

# New Theatre

## **Bury the Dead**

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that is to begin  
tomorrow night"*

*by Irwin Shaw*



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ETHEL BARRYMORE THEATRE

# NEW THEATRE

APRIL, 1936

Last April, by way of commemorating America's entrance into the World War, NEW THEATRE published a special anti-war issue. Its purpose was to show war as it really is, and to recall to people's minds the jingoism, the trumpery idealism and the hysteria that accompanied our entry into the war to end wars in 1917.

This year, again on the anniversary of that notable occasion, NEW THEATRE has the privilege of publishing Irwin Shaw's one-act play *Bury the Dead*. At its initial performance in New York on March 14th this play was accorded a reception only surpassed by that given *Waiting For Lefty* last season. Critics and audience alike hailed it as the most moving and effective plea against war of our time.

This play should not only harrow those who witness it: it should affect their lives. That is frankly its purpose. If it can draw new masses of people into the militant struggle being waged against the forces of militarism by such organizations as the American League Against War and Fascism and the American Student Union, it will have fulfilled the prime aim of its young author.

*Bury the Dead* should stir two particular classes of people to action: the students, and all those who depend on their own labor, manual or otherwise, for their living. Their lives and labor will be forfeit in the next war. To the American students and the American workers of all classes and professions, who will be uniting in anti-war strikes and demonstrations throughout the country this month, NEW THEATRE brings Irwin Shaw's play, in the hope that it will be acted, seen and read by hundreds of thousands in the coming months. Tell everyone you know about *Bury the Dead*. Pass your copy of NEW THEATRE on to a friend—it has work to do!

The modern American dancer takes her stand. In the past few weeks Martha Graham and Doris

Humphrey, representing the maturest artists in the field have allied themselves openly with the most progressive ideas in American culture. Martha Graham refused an invitation from Germany to participate in the Dance Festival to be held in Berlin in connection with the Olympic Games, saying, in part, "So many artists whom I respect and admire have been persecuted, have been deprived of the right to work for ridiculous and unsatisfactory reasons, that I should consider it impossible to identify myself, by accepting the invitation, with the regime that has made such things possible." It is interesting to record how desperately the spokesmen for Germany sought to override Miss Graham's refusal. She was offered lucrative dance tours with her group through Germany and the possibility of a substantial sum of money to defray all expenses from a group of people in this country. Miss Graham's steadfast opinion, and her lucid explanation of her position, should be a guide for every dancer in the United States to follow.

Miss Humphrey, several months ago, presented a dance recital which won the ovation of her audience and the unanimous enthusiasm of the critics, from the New York Times to the Daily Worker. Even Variety labeled it "swell legit stuff." *Theatre Piece*, which constituted the first section of the program, satirized the world today in brilliant episodes of business competition, man-hunting, sports rivalry, and an uproariously witty parody of the contemporary stage. *New Dance*, the second section, was a beautiful dance version of the ideal relation between the individual and the group. Despite the fact that this is Miss Humphrey's first statement of a particular social philosophy, it is one of the most convincing and powerful ever portrayed in the modern dance. NEW THEATRE, therefore, is happy to have arranged for a repeat performance of this program on Sunday evening, April 5th, at the Adelphi Theatre.

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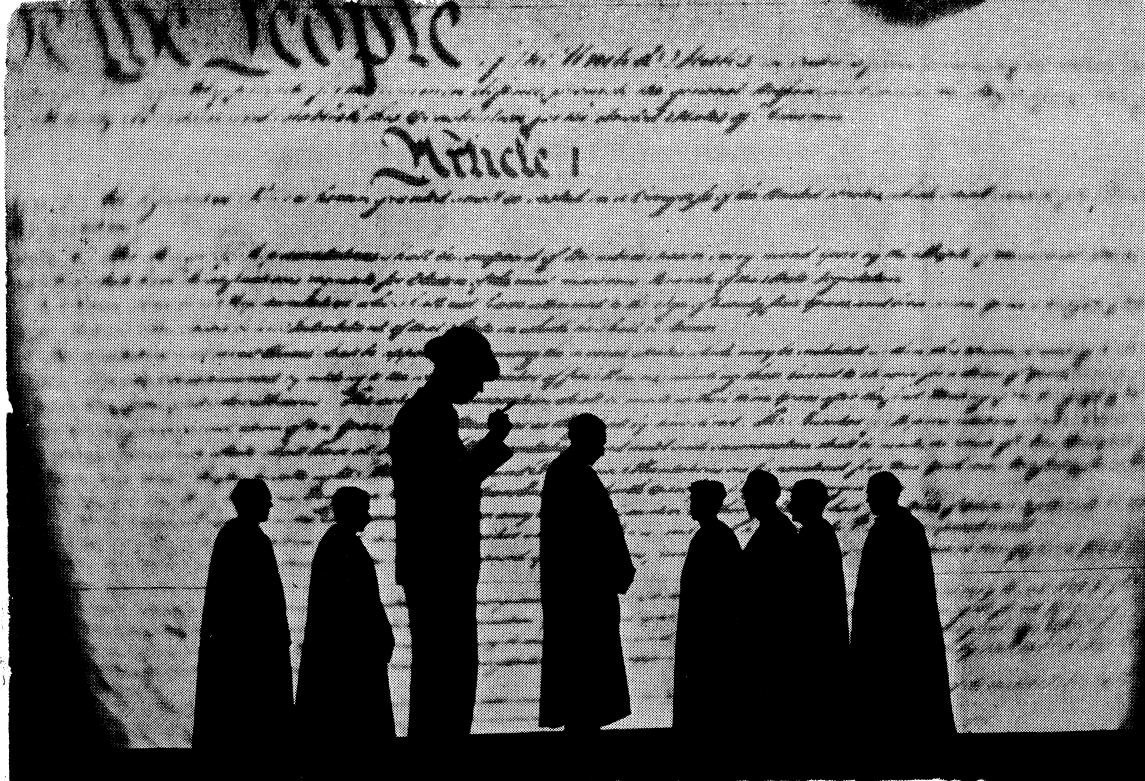
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SCENE FROM THE LIVING NEWSPAPER'S "TRIPLE-A PLOWED UNDER"

## The Dramatists' Strike

The playwrights are on strike, although some of them probably would not call it that. At a meeting on February 27th the membership of the Dramatists' Guild voted a new minimum basic contract with the producers, which is unacceptable to the latter. As we go to press the issue is deadlocked, and amounts to a strike on the part of the writers, with particularly militant opposition from a group of the younger managers.

The new contract is a great advance over the old one in the protection it affords the playwrights' interests. Over most of the clauses there is little disagreement; the real fight centers around those dealing with the motion picture rights, which provide, (1) that legal control of the film rights rests with the author alone, (2) that the percentage of the motion picture sale money accruing to the manager is no longer 50 per cent as in the past, but is on a sliding scale, and (3) that the motion picture companies can lease a play prior to its production provided they fulfill several conditions, one of which is meeting a minimum basic contract previously negotiated between the Dramatists' Guild and the film producers.

The vast importance of these clauses, which have been completely misunderstood in newspaper and trade paper comment, and even by some of the dramatists, is that they recognize the fact that picture money has come to Broadway, and rigorously define the terms under which it can be invested. In throwing down the gauntlet to the film producers the dramatists are performing a service to all workers in the theatre, including such managers

as may properly be called creative. For if the film trusts are permitted to gain control of the theatre on their own terms, it will mean the lowering of artistic standards as well as an attack upon the theatrical trade unions. The latter should therefore line up solidly with the dramatists in enforcing their demands.

The charge that the new contract will curtail theatrical production is old and stale; it was made at the time of the Equity strike, and again when the previous minimum basic contract was adopted.

Nevertheless the procedure of the Dramatists' Guild has shown certain grave errors from a trade union standpoint. There was not sufficient democratic discussion prior to the passing of the contract: members came to the general meeting without any knowledge of the issues involved or opportunity to study the contract. It was proposed at this meeting that another meeting be held at an early date. This did not take place until a month later, on March 27th, showing a serious disregard for democratic procedure, and the need for frequent Guild membership meetings both during the strike and after it is settled. (The meeting took place too late to be covered in this issue).

The Guild has also failed to achieve cooperation with the other theatrical trade unions. As far as Equity is concerned, this is undoubtedly due to the conservative attitude of the Equity leadership; Frank Gilmore has publicly criticized the playwrights, proposed arbitration, and invited a representative of the managers (Brock Pemberton) to speak at an Equity meeting. The Guild should have appealed directly to the Equity membership, as well as to the other unions: musicians, stage-hands, etc.

