Muriel Rukeyser's

first volume of poetry

## THEORY OF FLIGHT

"Perhaps the most vital collection of verse the Yale Series has yet published. Here you will find a perception of what modern America really looks like, feels like, promises and means."—*The Providence Sunday Journal*.

\$2.00

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS

New Haven, Conn.

## THE DRAMA BOOKSHOP, Inc.

THE THEATRE	Sheldon Cheney	\$1.69
TREASURY OF THE THEATRE	edited by Burns Mantle and John Gassner	\$3.75
IF THIS BE TREASON	Holmes and Lawrence	\$1.75
WINTERSET	Maxwell Anderson	\$2.50
PATHS OF GLORY	Sidney Howard	\$ .75
DANCE	Lincoln Kirstein	\$5.00

48 West 52nd Street  
New York, N. Y.

Tel: VOlunteer 5-2091

## TYPEWRITERS

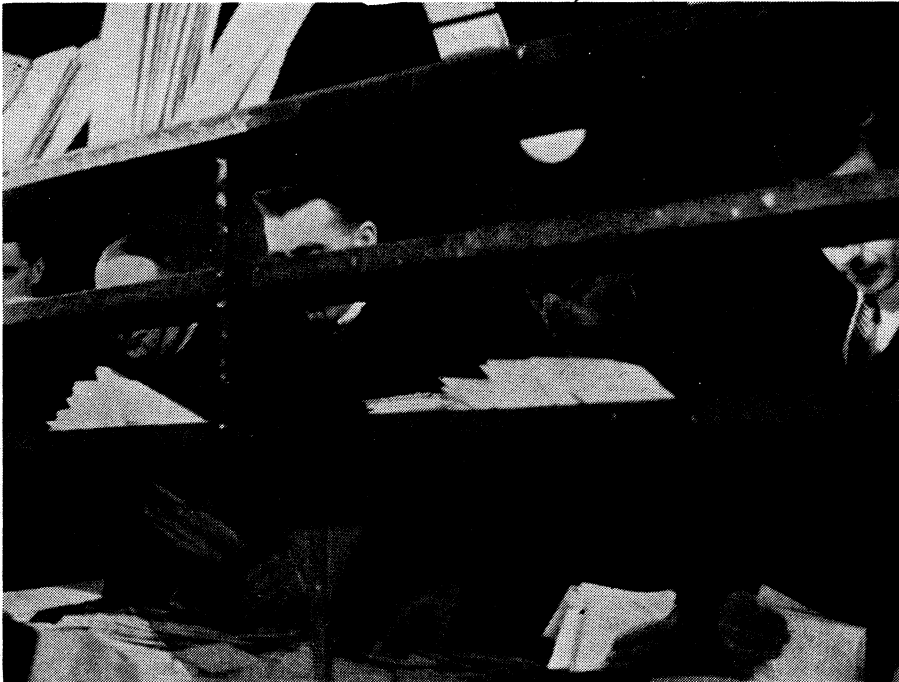
REPAIRED, CLEANED  
REBUILT and OVERHAULED

LOW SERVICE RATES

MONTHLY INSPECTION WITH  
RIBBON—\$1.00

GRAMERCY  
TYPEWRITER COMPANY

146 West 26th Street, New York City  
WAtkins 9-7871



STILL FROM JOHN GRIERSON'S G.P.O. FILM, "6:30 COLLECTION"

### English Documentary Films

(Continued from page 7)

close. They are sent out to some four or five million people a year, with road shows of six months apiece, a thing possible only in a country where a town of the capacity of Newcastle on Tyne boasts a film society of about eight hundred members, and the Young Farmers' Club of York have monthly bulletins of recommended films.

The English documentarians have been their own publicists. "The secret of our growth," says Grierson, "is the public instruction we pretended. The documentary film might have been a greater commercial success in a sentimental and popular journalism and might have gone the way of Flaherty into exotic places, but it discarded him, got down to themes and materials under its own nose, with a clearer social theory than the French and Germans and a closer observation of work and workers than the Russians."

These English films are sober, accurate chronicles of work in progress of the British islands in vistas that reproduce well in stills for the film magazines. But all ballyhoo to the contrary, they are basically government tracts, intended to applaud the progress of the Crown.

*Song of Ceylon* is not always clear in its symbolic references. Grierson's *Coal Face*, however, is a tour de force, a vigorous experiment in sound with a score composed by Walter Leigh in oratorio form, with solos and chorus integrated contrapuntally with the film. Paul Rotha's *Shipyard*, details the building of the Orient liner Orion in Barrow-on-Furness. The film was made for British In-

structional, an off-shoot of British Gaumont. It is full of magnificent close-ups of machinery and heads; its cutting is thoughtful and vigorous; the score is an ingenious commentary on the film. Yet the film as a whole is meticulous and arid.

Mary Field's *This Was England* with its thatchers, mole catchers, flint nabbers and two handed sowers, each recounting his trade and his prowess in the soft accents of Suffolk speech is closer to earth and the folk. As such, it is vivid and animate.

*Progress* is dull cavalcade of mechanical invention from the death of King Edward to a radio in every car; and *Citizens of the Future* is significant as the first of a group of children's films. Korda's Jubilee film that Winston Churchill wrote to order, *The King and the Man in the Street*, has been discarded, they say for "lack of time."

As in France the English amateur has become the film professional. The English documentarians have talked films into the dark corners of England, Scotland and Wales; they publish their own magazines and proffer their own lecturers with or without their films. They have acquired audiences, cameras and sponsors.

In retrospect, their films are more alert as physical commentary than drama. Their documents merely state and illumine; they explore the medium with highly formalized and studied photography and the avidity of the English for details. They posit a social inquiry and resolve it superficially by concluding that slum clearance has been ended by the Gas Company and the abuses of the coal pits blotted out with electricity for all. The Empire takes care of its own.

Joris Ivens' *Borinage* is a document, too. He made it during the Belgian mine strike, with a camera hidden under his coat. The miners sheltered him in their yards and the film was shipped out of the city each night for developing. *Borinage* is not handsomely photographed, but in the swift, brief mounting scenes of the strike there is a drama of revolutionary truth.

The English films by contrast are static and a little naive in their pretensions. Yet despite their inability to search deeper into the realities that underly the surface, the English documentarians, led by Grierson and Rotha have demonstrated how far a consistent proof of view and determination men go in the battle against the commercialized fantasies and wish fulfillment exercises of Hollywood and Elstree.

**VOICE  
and  
SPEECH**

For Stage and Platform  
Individual and Group  
Instruction

HELEN CROSS  
287 W. 4th Street  
CHelsea 3-8806

GUILD THEATRE

SUNDAY EVENING

JANUARY 12, 1936

**TINA FLADE**

Auspices: Mills College Club of New York Scholarship Fund

Tickets: \$2.00 — \$1.50 — \$1.00

Management: Frances Hawkins, 11 West 42nd Street, New York





STILL FROM JOHN GRIERSON'S G.P.O. FILM, "6:30 COLLECTION"

# A \$75 Contest for Relief Plays

The City Projects' Council, a New York organization of professional and white collar workers on Public Works' Projects, and the New Theatre League announce a \$75 Prize Play Contest. The contest offers a \$50.00 first prize and a \$25.00 second prize for the best plays submitted dealing with the struggles of the white collar, professionals and other workers under the relief system.