Lastly, representatives of the managers should on no account be permitted to attend Guild membership meetings in the persons of author-producers. One result of this has already been a report to the League of New York Theatres (the managers' association) of those dramatists most actively in favor of the new agreement, the report to serve as the basis of a proposed blacklist! Dual membership in an employers' association and a trade union should no more be allowed in the realm of the arts than in industry.

The dramatists are learning valuable lessons in trade union tactics in the course of this fight. Playwrights, and authors in other fields are rapidly discovering the value of militant organization and solidarity. The Dramatists' Guild will unquestionably win the strike. The next step is A. F. of L. affiliation and close cooperation with other theatrical unions.

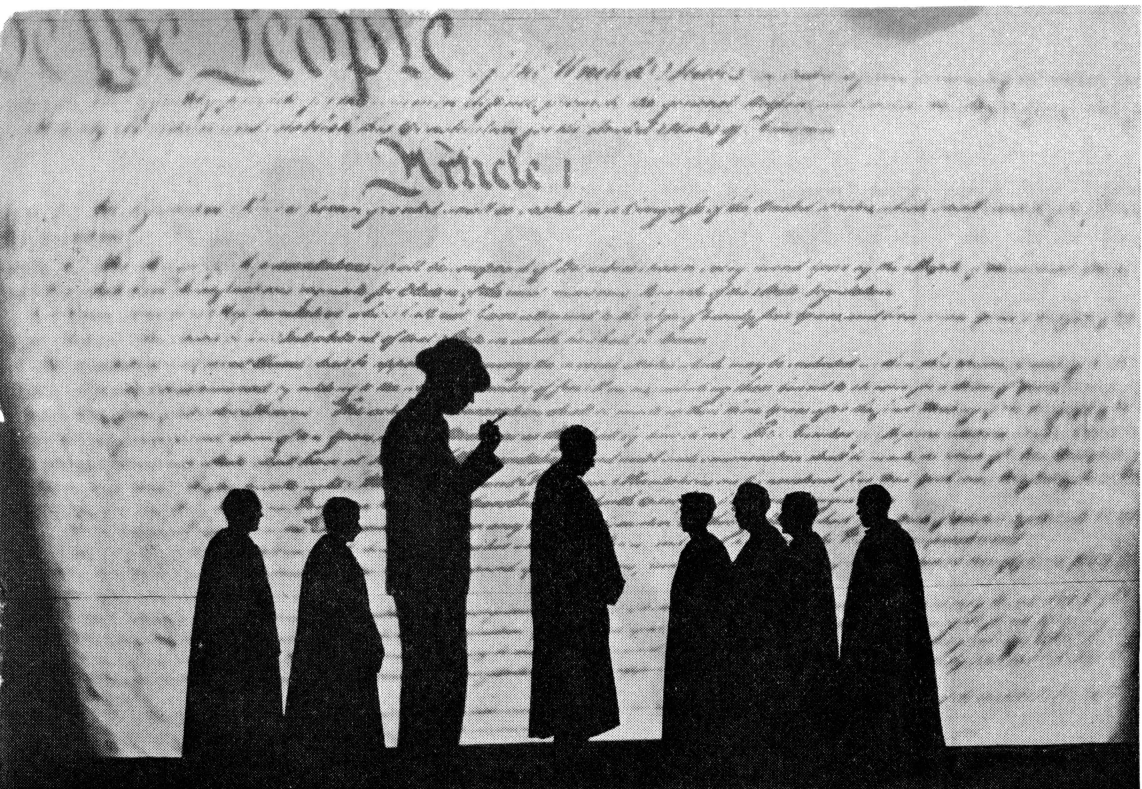
## Isidore Garelick

Isidore Garelick, business manager of the Artef Theatre for the past two and a half years, was instrumental in developing that theatre from one which performed only on week-ends to the fine art theatre now playing on Broadway to regular subscription audiences. To him also belongs the credit for the well-knit organization of this group. He understood the problems of transformation from a non-professional to a professional workers' theatre. He combatted professionalism, in its worst sense, and fought for a true art theatre playing to the broadest possible strata of people. Today as a result of his fine work the Artef has a First Collective daily on Broadway, a Second Collective playing in halls, at meetings and wherever there are workers gathered, and a studio group studying as did the others before it.

Mr. Garelick's work is an example to theatre groups everywhere. NEW THEATRE regards his death as a loss not only to the Artef but to the entire new theatre movement.

## Symposium

On March 8th six hundred people turned out for a symposium presented by the Contemporary Theatre of Los Angeles. Its subject was "The American Theatre—Force or Failure," and the list of sponsors and speakers included John Ford, King Vidor, Dudley Nichols, Jean Muir, James and Lucille Gleason, Rouben Mamoulian, Clifford Odets, Emanuel Eisenberg and Herbert Kline. The enthusiastic response of the audience to the symposium indicated the real need for an active social theatre in the film colony.



SCENE FROM THE LIVING NEWSPAPER'S "TRIPLE-A PLOWED UNDER"

# "Patriots" on the Project

BY RICHARD PACK

The Major didn't want to talk. The Major, who is William L. Ball, late of General Pershing's staff in Paris, and at present Managing Project Supervisor of the Federal Theatre in New York City and Honorary President of the Federal Theatre Veterans League, was not as imposing as his titles. A pudgy bespectacled little man, he could have posed for an illustration for *Babbitt*. I had been reading a lot in the papers about the Major's organization—how its patriotic members had found red radicalism rampant in the Federal Theatre projects; how they discovered sinister subversiveness in *The Living Newspaper's Triple-A Plowed Under* and the Popular Price Theatre's *Class of '29*; how they wanted President Roosevelt to remove Hallie Flanagan, Philip Barber, Stephen Karnot, Helen Arthur, Alfred Kreymborg and others from the Federal Theatre because of "communistic leanings." Would the Major please tell me more about the Theatre Veterans League and the persons behind it? He would, but he couldn't. He explained that project supervisors are not allowed to criticize the Federal Theatre publicly. The major finally advised me to see Adolph Pinkus, President of the League. Pinkus, the Major assured me, could tell all.

Mr. Pinkus proved to be difficult to reach. Finally, I got him on the telephone the next day at Major Ball's apartment, 127 West 56th Street, which is also the unofficial headquarters of the Veterans League ("Where we hold our secret meetings," I heard Ball tell the *City News* man.) Pinkus could talk, but wouldn't.

He didn't know me—no telling whom I was writing for, etc. Finally, he agreed to give me an interview if Mr. Marks, counsel for the Veterans League, okayed me.

Norman L. Marks was located at the law offices of Lind, Shlivek, Marks and Brin, 10 East 40th Street. A stout, jovial gentleman who resembled Edward Arnold of the movies, he was very willing to talk. For over an hour he chatted with me about the Veterans League, communism, fascism, war, peace, J. P. Morgan, the American Legion and Italy.

Marks gave me a mimeographed copy of the five-page letter which the organization had sent to President Roosevelt the previous evening (March 20th). In this, the Federal Theatre Veterans League asks for "a complete and thorough investigation of the Federal Theatre Pro-

ject of the WPA, and specifically requests the removal of Mrs. Hallie Flanagan and her associates for the following reasons . . . (1) The project is primarily used for the dissemination of communistic propaganda. (2) Incompetency rules the project."

Under these two heads are numerous subdivisions which Marks dignified with the name of "proof." I discussed the letter with him. One of the allegations is that W. H. Auden's *The Dance of Death*, which the Poetic Theatre under Alfred Kreymborg is preparing for production, "openly condemns Jews." The line "There's a dirty Jew; you know what to do," is offered as evidence. Now obviously, to any one who knows the play, this is a deliberate distortion; the line has been lifted out of its context. In its proper place, the line is used *against* Jew-baiting.

Marks insisted that *The Dance of Death* is anti-semitic. Had he read the play? "No." Did he know the author? "No."

*Triple-A Plowed Under* has also aroused the patriotic fervor of the Veterans League. It seems that "George Washington and Andrew Jackson were removed from the play in order to give a prominent part to Earl Browder, Secretary of the Communist Party." "Does Mr. Browder call for revolution in this play?" I asked Marks.

"No," he answered. "But . . . he asks for the destruction of the Supreme Court and he asks that the power be given over to the people."

The case against Mrs. Flanagan, according to the letter, is that "she has definitely stated that she is not interested in American theatre or methods, but is interested only in the Russian stylized performances."

Did Mr. Marks know of Mrs. Flanagan's theatrical background? "I think she had something to do with Vassar College."