Playwrights are urged to take the broadest possible approach to their subject matter. The relief set-up today, affecting the lives of many millions in America, is rich material. What has been the effect of relief on the traditional family relationship? What is happening to the depression generation growing up under the relief system? What happens to the doctor, teacher, small business man or any one of the millions of professional and white collar workers uprooted from their position in society by economic forces and placed side by side with other working people on relief projects? How have the trade union standards of these people, achieved after many years of bitter struggle, been affected by the Works' Relief Program?

Many an investigator sitting in a home relief bureau or visiting a needy client, and many an impoverished client waiting for an investigator to call, has felt the pulsing drama of the situation. It is hoped that this contest will encourage these people, along with professional and amateur playwrights to throw a spotlight on the conditions under which the depression stricken American people have been existing during these past six years.

This is an historic contest inasmuch as it is the first of this nature to be launched by a union. As such it merits an impressive response.

The rules of the contest are as follows: Contest closes March 15th, 1936. Winners will be announced in NEW THEATRE and in the City Projects' Counsellor, official organ of the City Projects' Council. The New Theatre League reserves all production and publication rights to prize-winning plays. Runners-up in the contest will also be considered for publication and production with the authors' permission. Plays are to be 30 minutes to one hour in length, clearly typed on one side of the page, and must be accompanied by return postage. Author's name and address are *not to be on manuscript* but must be enclosed with postage in a sealed envelope with the name of the play on the outside. A registration

fee of 25 cents for handling must accompany all manuscripts. All plays must be addressed to Repertory Department of the New Theatre League, 55 West 45th Street, N. Y. C. A full bibliography of material on the subject matter may be obtained upon request from the above address. All manuscripts will be registered and those rejected will be promptly returned upon close of contest. A playwright may submit any number of scripts, but each script must be submitted separately. The judges will be Albert Bein, Virgil Geddes, Harry Elion, Emjo Basshe and Clifford Odets.

## "Paradise Lost" and the Theatre of Frustration

(Continued from page 10)

delicate, sensitive people against a gross and brutal Tobacco Road background: an ecstatic lunatic and a touchingly innocent girl about to be married to a coarse go-getting young farmer. The contrast is effective, but the causative relation is only vaguely and undramatically sensed in the possessive materialism and insensitivity of the farmers. A beautiful *genre* picture results—one so delicate, in fact, as to feel uncomfortable in the spaciousness of a full-length play. A lyric cry, rather strained and special, feeling enacted by Marie Brown, Myron McCormack and others, *How Beautiful With Shoes* was still one of the finer products of this or any other season, even if Broadway could not take it to its rough and ready bosom. An important drama, however, it could not be.

Among the more finished and pleasing new comedies first rank is taken by *First Lady*, by Katharine A. Dayton and Geo. S. Kaufman, and Helen Jerome's dramatization of *Pride and Prejudice*. The first-mentioned comedy begins as a mild satire on Washington politics and develops into a highly entertaining knock-down duel between two socially ambitious women. The situation becomes rather forced when the victor disposes of her rival by exhuming an illegal foreign divorce and when the ruction is over it all seems very unimportant. But one does not look a gift-horse in the mouth, especially when it prances and Jane Cowl is the superbly poised rider. George S. Kaufman adds some more counterfeit coinage to his already well-filled treasury epigrams, and turns in another of his finished performances as a director of comedy. And one is properly grateful that the satire makes room

for a good old-fashioned feminine brawl—otherwise the play would be misleading in focussing upon idiosyncrasies instead of vital questions about the government. The heroine's naive faith in putting the best man (her husband!) into the presidential arm-chair can be discounted for what it is worth or exchanged for the humor latent in the situation. All is well in the Kaufman merry-go-round.

Mr. Max Gordon's gift to the ladies is another smooth exercise—this time in the field of sentimental comedy, supposed to have been laid in lavender by post-war sophistication. The reviewer began to feel uncomfortable in the heat of so much match-making and found the sentiment intensely soporific. Fortunately, the play is braced by perfectly poisonous exposure of aristocratic snobbery and middle-class pretentiousness. Quite guilelessly to be sure and all in humor, *Pride and Prejudice* manages to do quite a bit of social dynamiting even if it hastens to rebuild its house of cards in an inordinately happy ending. With greater experience and a wider point of view Jane Austen might have become the Daumier of English literature and Helen Jerome's dramatization might have been continuously rather than just sporadically delightful. Without wishing to appear ungrateful for a sumptuous evening, this reviewer records his impression that the published play is more charming than Mr. Gordon's loving production of it. Nevertheless, the acting of the principals presents a feast for the eye. It is possible to visualize an altogether different production in which the satire would predominate. But this would presuppose a different evaluation of the play's material and a different audience.

● ROSE CRYSTAL  
CLASSES IN MODERN DANCE TECHNIC  
BEGINNERS AND ADVANCED  
ADULTS AND CHILDREN  
144 BLEECKER ST. Algonquin 4-4974

## ELSA FINDLAY

MODERN DANCE  
EURYTHMICS

64 East 34th Street  
New York—ASH. 4-2090

## LILLIAN SHAPERO

CLASSES  
IN MODERN DANCE TECHNIQUE

79 W. 12th St., N. Y. C.—ALgonquin 4-7760

# New Theatre's Second Anniversary

With this 48 page issue we celebrate the second anniversary of NEW THEATRE as a printed monthly magazine. From the beginning it has been dedicated to the following objectives:

To stimulate and report the new theatre movement and the parallel movements in the modern dance and film; to orient the theatrical arts towards the realities of our time, against reaction, fascism and war, and for a fuller life; to advance the cause of the culturally and economically disinherited;

To fight, by exposing their nature, reaction in the films and decadence in the drama and dance; to preserve a free stage and screen and to demand that they be used for the interests of the majority;

To serve and express the interests of workers employed in the theatre, film and dance;

By constructive and analytic criticism to preserve the best in the old theatre, and to champion the best in the new;

To publish the writings of the best and most active and creative artists in their fields, instead of relying upon side-line commentators.

We are proud that among those who have associated themselves with us in

the creation of NEW THEATRE are: Clifford Odets, Langston Hughes, Paul Green, Albert Maltz, George Sklar, Archibald MacLeish, John Howard Lawson, Sergei Eisenstein, V. I. Pudovkin, G. W. Pabst, King Vidor, Erwin Piscator, Lee Strasberg, Harold Clurman, Mordecai Gorelik, George Antheil.

From a "little magazine" with 2,000 readers two years ago, NEW THEATRE has grown to a professional magazine with an important following of 20,000. It has had no financial backing. At times the appearance of an issue has depended on loyal friends supplying enough money to squeeze through a crisis.

In the year ahead NEW THEATRE wants to go forward, to secure a firm financial base, to maintain an adequate staff and office, to print at least 40 pages regularly. This would mean more frequent printing of plays, more theoretical material, more adequate coverage of the theatre, film and dance.

To do this, we need your help.

If you are a reader, but do not subscribe, will you do so today?

If you are already a subscriber, will you ask a friend to subscribe?

If you can make a contribution to this magazine, will you send us a donation?