Did Mr. Marks know anything about the background of Helen Arthur, Stephen Karnot, Philip Barber, Alfred Kreymborg? "I don't know anything about them personally," he admitted. "I only know what the boys tell me. As I understand it, none of them has any experience in the theatre."

I noticed that the petition to the President asks "that all communists be removed from the Theatre Project and transferred." "Theatre molds the minds

of the people," he added. "We just want the communists out of the theatre. We want them transferred to projects where they cannot successfully advocate the destruction of our government."

Marks chuckled. "After all, a man slinging a pick and shovel can't do much damage as a communist."

I asked Marks what sort of plays he would like to see the Federal Theatre produce. He muttered something about "Plays on American aspects, and Shakespeare."

"But aren't there entire divisions of the Federal Theatre producing Shakespeare and other classics . . . Ibsen, Molière, Sheridan, Goldsmith . . .?"

"I don't know if there are or not," Marks replied blandly. Anyway, he didn't think the theatre was an art. . . . "Personally, I'll take the Ziegfeld Follies any time."

I wanted to know how the Federal Theatre Veterans League came to be. This, said Marks, was a long story.

It all began in 1919, he explained. He was in the U. S. Army Engineering Corps during the war, and in 1919 was Chairman of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee of the Paris Convention at which the American Legion was created. "I was one of the first members of the Legion."

Marks pulled out a little card. I took it and read: "Norman L. Marks is a member of Post Number 1 of the American Legion, Rome, Italy."

He smiled, "Betcha didn't know post number one was in Rome."

Marks told me that he had been stationed in Rome for several years after the war as a representative of the Westinghouse Electric Company.

In 1934, while he was in Washington lobbying for the American Legion, ("active on the Legion legislation commission" to use his own words) he was asked to testify at the McCormack-Dickstein investigation into "un-American activities."

Marks smiled. "Smedley Butler knew I had a hookup in Italy and he accused Gerald McGuire and me of approaching him on behalf of Wall Street to lead a Fascist march on Washington."

"Of course," Marks added, "That was a lot of hoovey."

The Dickstein-McCormack investigation brought about Marks' great awakening. "You see, before this I thought this Red Menace stuff was all a joke. I

thought Dickstein overemphasized things. Then I talked with Sam Dickstein and learned what was going on . . . at my own college, for instance."

It was then, said Marks, that he began "raising hell" at the City College of New York. He told me how with the help of President Robinson he and the Legion inaugurated an "Americansm" drive at CCNY. Here Marks gave me a long description of the tactics they had used against progressive students at that school. "There's scarcely an issue of the City College student paper without my name in it," Marks boasted. "In fact, in a recent issue there were five articles about Norman L. Marks."

As a result of all this activity, "some of the boys" came to Marks not long ago and told him: "You're interested in Americanization at CCNY—well, we got an Americanization problem here in the WPA Theatre."

"And that," Marks laughed, "is how the Federal Theatre Veterans League was born. If it wasn't for Rome, I never would have been mixed up with Butler; if it wasn't for Butler, I wouldn't have started the Americanism drive at CCNY; and if it wasn't for that, there probably wouldn't have been any Theatre Veterans League."

Marks told me proudly he has served as an attorney for Morgan in many cases. He recalled a debate with a "communist" lawyer, who had denounced him for his Morgan connections. "The way I look at it," Marks philosophized, "this fellow's only real objection was that I could get Morgan's check and he couldn't."

The talk shifted to Italy again. Fascism? "It's the greatest thing in the world for Italy," Marks declared emphatically. He explained how Mussolini had made the trains run on time and had stabilized the price of Barcelona hats. The Italians, Marks feels, "need some one to drive them . . . just like the niggers here in the United States." Fascism is no good for America, though, Marks said. "It wouldn't work here. It's against the American spirit."

Before I left, Marks presented me with copies of three resolutions which he told me were going to be introduced at a meeting of the American Legion on Monday night. (This was Saturday afternoon, March 21st).

The last of the resolutions was particularly interesting. This asked for an investigation by the New York County Grievance Committee into the activities of "one Thomas E. Stone, a member of the 307th Infantry Post of the American Legion" . . . charged with actively engaging in disseminating "subversive propaganda" and "conduct contrary to

the principles of the American Legion."

Major Thomas E. Stone is commander of the 307th Infantry Post of the American Legion, a delegate to the County Committee of the American Legion, and a senior supervisor of the Experimental Theatre Unit of the Federal Theatre. This Marks-inspired resolution omitted mention of the fact that it was Major Stone who recently pointed out in the press the Fascist tendencies of the Federal Theatre Veterans League!

It was Major Stone who late in March sent a letter to Victor Ridder, Chief of WPA in New York City, which said in part: "In view of the fact that your name is seemingly to be used as a cloak for the use of gangster methods against individual employees and supervisors on the Federal Theatre Project . . . will you by an immediate public statement condemn such rowdiness and disassociate yourself from this so-called League of Veterans as the inspiration for its organization and activities?"

"Subversive propaganda?"

With Marks' approval, I went back to 126 West 56th Street to speak with Pinkus. This time the President of the Federal Theatre Veterans League talked.

He was a dapper sharp-eyed fellow, company manager for the Anglo-Russian theatre of the Federal Theatre Project. He has been in the theatre, he said, for nearly twenty years as an actor and as manager of theatres. Except for a contradiction here and an elaboration there, he added little to what Marks had already told me.

*The Dance of Death*, according to him, was not only "anti-semitic but communist propaganda as well." "It's all in poetry," he added, "something about a revolution in England. Lord knows who wrote it." He was particularly insistent in pointing out that it bore the strong recommendation of Mrs. Flanagan. All he knew about Mrs. Flanagan's background was that she came from Vassar and "spent five years in Soviet Russia." He found *Triple-A Plowed Under* subversive because in it "Earl Browder suggests a Farmer-Labor party, defiles the courts of the United States and whatin hell not." He referred to the Newspaper Guild, sponsoring *The Living Newspaper*, as "one of those phony things." Helen Arthur, he admitted, had a theatrical background; he knew she had been manager for Ruth Draper. She was "communistically inclined" because she gave teas at the theatre at which she "discussed the Russian type of theatre and said the American theatre was obsolete." Alfred Kreymborg? He didn't have any theatrical experience. Pinkus didn't know much about him. "Some sort of a phony poet . . .

published a couple of books I think."

At this point, James McCauley, secretary of the Federal Theatre Veterans League, and company manager of the Melodrama Revivals group, entered the conversation. McCauley had a different version for the origin of the League. According to him, it started "after that disgraceful Marcanonio riot."

McCauley contributed this significant information: After the formation of the Veterans League, he said, Victor Ridder, in charge of WPA activities for the New York area "told me that he was glad to see somebody starting such an organization. He told me: 'I'm for you 100%.'"

McCauley denied that the League intended to use violence as a weapon. "However"—he smiled a you-know-what-I-mean smile at me—"If necessary . . . we're still veterans!"

(I later learned that at an open meeting of the Federal Theatre Veterans League, a speaker made the following statement: "When we veterans get a chance to deal with those radicals, we'll be so hardboiled that Hitler will look like an amateur compared to us!")

Since Major Ball was busy, I didn't get around to any further conversation with him. It was no longer necessary; I knew all I wanted to know about the Federal Theatre Veterans League and its sponsors.

The attacks made by the Veterans League are disturbingly reminiscent, both in tone and in content, of the general run of Hearst editorials. Their fascist implications are clearly recognized by such ex-servicemen as Major Stone, who repudiate the League's claim to be spokesman of the veterans. The organization, despite the weakness of its accusations, is a real menace, the immediate danger being that it may succeed in splitting, to a measurable degree, the forces of the Federal Theatre workers by deflecting attention from the real problem of mass dismissals to a mythical Red Menace.

Most serious of all is the possibility of the League's connection with Administrator Victor Ridder, a connection boasted of at every step by the League officials, and not yet (as we go to press) conclusively denied by Mr. Ridder. Instead, he has consistently implied that the City Projects Council, the union of WPA workers, is "communistic," which is also the burden of the League's attack on the Council. And it is this organization, by a strange coincidence, which is leading the fight against dismissal of 40,000 persons from the WPA roles which Ridder has announced by July 1st!

(Flash: Major Ball has just been transferred from the Theatre Project to the WPA Finance Department.)

# John Ford: Fighting Irish

BY EMANUEL EISENBERG

Mr. Ford wasn't in to anybody, the information clerk assured me; the secretary had just told him so. But I had been granted an appointment the day before. The clerk shrugged and called the secretary again. All right, I could go into the office, and he pressed a releasing button with an expression that said: for all the good it'll do you.

The secretary was extremely considerate and greatly concerned for my sanity. See Mr. Ford today? Did I know that he was making tests of Hepburn? That the filming of *Mary of Scotland* was to begin the day after tomorrow? She could conceive of no urgency impressive enough for disturbing him. I really must have made a mistake. Or Mr. Ford had not been aware of his own involvements in suggesting the appointment. It was quite hopeless. No one could see him today.

I wandered out of the building and there was the publicity department. Maybe they could help me; I knew the head. An interview with Ford? Ford never granted them to anyone; couldn't be bothered; there wasn't the dimmest chance. And TODAY: test day. I must be mad. Interruption was practically a criminal offence. He himself, the head publicity man, wouldn't dare to break in. Oh, no. Just forget the whole idea.

By now I was pretty depressed. John Ford had promised me no more than five minutes, but I wanted those five minutes and I was particularly piqued by the wonderful studio set-up of inaccessibility. It was impossible to believe that Ford himself had dictated this situation. Yet I had no way of finding out.

I walked on the mock-streets of the enclosed studio city. Deserted. What would I do with the morning? I had made no more than two turns when suddenly, incredibly, there stood the unobtainable Mr. Ford, chatting leisurely with a couple of men. It was too good, too much like the mechanical ending of a joke with an over-heavy build-up. I managed to catch his eye; he winked in recognition; we strolled over to the office; Dudley Nichols soon joined us; and we sat for almost two hours in an easy, informal, wandering talk.

I offer the preliminary details of the meeting simply because they are so representative of the man Ford, his style and his methods. In the middle of an abnormally busy day he had found time to hang around on the sidewalk for some



JOHN FORD

gossip. Officially he could be located or approached by no one in the studio, yet a stranger wandering illegitimately around the lot might bump into him and attract him away from schedule for a period. He had warned me that I would be lucky if I could talk to him for five consecutive minutes as he went about his work; but the non-giver of interviews found NEW THEATRE and its point of view so challenging that he stretched five minutes to 120 and extended a further invitation to come down to the set next week and watch him direct (something Dudley Nichols described as a distinct rarity).

For Ford is Irish and a fighter. He has fought for this way of living within the film industry as he has had to fight for the stories that interested him and the methods he believed in.

Pictures like *The Informer* do not come into existence lightly. To the frantic but still hopeful devoté its appearance—or the appearance of any other film on such a high level—is revelation, oasis and consummation, a sudden reward in the stoical pilgrimage of picture-going; but to one whose eyes have been exposed ever so briefly to the mechanics and finances of Hollywood production, the sheer physical emergence of *The Informer* is a small miracle. It began over the dead bodies of all the money lads; it was permitted to carry through in the periodic embarrassed concession to Art, an essence relied upon to secure the equally obscure quality of Prestige; and when it broke

across the tape not only with high critical acclaim but with a hundred thousand dollars of profit, almost the sum it had been expected to lose, confusion was intense. Such reckless and audacious efforts are not supposed to make good.

John Ford is among the startling handful of men in films who believe that a picture, to make any sense, must be conceived from the first day of action by a fixed group of workers dedicated to seeing it through from beginning to end. This is so violently in contrast to the anarchistic principles of putting anybody to work who happens to be around and never quite knowing the next week's program of operation (creatively speaking) that Ford is considered something of a forbidding fanatic and accordingly permitted—but not too often—to function severely in his own way. He wisely takes advantage of this reputation to insist upon a courageous individualism of attack which is denied even the most impressive directors in circulation.

He has been in pictures since 1914; thinks entirely in terms of cinema and works as a craftsman. The conception of a frame, a composition and a camera angle is rarely something he simply hands over to the highly skilled technicians around him; it has validity and completeness only after he has scrambled up the ladder to the platform and studied the actual register inside the box. His consistent participation in all of the aspects of production sometimes makes it difficult to distinguish him from among the property men, electricians and camera workers. Ford's high talent for simultaneous leadership and collaboration is conceded by everyone who has ever worked with him to be almost without parallel in the movies.

"After all, there's nothing surprising about the difficulty of doing things you yourself believe in in the movies," he said, "when you consider that you're spending someone else's money. And a lot of money. And he wants a lot of profit on it. That's something you're supposed to worry about, too."

"Trouble is, most of them can't imagine what'll make them money outside of what's already been made and what's already made them money before."

"Exactly! That's why it's a constant battle to do something fresh. First they want you to repeat your last picture.

(Continued on page 42)





JOHN FORD



Ralph Steiner

• MORRIS CARNOVSKY AND LEE STRASBERG, DURING A REHEARSAL OF "CASE OF CLYDE GRIFFITHS," WHICH WAS DIRECTED BY STRASBERG.

## Drama versus Melodrama

BY JOHN W. GASSNER

By one of those coincidences not rare in a theatrical season most of the substantial plays of the past month have revolved around highly melodramatic situations. *Case of Clyde Griffiths*, which takes precedence among the tragedies, is founded on a good old-fashioned murder story. *Love on the Dole*, the recent English importation, culminates in the stock situation of young people getting into trouble in the time-honored manner. *The Crime*, the Theatre of Action's one-hour play about a labor leader, could easily have become the regulation melodrama

of betrayal and retribution. Dan Totheroh's *Searching for the Sun*, involves its characters in illegitimate parenthood, in addition to an aborted hold-up. Not to be outdone by any of the aforementioned pieces, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, currently on view with two eerie auto accidents by Mielziner, jingles the familiar tunes of crime, detection and retribution. In every instance, except *The Crime*, the formula is at least superficially the ancient one of "Boy goes wrong—girl goes wrong."

However, it is pleasant to reflect that

plays that would have once snorted and wept themselves to a consistently melodramatic finish now give new significance to stock situations, and order them into a meaningful design. With the exception of one unsublimated melodrama, the aforementioned dramas justify themselves largely on the ground that they compel thought. Melodrama, like romanticism, has of course never been routed from the stage. But the efforts of the pioneering realists, Ibsen leading the charge, did force this debased form of tragedy to take a subordinate position. The later social theatre now prevailing has renewed the attack through its unconditional demand that a play have purpose and meaning.

Under the old dispensation, a dramatization of *An American Tragedy* would normally have been (and actually was, in the late Patrick Kearney's version) a crime thriller, rather than a social analysis like the Group Theatre's *Case of Clyde Griffiths*. In this dramatization by Erwin Piscator and Lena Goldschmidt the tables are turned. Society indicted Clyde Griffiths of murder in the first degree. His counsel, voicing the collective conscience, hurls the charge back against society in more ways than one. Clyde is not exonerated. It is a mistake to say that the social determinism of the play relieves him of responsibility to the girl he betrayed or overlooks his weakness of character. Time and again he is sharply criticized by the Speaker or commentator of the drama, as well as by its working people, who disclaim him. But while rich and poor alike disown Clyde, and even when his behavior sets him down as a cad, the Speaker viewing the tragedy under the aspect of social conditioning, understands and pities him.

Was Clyde Griffiths' longing for the conveniences and amenities of the rich a symptom of perversity, an expression of sinfulness? It was nothing of the sort. Why should he not have nursed these desires? In what way were his wealthy cousins superior to him that they should be living on the fat of the land while he sweated out his guts in the shrinking room of his wealthy uncle's collar factory? Who is to order the human soul to cast out its longing for the brightness it too might possess? To make such desire sinful is the way of the master and the



*Ralph Steiner*

first condition of slavery. The temptation became overwhelming when Clyde was given an opportunity to rise in the world under the aegis of the society girl who loved him. But in the way of happiness stood the factory girl who had been his mistress and who was bearing his child. Against the temptation he could muster few resources. Had not the society, which decrees poverty for the millions of Clyde Griffiths, cradled him in the gospel of personal ambition? Was a simple, untutored lad to deny the validity of its teachings? Would the tub-thumping evangelism of his parents, with its doctrine of individual salvation, the only system of ethics to which the lad had been exposed, inoculate him against the bacillus of individual escape, of rising above the others, if need be at the expense of others? Would this evangelism be potent enough to oppose his thoughts when they applied themselves to the problem of eliminating the girl who stood between him and the only paradise he could conceive? In the critical moment his inhibitions, if not his reserves of common decency, prevented him from committing the murder, but an accident arising from his homicidal plans did the dirty work for him, and he swung for a crime he had not committed but had nevertheless intended. The analysis of Clyde's tragedy is airtight. Its soundness can be questioned only by those who doubt the fatality of man-made conditions that cradle the individual from birth to death. Its logic may be a bitter pill to swallow, but it must nevertheless be downed. Clyde Griffiths, it has been seen, is not whitewashed; whatever whitewashing he could receive would more probably emanate from the melodramatists who might plead his youth and immaturity, who would be least inclined to scorn him as a so-called traitor to his class, as the Group's play does quite stridently. But neither is society whitewashed or relieved of its responsibility for tolerating flagrant social inequalities and failing to crystallize an adequate order in which the young may live and reach fruition. On this score, the play makes no compromises, from the first words of the Speaker when he calls "money" the root of evil to his closing statement that society is on trial.