The National Negro Congress is of vital concern to everyone who fears the onslaught of fascism. It is to be held in Chicago, February 14, on the anniversary of the Negro leader of Reconstruction times, Frederick Douglas. Problems in the fight for Negro rights and liberties will be discussed and acted upon by delegates representing every type of Negro organization and members of all political parties. Details are available in a pamphlet Let Us Build a National Negro Congress by John P. Davis.

The new theatre movement has recognized from the beginning that the oppression of the Negro people is a part of the whole conscious and unconscious mechanism of cheating and fooling the people at large. The struggle for Negro rights and for unity of Negro and white action is the only course to be taken by all of us in self defense. The theatres of the New Theatre League, who have presented Negro problems on their stages in plays like *Scottsboro*, *Scottsboro*, *Stevedore* and *They Shall Not Die*, pledge their support of the Congress. They call on Negro theatre and film and dance workers to send as many delegates as possible, and to present resolutions to their organizations endorsing its aims of unity and unyielding action for Negro rights.

## NEW DANCE LEAGUE

sponsors

## Group Dance Recital

## ALL NEW COMPOSITIONS

★

LAST WEEK-END IN JANUARY

TICKETS: 35c, 55c, 83c, \$1.10, \$1.65

Watch for further announcements

New Dance League, 55 W. 45th St., N.Y.

... Now Available ...

## "The Awakening of the American Theatre"

By BEN BLAKE

"A stirring record of the new theatre movement."  
ALFRED SAXE

"Should be read by every theatre worker in America."  
MOLLY DAY THATCHER

"Every new theatre should read and distribute this fine analysis of its accomplishments."  
GEORGE SKLAR

64 pages, Illustrated—25c

QUANTITY RATES SENT ON REQUEST

All theatres are urged to buy quantities of this pamphlet to sell to their audiences and theatre people in their communities. This pamphlet will help win thousands of new friends and talents to the new theatre movement.

Order From

SOCIAL DRAMA BOOK SERVICE  
New Theatre League

55 WEST 45 STREET  
N. Y. C.

## The Negro Play Contests

Langston Hughes, famous Negro poet and playwright, won first prize in the contest sponsored by the New Theatre League and the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners for plays on the life of Angelo Herndon. Hughes' play, *Angelo Herndon Jones*, was awarded first prize by the judges because of its unusual imaginative and poetic quality.

Bernard Schoenfeld, a graduate of Professor Baker's 47 Workshop who had a play on Broadway two seasons ago, won first prize in the New Theatre League-National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners contest for plays dealing with Negro life. Mr. Schoenfeld's play, *Trouble With the Angels*, a dramatization of Langston Hughes' article by that name which originally appeared in NEW THEATRE, was selected by the judges in the contest as the prize-winning script because of its simplicity and authentic style.

An article on the two play contests will appear in the next issue of NEW THEATRE. Both prize-winning plays are available through the Repertory Department of the New Theatre League.

## Love 'em With Bullets

(Continued from page 23)

laugh enough. In a sense the film marks the highest point of the Marx Brothers' work. From the very beginning of their film career the thing that made their magnificent clowning memorable and kept it from descending to pure nonsense, however delightful, was the complete irreverence they expressed for the stiff-shirt stooges of higher society. In *Animal Crackers*, the absurd lionizing of celebrities by the empty-pates of our best families was laid bare. In *Coconuts*, the denizens of the Florida watering-places came in for their share of ridicule. Throughout all their films the divinely obtuse widow of means, as played by Margaret Dumont, has been retained. But in this their last picture, the Marx Brothers have struck on the ultimate symbol of upper-class pretentiousness—the diamond horseshoe. This reviewer shall never forget Groucho leaning out of the box and shouting to a fish-and-soup in the orchestra section, "Hey punk, will you reach up my hat?"

Unfortunately, the devastating devices of the brothers are placed at the service of the most inane juveniles of the current season, Miss Kitty Carlisle and Allan Jones, both presumably opera stars in the embryo where they had better stay. We can only hope that some day we may see these glorious satirists unimpeded by the supposed requirements of the film market.

**MEN OF IRON:** A Warner Brothers film that even exceeds *Black Fury's* insults to the American working class. During a strike in a steel mill the workers don't hesitate to gang up on a member of their group who has managed to raise himself above their position. Surprisingly enough he comes off with but a scratch or two. It was all a mistake anyway. He never gave the order for the lock-out or ordered them to work overtime. It was the boss' envious nephew who was causing all the trouble. The portrait of the foreman who rises to the vice-presidency of the Balding Steel Works because the men trust him is a masterpiece of clumsy vilification. At parties, this fellow eats chicken with his hands, grabs cocktails out of platters without waiting to be served. He likes a shower bath but only because it is a symbol of his rising fortunes. He vulgarly insists on it being the best shower that can be devised. He shows no restraint. No sooner does he get some money than he builds a pretentious house wherein he can never hope to live in comfort. His place is in a three room joint as his wife so often insists. He

continually tries to resign his high offices. "I don't belong up here with you educated fellers." But his boss never permits him to resign. It seems that this fish out of water although he's good enough for the job is too dumb to know it. In short, *Men of Iron* is another example of the Warner Brothers brand of the social drama.

**BROADWAY HOSTESS:** With Miss Wini Shaw, Warner Brothers' latest "torcher" or spell it any way you please. We doubt if there exists any movie goer incapable of anticipating every turn of characterization and plot once the film begins. If we had only been able to anticipate the beginning without entering the theatre!

**I DREAM TOO MUCH:** The title could serve as a characterization of most films. Here it is nothing but the name of the theme song. Miss Lily Pons contrives to sing a little more in tune and with less of a vibrato than at the Met. It is said she possesses a moderate comedy sense. This may very well be. Perhaps in her next picture the scenarists will permit her to prove it.

**THE LITTLEST REBEL:** It is one of the many disappointments of life that the distance between the littlest Shirley Temple and the nothing-at-all Shirley Temple is so great. In her latest film Miss Temple charms President Lincoln into saving her father, John Boles, from the firing squad. How Mr. Lincoln in real life would have reacted to the synthetic wonders of Shirley is intriguing to think about. He'd probably have started by plucking out the false teeth they've given her for the missing ones in her first set. As for John Boles, the president was a merciful man, but think of his duty to the state.

**CRIME AND PUNISHMENT:** Directed by Josef von Sternberg for Columbia Pictures. Mr. Sternberg has tried so earnestly and with such evident sincerity that it becomes a painful duty to

point out his failure. *Crime and Punishment* displays none of the bloated symbolism and heavy freightage of *The Scarlet Empress* or *The Devil Is a Woman*. Yet *Crime and Punishment* won't do simply because Sternberg's conception is entirely askew. His treatment, for instance, of the relationship between Porphyry and Rodion (here named Roderick) is dangerously akin to the sort of rivalry exemplified by Victor McLaglen and Edmund Lowe. Porphyry who, in a certain sense, is the externalization of Rodion's conscience itself, becomes a taunting, jeering assailant. Sonya is a Dresden china shepherdess. Nowhere is there evidence that life has burned itself into her in the few years of her existence. Rodion commits murder on a sudden impulse. Nowhere do we experience the excitement of the French version *Crime et Chatiment* with its remarkable opening—Rodion is seen sitting on his bed. His first words, "Would I dare?" plunge us immediately into the drama of his poor confused life. The Sternberg film has other failings that we cannot treat at present. But we are not among those who believe that Sternberg is incapable of a good picture. We look forward to the time when he will give the lie to his detractors and we are convinced that on that occasion they will be no less pleased than this department.