The total effect is absorbing. *Case of Clyde Griffiths* is one of the most stirring, as well as unique, plays of the season. The bewilderment of the youth plumbs the depths of an experience which must be immediate to most people. The pathos of the abandoned factory girl is compelling. The scenes in the factory are filled with excitement, and even more forceful is the grotesque picture of Clyde

buying a dress-suit and being confronted by workers who have been "locked-out" by his uncle. To single out individual members of the Group Theatre for their performance would be unfair, as they all fit into Lee Strasberg's frequently brilliant pattern with uncanny precision. Much of the play's impact is due to their collective organization and training.

However, a proper appreciation of the play is inseparable from a consideration of its style,—its most troublesome feature. Consisting of brittle cinematic flashes, fragments of scenes unified by a commentator who addresses both the actors and the audience, the play does not follow the usual lines of exposition and development. Its expressionism is further complicated by the fact that it is a didactic instrument; *Case of Clyde Griffiths* is "a learning play" much in the manner of Bert Brecht's *Mother*. Much has been accomplished by this technique. Its novelty and crass directness can provide a tonic to jaded theatre-going nerves, and any procedure which will shake the average spectator's complacency deserves a blue ribbon. Expressionism is also, in this instance, a ready means of condensing the vast bulk of Dreiser's novel, of achieving condensation without emasculation. The novel's melodramatic surface action lends itself to conventional dramatization, but the larger implications of Dreiser's work would be of necessity a sealed book to the traditional dramaturgist. It is not easy to compress a social system into the so-called "well-made play." To a great extent, then, "learning-play" expressionism is the technical device that transforms the play's potential melodrama into social tragedy.

Still the fact must be faced that expressionism, particularly of the Brecht-Piscator variety, is a double-edged

weapon. If it attracts, it also repels. In too many instances it only encounters the inertia of the spectator. He must adjust himself to a relatively new theatric convention, and this adjustment is further hampered by the harangues and explications basic in the style. To sneer at these exhortations as soap-box business rather than theatre is to beg the question. The lengthiest and most straightforward harangues of the theatre are to be found in the choruses of classic Greek tragedy and comedy. But the fact remains that harangues can be tiresome; the pre-convinced part of the audience finds much repetition in them, while the stiff-necked tribe of unbelievers is not apt to humble itself in dust and ashes before a direct assault. There are therefore serious impediments in the *Case of Clyde Griffiths*. The Speaker's interruptions of the flow of the drama are sometimes disconcerting, and his explanations occasionally superfluous and bald; it is not surprising that some people should even find them blatant. But for Morris Carnovsky's persuasiveness the Speaker would be a downright bore part of the time.

Equally dubious is the abbreviation and kaleidoscopic scattering of the scenes. Sometimes the condensation of an event goes to the heart of its meaning and reaps gratifying results. The scenes in the tailor shop and in the street, when Clyde is cornered by the unemployed, are a case in point. On the other hand, the truncation of other scenes results in flatness. I refer especially to the rather wooden Christmas party at the rich girl's home, and the automatic exit of the factory girls leaving Roberta alone with Clyde. It is also tantalizing to watch the freezing of some actor in his tracks. Alexander Kirkland, who performs so appealingly when he is permitted to act, is called



SCENE FROM THE ARTEF'S "HIRSCH LEKERT"



SCENE FROM THE ARTEF'S "HIRSCH LEKERT"



SCENE FROM THE NEW THEATRE UNION PLAY "BITTER STREAM"

Talbot

upon to assume a dozen or more spotlighted poses reminiscent of the artificial, often pretentious close-ups of the flickers. Momentary immobility on the part of a character can be effective in the theatre, but only when properly related to the other stage business. The problems of stylization are among the most difficult in any art, and those inherent in *Case of Clyde Griffiths* are still far from settled. When they are least in evidence, the play is powerful drama; when they are most apparent the effect is sometimes forthright and exciting but much more frequently uneven and disconcerting. But the logic of the play is consistently sound, and certainly much sounder than some people may be willing to grant.

The other plays present far fewer complications. Michael Blankfort's *The Crime*, for the most part, expertly performed by the Theatre of Action, especially by Curt Conway, Will Lee and Norman Lloyd, revolves around the unintentional betrayal of a strike by its leaders: by an organizer who has grown too old and timorous and represents an antiquated labor policy, and by the young man who follows his leadership. Apparently this piece is an authentic document; Patrick E. Gorman, the International president of the A. F. of L. union actually involved in the play, considers it a "highly dramatic presentation of a meat-packing strike, ably and authentically performed." Not being able to pass judgment in the matter of the play's fidelity to actual events, I can only report that the play did not arouse any excessive interest or excitement on the part of this reviewer. It follows a sketchy pattern, its moral would seem to be rather obvi-

ous in the year 1936 (at least to the labor audiences for which it is most intended), and the specific issues are not quite convincing. The older organizer's quaint scheme of making the non-striking employees of the meat-packing plant sign pledges not to work in the killing room, as well as his unholy fear of drawing down the militia even when the whole town is presumably on the side of the workers, seems too flagrantly insipid to have been tolerated by the strikers. The latter, including their young leader, may not be the last word in sophistication, but they are supposed to have common sense and determination. On the other hand, the rich folk-setting of the play enlivens it considerably, and the inner struggle of the younger organizer is caught with sympathy and understanding not always in evidence in agitational drama. This understanding unfortunately fails to explain this particular leader's obtuseness, but one may be grateful that his betrayal is no longer a melodramatic affair in which the villain is dyed a deep scarlet. *The Crime* appears in this respect an advance upon most plays of its kind.

Ronald Gow's and Walter Greenwood's *Love on the Dole*, is one of the few important plays to emanate from Great Britain in many years. It is an authentic record of the condition of large segments of the king's subjects. Poverty, relieved only by occasional stupefying drunkenness, is the lot of the inhabitants of Hanky Park in Manchester, as dreary a slum as any to be found in our vaunted civilization. The bleak room of the Hardcastle family weighs on the spirit like an incubus. The apprentice son wears his overalls night and day because he can-

not afford a pair of long trousers. The mother is a household drudge, while the father, like most of the men of Hanky Park, belongs to the damned legions of the unemployed, after a life-time of earnest application to his trade. The family is largely dependent on the earnings of the daughter, a courageous and self-sacrificing girl. The boy loses his job, his girl becomes pregnant, and they have no place to stay when cast out by their shabby but tenaciously "respectable" parents. His sister's lover loses his position, and is killed in the course of a demonstration against the reduction of the dole upon which most of the population is dependent. The final blow comes when the Hardcastles must relinquish their sole remaining luxury, their respectability. Sally Hardcastle, driven to the wall, bitter and fiercely cynical at last, becomes the mistress of a gambler and politician, and her family is forced to subsist on the crumbs that she can bring them from the rich man's table and the jobs he has procured for them. An authentic production, especially distinguished by a remarkable young actress, Wendy Miller, and two superlative actors—Alexander Grandison as the young brother and Reginald Bach as Hardcastle senior, impresses the tragedy indelibly upon the mind.

The play is not all of a piece. The movement of the story is halting, and its last chapter inconclusive, Sally's prostitution representing no solution whatever and being rather in the nature of a *deus ex machina*. The authors, who cannot be accused of quite forgetting this fact, suffer from the limits which they have set themselves. Resolutely avoiding a dynamic answer to the conditions they have set down so bitterly, they have been compelled to leave the drama suspended on a note of inef-

(Continued on page 43)



Sketched at "Love on the Dole" by F. Sachnoff



*Sketched at "Love on the Dole" by F. Sachnoff*



SCENE FROM THE NEW THEATRE UNION PLAY "BITTER STREAM"

*Talbot*



# The New Theatre Conference

BY MARK MARVIN

Information that the New Theatre League will hold its biennial National Conference in Philadelphia, April 10th to 12th may not seem to be vital news to those readers of NEW THEATRE who are unconcerned with the organization problems of the new theatre movement. Having accepted this movement as a normal and vital feature in the contemporary theatre, they are perhaps unaware of the complex inner problems of the New Theatre League, the national organization which founded and services the new theatres.