## ● RUTH ALLERHAND

## ● SCHOOL

for the development of  
DANCERS  
TEACHERS  
GROUP LEADERS

## ● STUDY COURSES

Tuesday—Dance Method I

Thursday—Composition

Friday—Percussion

Saturday—Anatomy-Kinesiology

TECHNIQUE CLASSES DAILY

Fee . . . \$3 monthly

148 West 4th Street New York City

## NEW THEATRE SCHOOL

CATALOGUE FEB. 1

New  
Term Begins  
MARCH 2

REGISTER FEB. 10

ACTING  
DIRECTING  
STAGE-TECHNIQUE  
THEATRE MANAGEMENT

55 West 45th Street, NEW YORK

## B R U G G I

## NEW PRICES

FOR THE NEW YEAR

Bruggi's Famous Toe Slippers in plain and suede tip. Pink, Black and White Satin. Also Black Kid. Special price . . . . . \$2.95  
Order of 3 prs. or more . . . . . \$2.80  
Acrobatic Sandals, all colors and sizes. Price . . . . . 75c  
Dozen pairs . . . . . \$6.00  
Ballet Pumps in Black and White Kid. Elk sole. Right and Left. Price . . \$1.15  
Order of 6 prs. or more . . . . . \$1.00

The above materials are the finest quality obtainable—and in addition we are in a position to supply your needs in tap shoes, taps, and in fact every thing in dancing footwear at better prices than obtainable elsewhere.

Theatrical Footwear

154 W. 44th St., N. Y. C.

## Dovjenko's "Frontier"

(Continued from page 24)

over endless forests, and turbulent seas. Suddenly we are thrown into a man-hunt. A series of titles like decrees is projected:

In the East, Beyond the Amur River

On the Shore of The Japan Sea Known by the Name of Karl Marx

The Old World Contracts and the Great Ocean Narrows Down.

Across the Amur Border, Strangers Carry Dynamite—Five Russians, Two Non-Russians

Attention! We'll Kill Them Immediately!

Then Glusak fires upon the invaders. He kills the five Russians but the two Japanese escape. The chase that follows is a masterpiece of film architecture; the cutting gets swifter and the shots closer. The only sounds from the sound-track are the moans of the hunted men which increase in intensity as the chase narrows down. Finally the Japanese imperialist is caught in his trap and he explodes:

"I hate your whole country and your nation and your calm and your cheerful sweat and collective labor . . . the whole taiga is millions of meters . . . Great Asia is mine and the fish and the animals and the cities from the sea to Baikal."

The mood continues on this realistic note until the introduction of the second Japanese. Here we get another picture of the imperialist: the ruler of Asia by Divine Right. We see him inspired by a holy ritual. The sequence is stylized—a performance of a high war dance of death. Compare this with the similar idea in *Soil*: just before the kulak murders the hero he goes into a death-dance, a ritual based on Ukranian folk-lore.

Then ensues the battle between the partisans and the kulaks. Dovjenko returns to the realistic manner. It is here that Glusak executes his friend. It is here that a young Chinese member of the collective meets his death. The old partisan carries the body of the young hero to his son's plane. The plane soars into the air. Its motor again sings the Song of the Aviators which has now become a dirge. But the plane is joined by other battalions from all parts of Siberia and Russia until the sky is filled with them. The song, the funeral march, is once more joyous. The sequence is allegorical: like the ending of *Soil* and *Ivan*. But here it becomes a clear and definite statement: an integral part of the film.

It is difficult to be coldly critical of a film that is unlike any other film and unlike any other form of art. In his silent films, Dovjenko achieved a lyric

poetic quality with purely cinematic methods: more fundamentally, more cinematically than any abstract, *avant-garde* film. Each sequence and shot within that sequence was so beautifully controlled that you were absorbed in it almost without knowing it; they were so accurately timed that they expressed fully what the director wanted to say with them.

Dovjenko's use of sound in *Frontier* places the film years ahead of anything that has been produced so far. It is not burdened with the formalistic approach that was apparent in Pudovkin's *Deserter*; it isn't a "talkie" in any sense of the word. The director has blended the sight-sound image so cleverly that the use appears perfectly natural. Yet when there is straight talk it isn't like any other kind of dialogue. It is literary, highly poetic and in keeping with the individual shot. Most striking of all is Dovjenko's use of silence in a sound film. Some years ago he stated, "We shall strive to attain an artistic creation on the basis of the relations and proportions of sound to image." Dovjenko has unquestionably achieved this with *Frontier*.

To attempt to compare *Frontier* with such dramatic films as *Youth of Maxim*, *Peasants* or *Chapayev* is unfair. It simply isn't that kind of film and it doesn't have the same emotional appeal that the straight dramatic film possesses. Moreover, it is unfortunate that Dovjenko has for the first time neglected the photography. Somehow the sustained photographic beauty of Dovjenko's earlier films is lacking. Except in one or two places Tisse's camera work is too realistic, too prosaic for the mood of the film. Camera work to the contrary, *Frontier* emerges as something more than an unusual film; it is a profound intellectual document that demands your attention. It requires *active* audience participation; it requires repeated seeing. Some persons will raise the point that such a form is not good movie and entertainment: therefore bad drama. But certainly it can't be judged by any present standards of motion picture entertainment. To Dovjenko *Frontier* is not only a work expressive of his love for new Russia and its vast taigas, but a prophecy:

"I became convinced that the existing administrative and economic centers in the Far East are inadequate—that a road should be found through the Sakhalin Ridge to the sea, and a socialist, Bolshevik city built on the shores of the Pacific Ocean. That city should be called Aerohrad and the title of my film I regard as a forecast of the future. I soon decided that this film should be a defense film and so it turned out."

## A PRIZE SCENARIO CONTEST

The New Film Alliance announces a prize contest for a twenty-minute anti-war or anti-fascist scenario to be produced by Nykino and published in *NEW THEATRE*. One prize of \$40 will be awarded the winner.

The rules are as follows: All mss. must be received by midnight March 1st, 1936. The first prize scenario will be published in *NEW THEATRE* as soon thereafter as possible. The winners will be announced in the April 1936 issue of *NEW THEATRE*. The prize scenario will definitely be produced, and Nykino reserves the right to produce any of the other scenarios submitted. All writers who have their scenarios produced will receive royalties.

The subject of the scenario is to be of an anti-war or anti-fascist nature, based on the contemporary *urban* American scene. The length should not exceed twenty minutes of running time. The scenario should be written in the form of a story treatment—not a *camera shooting script*. Writers should keep in mind that the producing unit does not have unlimited facilities; that the locale should be largely exterior with a minimum of constructed sets; that the producing unit should be able to utilize homes, offices, or factories. The film is to be a *sound* film, but there is to be *no* synchronized lip movement. Speech, sound effects and music may be used.

Manuscripts submitted are to be clearly typed and accompanied by return postage. *The author's name and address are not to appear on the manuscript*, but must be enclosed in a sealed envelope with the title of the scenario on the outside of the envelope. Send all scripts to the Scenario Contest Department, *NEW THEATRE*, 156 West 44th Street, New York City. Any number of scenarios may be submitted by each contestant.