Since 1931 when the social drama and the workers theatres made their first appearance, the New Theatre League, and before it its predecessor, the League of Workers Theatres, has been steadily at work. New theatre groups and workers theatres emerged in leading cities from coast to coast. In a period of two brief years of arduous work the National Office of the League was able to grow from a staff of two part-time workers to a present full-time staff of fifteen aided by many capable part-time and non-salaried assistants. In rapid order the League established a Repertory Department, a Social Drama Book Service, a professional play agency, a Production Department (responsible for the many successful New Theatre Nights which are now an outstanding feature of New York theatre life), a Booking Agency which brings lecturers and mobile dramatic entertainment to various organizations, a National Committee Against Censorship of the Theatre Arts which led the successful anti-censorship fight last year, and finally a New Theatre School which has won much recognition for the training it staff gives to hundreds of students each semester.

Among the accomplishments of the League in the past two years have been the sponsoring (in conjunction with NEW THEATRE) of such plays as *Waiting For Lefty*, *Private Hicks*, *Hymn to the Rising Sun*, and most recently *Bury the Dead*, the publication of the pamphlet, *Censored*, on the censorship fight in the field of the theatre, and the holding of various conferences, national as well as regional, for all groups participating in the new theatre movement.

Personal sacrifice and grueling hard work made possible the weathering of the early, leanest years. Part of the story of the pioneer days has been recorded in Ben Blake's valuable pamphlet, *The Awaken-*

*ing of the American Theatre*. One distinguishing and important trait mentioned by Blake bears re-emphasis. Each period brings a recurrent necessity for evaluation of the basic premises of this new drama. And as great social changes transform the world today in swift, often bewildering movements, the new theatres find it necessary to convene regularly in regional and national conferences to discuss inner creative and organizational problems in order to adjust their policies to social reality.

The forthcoming National Conference marks the end of a two-year period in which notable improvement in the writing and production of plays of social criticism has been achieved, as evidenced by the work of Peters, Maltz, Sklar, Wexley, Odets, Kreymborg, Bein, and now Irwin Shaw, as well as that of hundreds of actors and directors. Equally important is the fact that these same theatres have also developed better methods for reaching wider masses of people. Numerous, and at times discouraging, flaws and failures have accompanied their activities; but since self-criticism is a marked characteristic of the new theatre movement its members are acutely aware of its failings and the need for improving the work of the League National Office, the magazine, and the theatres themselves.

The most urgent task facing the National Conference will be the hammering out of a policy and an effective program of work for the next two years. The new theatres have now to be divided into two major categories, roughly based on definite social needs: People's Theatres and Labor Theatres. The People's Theatres will answer the need in all cities for community centres supplying social drama and recreation to workers, intellectuals and middle class people. These theatres, which should ultimately reach the strength and quality of the *Volksbühnen* of pre-Nazi Germany, will become the voice of the most progressive elements in every community. With their development must ultimately come financial assistance and subsidies from municipal and state governments as was also the case in Germany. These theatres will serve the workers and farmers who are now denied participation in theatre culture, whom they will rally and educate to the struggle for a better social system, for peace, and against fascism. They will be an important aid to the dramatization of the rich social and labor history

of the American people. And to the theatre worker such non-profit theatres will provide in America, as they did in Germany, an outlet for the best creative work of the sincere artist.

Along with and perhaps as a part of the People's Theatres, will emerge new and more powerful Labor Theatres backed by the strength of the American Federation of Labor, which has officially endorsed the idea. Labor Stage, Inc., supported by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, is the first of these theatres to be established. The new trend is evident in the American Federationist, organ of the A. F. of L., which has just added a labor-play review section to its pages. But equally important to the New Theatre League is the fact that its own theatres, as recorded monthly in *Shifting Scenes* in NEW THEATRE, have taken the lead by playing to trade unions throughout the United States, and that the New Theatre League Repertory Department is becoming recognized as the center for the distribution of labor plays.

In this program of work the New Theatre League seeks and needs the cooperation of Labor Stage, Inc., of such pioneers as Fanya Cohn of the I. L. G. W. U., Sam Friedman of Rebel Arts Players, and theatre workers such as Hallie Flanagan, Jasper Deeter, Gilmor Brown, Professor Frederick B. Koch, and others too numerous to mention.

The problem facing the National Conference is to draw the League's present scattered influence and forces into an improved and stronger New Theatre League which will contain the best possible leadership and ability, and will represent an extensive united front of every progressive element interested in the social drama and in furthering the People's and Labor Theatre movement. In addition to the problems outlined above, the business of the Conference will include discussions of NEW THEATRE, Negro theatre work, censorship, the election of officers, and the adoption of a new constitution.

To those elements not in its ranks the New Theatre League repeats: "Come into our organization. Join hands with us now! Never have the prospects seemed so hopeful. Unity alone can bring realization to these prospects. Attend the National Conference in Philadelphia, as observers or fraternal delegates, and make your view-point, your experiences, your talents felt."



"LITTLE NIGHTINGALE," FIRST SOVIET ALL COLOR FILM (EKK)

## Film Forms: New Problems

BY SERGEI EISENSTEIN

Even that old veteran Heraclitus observed that no man can bathe twice in the same river. Similarly no aesthetic can flourish on one and the same set of principles at two different stages in its development. Especially when the particular aesthetic concerned happens to relate to the most mobile of the arts, and when the division between the epochs is the succession of two Five-Year periods in the mightiest and most notable job of construction in the world—the job of building the first Socialist state and society in history. From which it is obvious that our subject is here the aesthetic of film, and in particular the aesthetic of film in the Soviet land. That land in which, in Stalin's words, cinematography has been designed the most notable of the arts.

During the last few years a great upheaval has taken place in the Soviet cinema. This upheaval is, first and foremost, ideological and thematic. The high-water mark of the blossoming of the silent cinema was attained under the broadly expansive slogan of mass, the "mass-hero" and methods of cinematographic portrayal directly derivative therefrom, rejecting narrowly dramaturgical conceptions in favour of epos and lyricism, with "type" and episodic protagonists in place of individual heroes and the consequently inevitable principle of montage as the guiding principle of the film expressiveness. But during the last few years—the first years, that is,

of the Soviet sound-cinema—the guiding principles have changed.

From the former all-pervading mass imagery of movement and experiences of the masses, there begin at this stage to stand out individual hero-characters. Their appearance is accompanied by a change in the construction of the works in which they appear. The former epical quality and its characteristic giant scale begin to contract into constructions closer to dramaturgy in the narrow sense of the

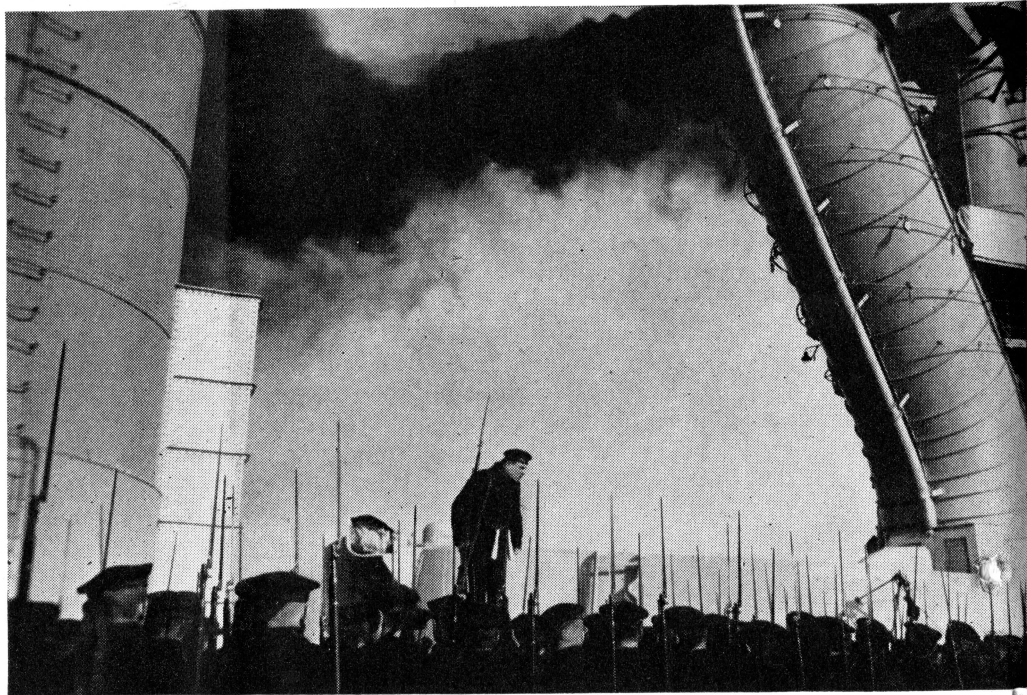
word, to a dramaturgy, in fact, of more traditional stamp and much closer to the occidental cinema than the pictures that once declared war to the death against its very principles and methods. The best films of the most recent period (*Chapayev*, for example) have none the less succeeded in partially preserving the epical quality of the first period of Soviet cinema development, with larger and happier results. But the majority of films have almost completely lost that luggage, comprised of principle and form, which determined in its day the specific and characteristic quality of face of the Soviet cinema, a quality not divorced from the newness and unusualness it bore as reflection of the unusual and never-heretofore-existing land of the Soviets, its strivings, aims, ideals and struggles.