The judges will be: Paul Strand, Lee Strasberg, Ralph Steiner, James Shelly Hamilton, Michael Blankfort.

### New York School of the Theatre

#### Evening Course

Directed by Harry Coult

#### Technique of Acting

Fundamentals Improvisation  
Make-up

Rehearsal and Performance

Four month Spring session opens  
January 3 — \$7.50

CARNEGIE HALL, N. Y.  
Columbus 5-2445

**"The Awakening of the American Theatre"**

(Continued from page 5)

ican theatre is the subject of Blake's writing.

Yes, you will find this booklet is about what is referred to as "the propaganda theatre." (A few eminent conscious propagandists: Euripides, Aristophanes, Dante, Molière, Byron, Shelley, Hugo, Tolstoy, Zola and Ibsen.) How did this theatre begin in America? What people spanked the baby to a fuller breath? How was the baby kicked around, and who did the kicking? Lots of interesting facts like the answers to these questions are found in *The Awakening of the American Theatre*.

And how talented men like Lawson, Maltz, Saxe, Rice, Peters, Sklar, Odets, Wexley—lots of others—how they grew and developed upward with their various theatres and groups.

The whole question of groups is very well brought out here. What it means for actors and writers to work for audiences which actively participate in the stage life. Why New Theatre League plays are immediately produced from coast to coast in town and hamlet: *Waiting for Lefty* plays in 104 American cities in eight months!

And censorship! plays banned, actors clubbed, policemen pushing, overalls and

evening clothes joined in protest—and riding clear and high over all, a new consciousness of what the theatre can and must mean in our country today! The love of our people for the theatre! The disjointment of price and desire set right! Coal miners, dock workers, spindle girls—all catching fire from the same plays which startle and entertain Broadway. Hard-worked critics first amused, second bemused, next amazed! The whole shebang looking forward eagerly to promised production of these new plays.

Ben Blake has done a good job. His booklet was badly needed. But don't forget with the amazing growth of this new theatre movement came the magazine you are now reading, the one in your hand. This NEW THEATRE magazine, its very name is significant. Those pages are filled every month with a content plucked from the mouths of very good people, Americans, Europeans, first-rate artists of every theatre front. World-famous names. Men busy with the great stuff of modern life.

And all their good ideas and works thrown back through this magazine into the new theatre movement. Where they are eagerly seized on, chewed up, rejected, accepted, worked—all for the continued growth of this new vital theatre which is as healthy as the fruit on Florida trees.

**ARTEF** —ANNOUNCES ITS SECOND PRODUCTION For This Season

**HAUNCH PAUNCH and JOWL**

of the Novel by Samuel Ornitz  
Dramatized by

**KHAVER - PAVER**

Play Based upon the English Version by Samuel Ornitz and Donald Davis

Premiere:

**Tuesday Evening, Dec. 24th**  
(CHRISTMAS EVE.)

And Thereafter Every Evening (Except Monday)

**MATINEES SAT. AND SUN.**

Prices: 50c - 75c - \$1.00 - \$1.25

**ARTEF THEATRE**  
247 W. 48th Street  
CHI. 4-7999

**MARIA OUSPENSKAYA**  
**SCHOOL OF DRAMATIC ARTS**

"I admire Madame Ouspenskaya tremendously and I have profited greatly from her teachings."

—FRANCHOT TONE

Special Spring Term Beginning Feb. 3rd

For further information inquire

**27 West 67th St., New York**

Telephone: SUsquehanna 7-3750

**"THE BIGGEST PLAY OF THE YEAR ★★★★★"**

Burns Mantle, News

HERMAN SHUMLIN presents

**The Children's Hour**

By LILLIAN HELLMAN

"I imagine this is a play that cried aloud in the hours of the night, pleading to be written. Well, it has been written, and Mr. Herman Shumlin has endowed it with a gifted cast, a fine production and his own fluent and affectionate direction."

—ROBERT GARLAND,  
WORLD TELEGRAM

"One of the most straightforward driving dramas of the season."

—BROOKS ATKINSON, THE TIMES

"The season's dramatic high-water mark. A fine, brave play."  
—Robert Benchley, New Yorker

**MAXINE ELLIOTT'S THEATRE**

39th St. E. of B'way  
Eves. 8:40—50c to \$3

MATINEE WEDNESDAY and SATURDAY 2:40—50c to \$2

## Interpretation and Characterization

(Continued from page 21)

Marcus Katz, Leo's partner, written with a certain comedy explosiveness is given an even more tragic interpretation in the production. He wants to be loved, but everyone hates him. Why? In order to exist as a small capitalist he is forced to do ugly, shameful things. Leo concerns himself only with the "artistic" side of the business, but Katz himself must do the dirty work, and for this he earns nothing but scorn or suspicion. He questions everybody. "Why are you better than I? I do the things I have to do in order to provide the wherewithal which enables you to cultivate the airs of a fine gentleman. Why then am I the most despised of men?" The answer he gives himself is that because he does the terrible things that business demands he is actually better than anyone else. This is the source of his madness.

Gus Michaels, the family friend, fights imaginary battles and boxes with non-existent contestants, cries apropos of most of his grievances because he wants to assert his right to live even though he has never been able to earn a living. The man who fails in our middle class is generally looked down upon; unless he is strong he will always hanker for that degree of "respectability" which is denied him. So Gus vacillates between his true nature—an imaginative, sensitive one—and the stupidities of the bourgeois world he would like to feel part of. His greatest satisfactions are in his dreams and his memories of the past. I have tried to visualize all this in production by numerous small details which make clear both the positive and negative side of the character.

The equivocal Mr. May, the man who arranges fires so that troubled business men may collect insurance, is also a seeker after reality! He knows his little occupation is an illegal one, but if a fine "front" is put on it, if his vocabulary shows a degree of refinement and "ethics" what he is selling will find a buyer in the middle-class world. To sell at a profit is real—it is almost the only reality which is universally accepted in our society! So that the most "ordinary" character in the play, the one whose mental process is most "average" and most "normal"—the dull salesman of the play becomes in production the most insane, the most stylized figure of all. The details of dress, of make-up (the actor's hair does not naturally grow red), the conjurer's mannerisms, the sweetened speech is the director's way of making a theatrical comment on the scene, a means of saying: "What the author has written here is the

grotesque and tragic farce of our middle class life."

And in each character, whether "sympathetic" or not I have tried in a similar manner to create through a definite quality of behavior or through special imagery the salient contradictions—the craziness!—of these middle-class types. Mrs. Katz knows the secret of her husband's tragedy, she protects him at all times, following him always, picking up the refuse he makes wherever he goes, always excusing herself for the trouble he causes. . . . Foley, the local politician, is a good fellow, believing sincerely that Tammany is a kind of philanthropic society, but despite his hearty manner, we understand from the way he treats his henchman, from his reaction to the slightest word of criticism the brutality that goes with his "Democratic" kindness. Pearl, Leo's pianist daughter, is the type of romantic artist who from deep hurt tries to live in an ivory tower of "pure beauty": Her loneliness, her frustration, her almost comic adjustment to everyday life is embodied in slightly distorted physical mannerisms.