To many it seems that the progressive development of the Soviet cinema has stopped. They speak of retrogression. This is, of course, wrong. And one important circumstance is underestimated by the fervent partisans of the old silent Soviet cinema, who now gaze bewilderedly as there appears Soviet film after film which in so many respects are formally similar to the occidental. If in many cases there must indeed be observed the dulling of that formal brilliance to which the occidental friends of our films had become accustomed, this is the consequence of the fact that our cinematography, in its present stage, is entirely absorbed in another sphere of investigation and deepening. A measure of hold-up in the further development of the forms and means of film expressiveness has appeared as an inevitable conse-





"LITTLE NIGHTINGALE," FIRST SOVIET ALL COLOR FILM (EKK)



quence of the diversion of investigation into another direction, a diversion recently and still obtaining: into the direction of deepening and broadening the thematic and ideological formulation of questions and problems within the content of the film. It is not accidental that precisely at this period, for the first time in our cinematography, there begin to appear the first finished images of personalities, not just of any personalities, but of the finest personalities: the leading figures of leading Communists and Bolsheviks. Just as from the revolutionary movement of the masses emerged the sole revolutionary party, that of the Bolsheviks, which heads the unconscious elements of revolution and leads them towards conscious revolutionary aims, so the film images of the leading men of our times begin during the present period to crystallise out of the general-revolutionary mass-quality of the earlier type of film. And the clarity of the Communist slogan rings more definitely, replacing the general-revolutionary slogan.

The Soviet cinema is now passing through a new phase—a phase of yet more distinct Bolshevisation, a phase of yet more pointed ideological and essential militant sharpness. A phase historically logical, natural and rich in fertilising possibilities for the cinema, as most notable of arts.

This new tendency is no surprise, but a logical stage of growth, rooted in the very core of the preceding stage. Thus one who is perhaps the most devoted partisan of the mass-epical style in cinema, one whose name is forever fast-linked to the “mass”-cinema—the author of these lines—is subject to precisely this same

process in his penultimate film—*The Old and The New*, where Marfa Lapkina appears already as an exceptional individual protagonist of the action.

The task, however, is to make this new stage sufficiently synthetic. To ensure that in its march towards new conquests of ideological depths, it not only does not lose the perfection of the achievements already attained, but advances them ever forward toward new and as yet unrealised qualities and means of expression. To raise form once more to the level of ideological content.

Being engaged at the moment on the practical solution of these problems in the new film *Bezhin Meadow*, only just begun, I should like to set out here a series of cursory observations on the question of the problem of form in general.

The problem of form, equally with the problem of content at the present stage, is undergoing a period of most serious deepening of principle. The lines which follow must serve to show the direction in which this problem is moving and the extent to which the new trend of thought in this sphere is closely linked in evolution to the extreme discoveries on this path made during the peak period of our silent cinema.

Let us start at the last points reached by the theoretical researches of the stage of Soviet cinema above referred to (1924-1929).

It is clear and undoubted that the *ne plus ultra* of those paths was the theory of the “intellectual cinema.”

This theory set before it the task of “restoring emotional fullness to the intellectual process.” This theory engrossed

itself as follows, in transmuting to screen form the abstract concept, the course and halt of concepts and ideas—without intermediary. Without recourse to story, or invented plot, in fact directly—by agency of the image-composed elements shot. This theory was a broad, perhaps even a too broad, generalization of a series of possibilities of expression placed at our disposal by the methods of montage and its combinations. The theory of intellectual cinema represented, as it were, a limit, the *reductio ad paradox* of that hypertrophy of the montage conception with which film aesthetics were permeated during the period of blossoming of Soviet silent cinematography as a whole and my own work in particular.

Recalling the “establishment of the abstracted concept” as the framework of the possible products of the intellectual cinema, as the basic foundation of its film canvasses; and acknowledging that the movement forward of the Soviet cinema is now following other aims, namely the demonstration of such conceptual postulates by agency of concrete actions and living persons as we have noted above, let us see what can and must be the further fate of the ideas expressed at that time.

• STILLS FROM FORTHCOMING SOVIET FILMS: LEFT TO RIGHT, “WE ARE FROM KRONSTADT” (DZIGAN), “CIRCUS” (ALEXANDROV), “SEVEN BRAVE MEN” (GERASIMOV). AMKINO RELEASES.





Is it then necessary to jettison all the colossal theoretical and creative material, in the turmoil of which was born the conception of the intellectual cinema? Has it proved only a curious and exciting paradox, a *fata morgana* of unrealized compositional possibilities? Or has its paradoxicality proved to lie not in its essence, but—in the sphere of its application, so that now, after examining some of its principles, it may emerge that, in new guise, with new usage and new application, the postulates then expressed have played and may still continue to play a highly positive part in the theoretical grasping, understanding and mastering of the mysteries of the cinema?

The reader, doubtless, has already guessed that this is precisely how we incline to consider the situation, and all that follows will serve to demonstrate, perhaps only in broad outline, exactly what we understand by it, and use now as a working basis, and which, as a working hypothesis in questions of the culture of film form and composition, is fortified more and more into a complete logical conception by everyday practice.

I should like to begin with the following consideration:

It is exceedingly curious that certain theories and points of view which in a given historical epoch represent an expression of scientific knowledge, in a succeeding epoch decline as science, but continue to exist as possible and admissible not in the line of science but in the line of art and imagery.

If we take mythology, we find that at a given stage mythology is nothing else than a complex of current knowledge about phenomena, chiefly related in imagery and poetic language. All these mythological figures, which at the best we now regard as allegorical material, at some stage represented an image-compilation of knowledge of the cosmos. Later, science moved on from imagery narratives to concepts, and the store of former personified-mythological nature-symbols continued to survive as a series of scenic images, a series of literary, lyrical and other metaphors. At last they become exhausted even in this capacity and vanish into the archives. Consider even contemporary poetry, and compare it with the poetry of the eighteenth century.

Another example: take such a postulate as the a-priority of the idea, spoken of by Hegel in relation to the creation of the world. At a certain stage this was the summit of philosophical knowledge. Later, the summit was overthrown. Marx turns this postulate heels upon head in the question of the understanding of real actuality. However, if

we consider our works of art, we do in fact have a condition that almost looks like the Hegelian formula, because the idea-satiation of the author, his subjection to prejudice by the idea, must determine actually the whole course of the art-work, and if every element of the art-work does not represent an embodiment of the initial idea, we shall never have as result an art-work realized to its utmost fullness. It is of course understood that the artist's idea itself is in no way spontaneous or self-engendered, but is a socially-reflected mirror-image, a reflection of social reality. But from the moment of formation within him of the viewpoint and idea, that idea appears as determining all the actual and material structure of his creation, the whole created "world" of his creation.

Suppose we take another field—"Lavater's physiognomy." This in its day was regarded as an objective scientific system. But physiognomy is now no science. Lavater was already laughed at by Hegel, though Goethe, for example, still collaborated with Lavater, if anonymously. To Goethe must be assigned the authorship of, for example, a physiological study devoted to the head of Brutus. We do not attribute to physiognomy any objective scientific value whatsoever, but the moment we require, in course of the all-sided representation of character denoting some type, the external characterization of a countenance, we immediately start using faces in exactly the same way as Lavater did. We do so because in such a case it is important to us to create first and foremost an impression, the subjective impression of an observer, not the objective coordination of sign and essence actually composing character. In other words, the viewpoint that Lavater thought scientific is being "exhausted" by us in the arts, where it is needed in the line of imagery.

What is the purpose of examining all this? Analogous situations occur sometimes among the methods of the arts, and sometimes it occurs that the characteristics which represent logic in the matter of construction of form are mistaken for elements of content. Logic of this kind is, as a method, as a principle of construction fully permissible, but it becomes a nightmare if this same method, this logic of construction, is regarded simultaneously as an exhaustive content.