It is impossible in the space of a short article to point out all the ramifications of the director's problem, the pitfalls and obstacles that may attend its solution or the errors that may be committed in its name. Suffice it to say, that the scene (designed by Boris Aronson) though adequate to the naturalistic demands of the play is not quite in the tradition of the realistic box-set. It is abstracted to convey the sense of any middle-class room, to give some feeling of a "home" which is the actual milieu of the play without sacrificing the quality of a *stage* as a place where artists have a right to express something more than the "naked facts."

*Start the New Year Right!*

SUBSCRIBE NOW TO  
**NEW THEATRE**

Only \$1.00 for Eight Months

**Tamiris School**

NOW OPEN

CLASSES: Beginners

Intermediates

Advanced

Concert Group

52 WEST 8th STREET, NEW YORK CITY

GRamercy 7-5286

## Names and topics like these—

*From Recent Issues*

Christmas, 1935

By Sinclair Lewis

The Olympic Chief Speaks

By John L. Spivak

Who Murdered the Vets?

By Ernest Hemingway

The Writers Meet in Paris

By Michael Gold

Fats! Fats! Fats!

By John Strachey

What Happened to Us in Cuba

By Clifford Odets

A Glimpse at Soviet America

By Earl Browder

The Crisis of the Middle Class

Editorial

Radio—The Great American Racket

By Lucien Zacharoff

Chain Gang Governor

By Joseph North

Labor's Dividends Under the New Deal

A Record of Workers Killed in the Past Six Months

Love In Two Worlds

By Ella Winter

Robert Forsythe

Marxian Wit

Drawings By:

Burck, Gropper, Limbach, Art Young, Gardner Rea, A. Redfield, Adolf Dehn, W. Sanderson, Kriger, and Others.

Make NEW MASSES the most brilliant light among the weekly magazines today. No fence-sitters here—but outstanding writers, economists and artists, with a definite point of view. They understand and tell you what's back of wage cuts, tax schemes, lynchings, gag laws and war drives. They don't stop with exposing them—they propose to do something to stop them. Every issue contains articles and comment you can't afford to miss. For the "hottest" news and the brightest handling of it, read

**NEW MASSES**

TRY A TRIAL SUBSCRIPTION

**\$1** 12 WEEKS

NEW MASSES

31 East 27th Street, New York, N. Y.

Here's \$1. Please send me NEW MASSES for 12 weeks on your special trial subscription offer.

Name .....

Address .....

City and State .....

Occupation ..... NT

# With The Stage Unions

The minutes of the "vote-of-confidence" meeting of Equity called by President Frank Gillmore last November 25th are printed in full in the current issue of Equity, a permanent record of the despotism which characterized the administration's railroading of its confidence question to a vote against the sentiment of the membership. In spite of the administration's smug interpretation of the resultant vote, that vote in no way repudiated any plank of the Forum's platform. Moreover, the administration now announces that regular monthly membership discussion meetings will be held—a step which the Forum actors have advocated since they first began to meet together, and the lack of which heretofore made their meetings necessary. Now the Forum meetings are no longer necessary, and are to be discontinued.

It is unnecessary at this time to rehearse the record of service of the Forum. Many of the measures which they advocated have been put into effect, to the betterment of the actors. Others, especially with reference to the Federal Theatre Project, remain for discussion and action. The subject cannot be closed however, without challenging and regretting the leading editorial on the subject in the December issue of Theatre Arts Monthly. The uncritical adoption of Mr. Gillmore's attitude in a quarter where we have learned to expect fairness and a liberal approach is pretty disheartening. The Theatre Arts Monthly swallows and gives currency to the old and baseless slanders that the Equity members in the Forum were disruptive, that they blocked the best interests of their profession, and adds, out of whole cloth, the new accusation that they have no progressive program and impede the artistic progress of their craft. The exact opposite is true: the Equity members of the Forum in program and in action never behaved except as loyal builders of their union; they initiated and enlisted support in carrying through almost the only constructive legislation of the last year and a half of Equity and they count among their members many of the most creative artists in the theatre field, who sacrificed time from their personal work to try to wake up a union which was paddling sleepily through an economic crisis which was breaking the professional lives of many of its members.

It remains to be seen whether the waking-up will be permanent. It cannot but be so in those members of Equity who participated in the Forum, while the bystanders in the squabble created by the administration are more than ever stirred by doubts of the "democracy" which the present administration protests is its policy, and which we only hope will be introduced in its conduct of the discussion meetings to come.

**A**ssociated Musicians of Greater New York, Local 802, is to be congratulated for its splendid stand against the wage-leveling policies of Mr. Nicolai Sokoloff, Federal Administrator of the WPA Music Project.

The local by its intelligent preparation succeeded in lining up all workers on the project. This it accomplished mainly by a new and unprecedented tactic. All musicians, whether unionized or not, were assured the strike benefit amounting to one half of their weekly wage. With everything in readiness (even strike songs had been composed), with the men exhibiting an unusual militance, the success of the strike was seen as a foregone conclusion. As a consequence the government administration capitulated without a battle. Musicians won a reduction in services from eight a week to five at the same pay. Reclassification of musicians into three grades with a graduated wage-scale was forbidden and a guarantee was obtained that no WPA musicians would be employed on commercial radio programs at WPA prices. The union, moreover, has seized this opportunity to unionize the non-union workers on the project by offering them an easy installment plan for the payment of the initiation fee. It is to be hoped that union organizations all over the country will follow the example of the New York musicians' successful defense of their union standards.

**T**he Writers Union, a national organization, invites songwriters who need jobs, as well as those who have grievances against publishers, to register at local headquarters, 26 West 18th Street, on Monday and Thursday evenings at 8 o'clock.

## JOIN THE New Theatre League

Amateur and professionals of the theatre should join the New Theatre League to give their support to the new social drama which is rapidly becoming a major factor in the American theatre. Repertory, Booking, Training School and Organizational services are rendered to all members. Write now for further information.

### Repertory

20 New One Act Plays  
Available Now for Production

Write for Free Catalogue  
Full Length Scripts Available for  
Production Through the N. T. L.  
Repertory Dept.

DRIFT

1931

BLOOD ON THE MOON

By PAUL AND CLAIRE SIFTON

STEVEDORE \*

By PAUL PETERS AND GEORGE SKLAR

PEACE ON EARTH \*

By GEORGE SKLAR AND ALBERT MALTZ

BLACK PIT \*

By ALBERT MALTZ

YOUNG GO FIRST

By GEORGE SCUDDER, PETER MARTIN AND

C. FRIEDMAN

SAILORS OF CATARRO \*

By FRIEDRICH WOLF

QUESTION BEFORE THE HOUSE \*

By DORIS YANKAUER AND HERBERT

MAYER

\* Available in book form.

Every play that has ever made history in the theatre . . . and some that didn't but should have . . . may now be ordered directly from the

### Social Drama Book Service

(10% Discounts to New Theatre League members)

Stevadore—Sklar and Peters.....	.50
Men In White—S. Kingsley.....	1.00
They Shall Not Die—Wexley.....	1.00
Awake and Sing	
Waiting for Lefty	
Till the Day I Die	
—Odets.....	Three for 2.00
Paths of Glory—Howard.....	.75
Peace On Earth—Sklar and Maltz...	.75
Let Freedom Ring—Bein.....	.75
Black Pit—Albert Maltz.....	1.75
Precedent—Golden.....	1.00
Paradise Lost—Odets.....	2.00
Armored Train—Tretaiikov.....	.50
Gentlewoman, and Pure in Heart—	
J. H. Lawson.....	.50
Florisdorf and Dr. Mamlock—F. Wolf	1.00
History of Theatre—Cheney.....	1.69

All books on the theatre, the dance, the movies may be ordered directly from the Social Drama Book Service.

Make all checks payable to the New Theatre League.

## CENSORED!

A record of the reign of terror and censorship directed at the new theatres of social protest. 32 pp, illustrated, 5c. New Theatres should order quantities now for sale to their audiences. Wholesale quantity prices are 3c. Order now from . . .

Committee Against Censorship  
55 West 45th Street, N. Y. C.

## New Theatre League

(New Address)

55 West 45th Street, N. Y. C.  
LOnacre 5-9116

"Dovjenko's greatest film."—Peter Ellis.

Ambino presents  
**ALEXANDER DOVJENKO'S**  
Thunderbolt from  
the Far East.

# "FRONTIER"



**CAMEO 42<sup>ND</sup> ST. | CONT. 9:30 AM 25¢ to 1 P.M.**  
E. of B'way | TO MIDNIGHT | EXC. SAT. SUN. HOL



# 8 months of NEW THEATRE for only \$1

For only one dollar you can receive NEW THEATRE every month from now until next September . . . eight big, important issues crammed with vital material you can't afford to miss. A few of the features for February and March are listed below. Every issue in the next eight months will contain material just as valuable. Make certain that you get every one of these issues by subscribing now. Clip a dollar bill to the coupon below and mail it immediately.

## Don't miss these FEATURES

"I Can't Sleep"—a monologue  
By CLIFFORD ODETS

"The Technique of Playwriting"  
BY JOHN HOWARD LAWSON

"The Warner Brothers"  
By JOEL FAITH

And articles by Harold Clurman, John W. Cassner, H. W. L. Dana, Charmion von Weigand, Molly Day Thacher, Robert Stebbins and others.

## Use This Coupon

NEW THEATRE,  
156 West 44th St.,  
New York City.

Enclosed find \$1.  
Please send me NEW THEATRE  
for eight months.

Name .....

Address .....

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

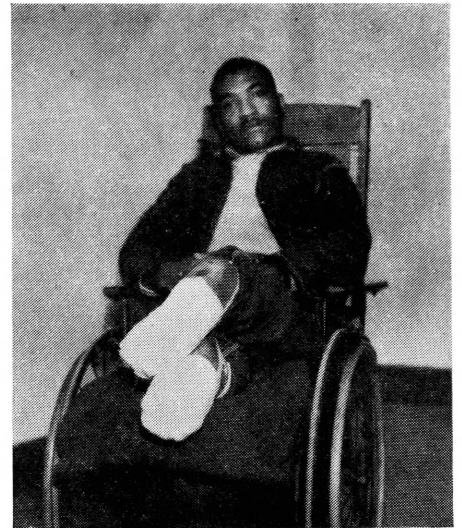
## Backstage

Two incidents set Paul Green to writing his beautiful and vigorous protest play, *Hymn to the Rising Sun*. One was the presentation to him by a chain gang guard of a diary which he had kept for many years as the enforcer of a system of brutality. It was a system which even the guard recognized as wrong, and he went to Mr. Green, the writer, because he thought "somethin' ought to be done about it." The second event, which shocked the country last year with its naked cruelty, took place near Green's home in North Carolina. It was the case of Woodrow Wilson Shropshire and a fellow prisoner who lost their feet as a result of exposure when they were chained up for days in zero weather. See the photograph on this page.

In its present form, Paul Green's play, *Hymn to the Rising Sun*, is dedicated to the reading public only, and no performance, representation, production, recitation, or public reading, or radio broadcasting may be given except by special arrangement with Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York, N. Y.

This play may be presented by amateurs upon payment of a royalty of Five Dollars for each performance, payable to Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York, N. Y., one week before the date when the play is given.

In the article *Duke Ellington on Gershwin's "Porgy,"* which appeared in the December issue of NEW THEATRE, Edward Morrow, the author, did not imply that any composer who borrowed from the original Negro musical or folk sources was a "chiseler." To borrow and derive from the native source is well within the artistic province, and legitimate, but he does maintain that the *distortion* of the original material, resultant from the ignorance of the basic derivation is just cause for critical analysis.



"Ain't that hard? Yes, that's a little bit hard."

*Black Pit* by Albert Maltz which is being presented by the New Theatre Studios of Philadelphia at the Erlanger Theatre beginning December 30th has been endorsed by John Brophy, National Secretary-Treasurer of the United Mine Workers of America.

He says, "I have read *Black Pit*. In vivid terms and characters the struggle of the mine workers to arise out of the darkness of non-unionism is here portrayed. The desire of the miners for security and the status of free men is well shown. The greed and viciousness of non-union management, careless of the miner's life and limb, is here presented in all its brutality and sordidness."

## Scenic Materials

Everything you  
need for building  
and painting scenery

\* \* \*

THEATRICAL HARD-  
WARE, SCENE PAINTS  
AND BRUSHES, COV-  
ERING MATERIALS

\* \* \*

Our 69 page illustrated catalog  
gives complete descriptions.  
Sent free on request.

**CLEON  
THROCKMORTON, INC.**

102 W. 3rd St., New York

**Rotograph**  
CO. INC.  
Quality Work Prompt Service  
817 BROADWAY, N. Y. C.

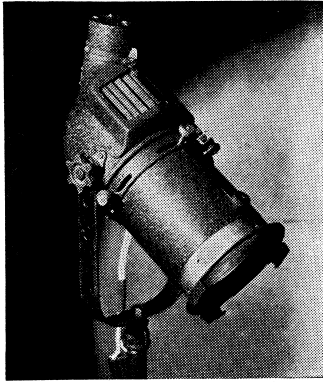
GIUSTI'S WAtkins 9-9177  
SPAGHETTI INN  
● Luncheon, 4 and 5  
course, 40c and 50c  
● Chicken Dinner, 6  
course, 60c  
Special Luncheon, 35c  
Wines and Beer Served  
49 W. 16 St.  
New York

## CLASSIFIED

DIRECTORS!—The New York Section of the New Theatre League receives frequent requests from amateur theatre groups for competent directors. A few groups can pay small fees. Address Ben Golden, 55 West 45th St., N. Y. C.

A NEW THEATRE organizational office is badly in need of several desks and a filing cabinet. If you know of anyone who can donate this equipment please address the New Theatre League, 55 West 45th St., N. Y. C. Tel.: LOngacre 5-9116.

YOUNG MAN, doing organizational work in the new theatre movement, would like a room with family interested in this work, at the lowest possible cost to him. Address B. G., P. O. Box 300, Grand Central Post Office, N. Y. C.



## CENTURY LEKOLITES

MODERN—PRACTICAL—ECONOMICAL

Send for literature and educational discount

**CENTURY LIGHTING EQUIPMENT, INC.**

419 West 55th Street

New York City

The Story of the Great Irish  
Nationalist Revolutionary  
and his love for the beautiful Katie O'Shea



# "PARNELL"

with  
GEORGE MARGARET EFFIE  
CURZON RAWLINGS SHANNON

"Dynamic performances by an exceptionally good cast."—*New Theatre*.

"A passionate drama beautifully acted and staged. . . . A solid triumph."—*Atkinson, N. Y. Times*.

"A rattling good love story."—*Time Magazine*.

"A deeply moving, highly satisfactory evening—it has passion, pictorial beauty and historical interest."—*Brown, N. Y. Post*.

257 GOOD SEATS  
All Eves. Perf's.  
**\$1.00** AT BOX  
OFFICE

**ETHEL BARRYMORE THEATRE**

47th St. W. of B'way. Eves. 8:30. Regular Mats. Wed & Sat. 2:30  
YULETIDE MATINEE SCHEDULE: DEC. 26, 27, 28, JAN. 1 and 4

We believe Clifford  
Odets' "Paradise Lost"  
is a great and impor-  
tant play. We are  
proud to present it.  
*The Group Theatre*

**LONGACRE THEATRE**

48th STREET, WEST OF BROADWAY

"Deeply moving . . . infinitely poignant revelation of the embattled human spirit."—*ATKINSON, N. Y. Times*.

"Gosh darned exciting for any class of trade."—*BENCHLEY, New Yorker*.

"Deeply entertaining, hot with life, juicy with American characters."—*CLIFFORD ODETS*.

"An enterprising play pervaded with earnest indignation and seething ferment. Worthington Miner's superintendence provokes much excitement."—*HAMMOND, Herald Tribune*

"No such cheers and bravos since the season began."—*LOCKRIDGE, N. Y. Sun*.

**AT ITS OWN LOW PRICES**

The THEATRE UNION presents

The LET FREEDOM RING ACTING COMPANY in

# LET FREEDOM RING

By Albert Bein

Based on the Grace Lumpkin novel,  
"TO MAKE MY BREAD"

Staged by WORTHINGTON MINER

Civic Repertory Theatre, 14th St. and 6th Ave.

Eves. at 8:30

Matinees Wed. and Sat. at 2:30

Evenings and  
Wed. & Sat.  
Matinees

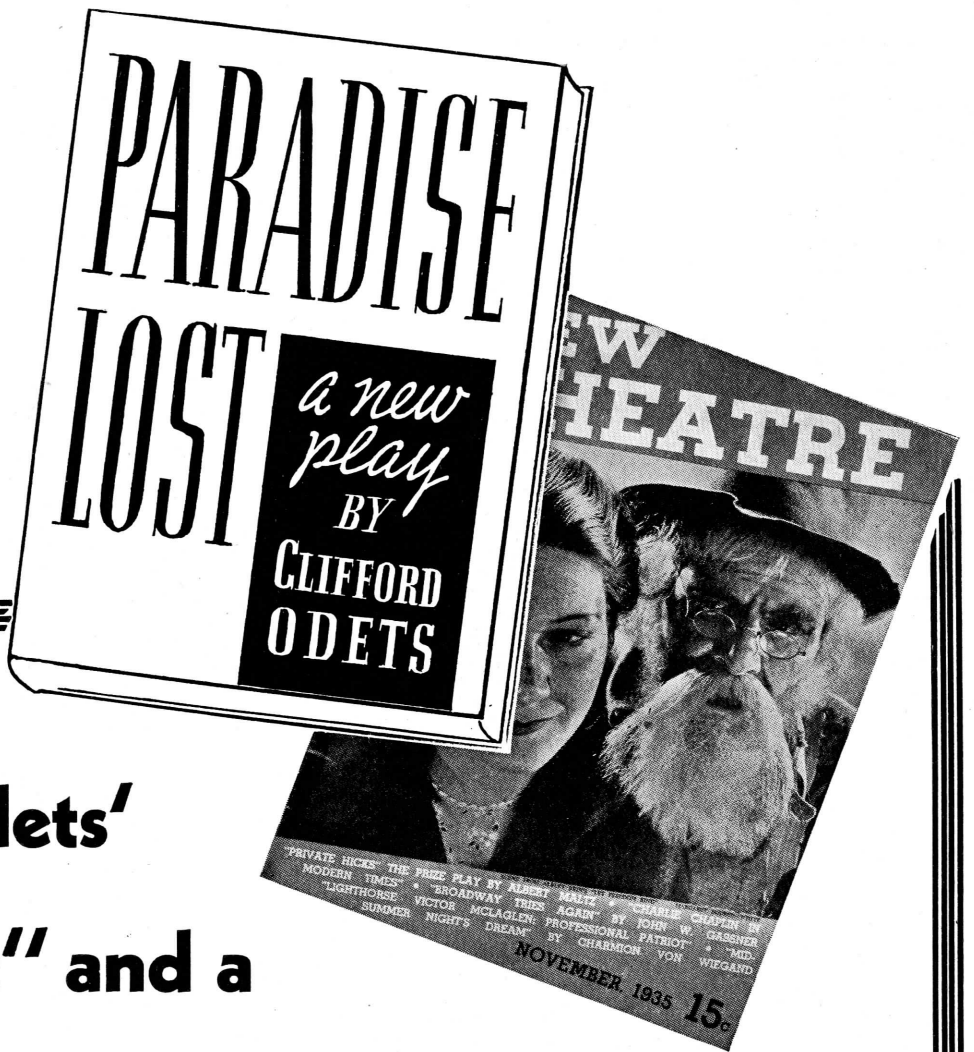
**30c**

TO

**\$1.00**

Sat. Evenings  
30c to \$1.50

Your last chance  
to get this  
combination!



**A copy of Odets'**

**"Paradise Lost" and a**

**year of New Theatre, both for \$2.75**

This is your last chance to get a copy of "Paradise Lost" and a year's subscription to *New Theatre* at this special combination price. 372 copies of the 500 we purchased for this special offer were snatched up last month as Christmas gifts. Exactly 128 copies are left.

"Paradise Lost" has stirred up more critical controversy than "Awake and Sing." The critics who like it rave about it (see Heywood Broun's comment on the right). The critics who object to Odets' unconventional approach to the theatre are forced to admit that "Paradise Lost" again proves Odets to be the outstanding talent in the theatre today.

"Paradise Lost" is "must" reading for every theatre person. So is *New Theatre*. This is your opportunity to get them both at a bargain price. Mail the coupon below NOW.

**MAIL THIS COUPON TODAY**

NEW THEATRE, 156 West 44th Street, New York City

Enclosed find \$2.75. Please send me a copy of "Paradise Lost" and NEW THEATRE for one year.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY.....STATE.....

"Odets is a far greater figure than O'Neill ever was or will be."

—Heywood Broun.

"There is in my not very humble opinion no play in New York at present which is as alive and vital and stirring as "Paradise Lost" . . . I want to go on record as saying that in my opinion Clifford Odets stands out as the white hope of the American theatre. He has more to say and says it better than any living dramatist in this country. . . . I want to make no reservation in stating the opinion that Odets is a far greater figure than O'Neill ever was or will be. It isn't enough to say that "Paradise Lost" is a promising play. It is not only the American theatre of the days to come; it is the best our stage has to offer here and now."