You will perceive already whither the matter is tending, but I wish to cite one more example, from literature. The question relates now to one of the most popular of all literary genres—the detective story. What the detective story represents, of which social formations and tendencies it is the expression, this we

all know. On this subject Gorki recently spoke sufficiently at the Congress of Writers. But of interest is the origin of some of the characteristics of the genre, the sources from which derives the material that has gone towards creation of the ideal vessel of the detective story form of embodiment of the given aspects of bourgeois ideology.

It appears that the detective novel counts among its forerunners, aiding it to reach full bloom at the beginning of the 19th century, Fenimore Cooper—the novelist of the North American redskins. From the ideological point of view, this type of novel, exalting the deeds of the colonizers, follows entirely the same current as the detective novel in serving as one of the most pointed forms of expression of private-property ideology. To this testified Balzac, Hugo, Eugene Sue, who produced a good deal in this literary-composition model from which later was elaborated the regular detective novel.

Recounting in their letters and diaries the inspirational images which guided them in their story constructions of chase and flight (*Les Miserables*, *Vautrin*, *The Wandering Jew*), they all write that the prototype that attracted them was the dark forest background of Fenimore Cooper, and that they had wished to transplant this dark forest and the action within it from the labyrinth of the virgin backwoods of America to the dark forests of the alleys and byways of Paris. The collection of clues derives from the methods of the "Pathfinders" whom this same Fenimore Cooper portrayed in his works.

Thus the image "dark forest" and the technique of the "pathfinder" from Cooper's works serve the great romantics such as Balzac and Hugo as a sort of initial metaphor for their intrigue of detection and adventure constructions within the maze of Paris. They contribute also to formalizing as a genre those ideological tendencies which lay at the base of the detective novel. Thus is created a whole independent type of story construction. But, parallel with this use of the "heritage" of Cooper, we see yet another sort: the type of literal transplantation. Then we have indeed ripe incongruity and nightmare. Paul Feval has written a novel in which redskins do their stuff in Paris and a scene occurs where three Indians scalp a victim in a cab!

(*Film Forms: New Problems*, translated by Ivor Montagu, is reprinted here through the courtesy of Life and Letters Today, an English quarterly edited by Robert Herring and Petrie Townshend. The article will be continued in the May issue of NEW THEATRE.)



"SHOCK TROOPS"—OTTO DIX

Museum of Modern Art

# "BURY THE DEAD"

BY IRWIN SHAW

## A Play About the War That Is to Begin Tomorrow Night

### CHARACTERS

FIRST, SECOND, THIRD, AND FOURTH SOLDIERS  
SERGEANT

FIRST CORPSE (PRIVATE DRISCOLL)  
SECOND CORPSE (PRIVATE SCHELLING)  
THIRD CORPSE (PRIVATE MORGAN)  
FOURTH CORPSE (PRIVATE WEBSTER)  
FIFTH CORPSE (PRIVATE LEVY)  
SIXTH CORPSE (PRIVATE DEAN)

CAPTAIN

FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD GENERALS

DOCTOR

CHARLEY AND BEVINS, PRIVATES

REPORTER

EDITOR

BESS SCHELLING, JOAN BURKE, JULIA BLAKE,  
KATHERINE DRISCOLL, MRS. DEAN, MARTHA WEBSTER

A Priest, A Rabbi, Two Whores, A Soldier Stenographer, A  
Radio Voice, Passerby, Three Businessmen, and Others.

SCENE: *The stage is bare except for a platform about seven feet high which runs along the back, parallel to the footlights. Across the back of it is an irregular entanglement of barbed wire.*

*(The light comes up on the platform which represents a torn battlefield, now quiet, some miles behind the present front lines. A burial detail of four SOLDIERS stand in a shallow trench digging a common grave to accommodate six bodies. The bodies are piled near them wrapped in blankets. A SERGEANT stands on the edge of the grave, smoking. The SOLDIER nearest him stops digging.)*

FIRST SOLDIER: Say Sergeant, they stink. *(Waving his shovel toward the corpses.)* Let's bury them in a hurry.

SERGEANT: What the hell do you think you'd smell like after you'd been lyin' out for two days—a god-damn lily of the valley? They'll be buried soon enough. Keep digging.

SECOND SOLDIER: *(Scratching himself.)* Dig and scratch! Dig and scratch! What a war! When you're not diggin' trenches, you're diggin' graves. . .

THIRD SOLDIER: Who's got a cigarette? I'll take opium if nobody's got a cigarette.

SECOND SOLDIER: When you're not diggin' graves you're scratchin' at fleas. By god, there're more fleas in this army. . .

FIRST SOLDIER: That's what the war's made for—the fleas. Somebody's got to feed 'em.

FOURTH SOLDIER: I used to take a shower every day. Can you imagine?

SERGEANT: All right, Mr. Lifebuoy, we'll put your picture in the Saturday Evening Post—in color!





"SHOCK TROOPS"—OTTO DIX

*Museum of Modern Art*

SECOND SOLDIER: When you're not scratchin' at fleas, you're being killed. That's a helluva life for a grown man.

THIRD SOLDIER: Who's got a cigarette? I'll trade my rifle—if I can find it—for a cigarette. For Christ's sake, don't they make cigarettes no more? (*Leaning, melancholy, on his shovel.*) This country's goin' to the dogs for real now.

SERGEANT: Lift dirt, soldier. Come on! This ain't no vacation.

THIRD SOLDIER: (*Disregarding him.*) I heard of guys packin' weeds and cowflop into cigarettes in this man's army. They say it has a tang. (*Reflectively.*) Got to try it some day.

SERGEANT: Hurry up! (*Blowing on his hands.*) I'm freezin' here. I don't want to hang around all night. I can't feel my feet no more.

FOURTH SOLDIER: I ain't felt my feet for two weeks. I ain't had my shoes off in two weeks. (*Leaning on his shovel.*) I wonder if the toes're still connected. I wear a 8A shoe. Aristocratic foot, the salesman always said. Funny—going around not even knowin' whether you still got toes or not. It's not hygienic really.

SERGEANT: All right, friend, we'll make sure the next war you're in is run hygienic.

FOURTH SOLDIER: In the Spanish-American War more men died of fever than—

FIRST SOLDIER: (*Beating viciously at something in the grave.*) Get him! Get him! Kill the bastard!

FOURTH SOLDIER: (*Savagely.*) He's coming this way! We got him cornered!

FIRST SOLDIER: Bash his brains out!

SECOND SOLDIER: You got him with that one! (*All the SOLDIERS in the grave beat at it, yelling demoniacally, triumphantly.*)

SERGEANT: (*Remonstrating.*) Come on now, you're wasting time.

FIRST SOLDIER: (*Swinging savagely.*) There. That fixed him. The god-damn—

FOURTH SOLDIER: (*Sadly.*) You'd think the rats'd at least wait until the stiffs were underground.

FIRST SOLDIER: Did you ever see such a fat rat in your whole life? I bet he ate like a horse, this one.

SERGEANT: All right, all right. You're not fightin' the war against rats. Get back to your business.

FIRST SOLDIER: I get a lot more pleasure killin' rats than killin' them. (*Gesture toward the front-lines.*)

SERGEANT: Rats got to live, too. They don't know no better.

FIRST SOLDIER: (*Suddenly scooping up rat on his shovel and presenting it to SERGEANT.*) Here you are, Sergeant. A little token of our regard from Company A.

SERGEANT: Stop the smart stuff! I don't like it.

FIRST SOLDIER: (*Still with rat upheld on shovel.*) Ah, Sergeant, I'm disappointed. This rat's a fine pedigreed animal—fed only on the choicest young men the United States turned out in the last twenty years.

SERGEANT: Come on, wise guy. . .

FIRST SOLDIER: Notice the heavy, powerful shoulders to this rat, notice the well-covered flanks, notice the round belly—bank clerks, mechanics, society-leaders, farmers—good feeding—(*Suddenly he throws the rat away.*) Ah—I'm gettin' awful tired of this. I didn't enlist in this bloody war to be no bloody grave-digger.

SERGEANT: Tell that to the President. Keep diggin'.

SECOND SOLDIER: Say, this is deep enough. What're we supposed to do—dig right down to hell and deliver them over first-hand?

SERGEANT: A man's entitled to six feet o' dirt over his face. We gotta show respect to the dead. Keep diggin' . . .

FOURTH SOLDIER: I hope they don't put me too far under

when my turn comes. I want to be able to come up and get a smell of air every once in so often.

SERGEANT: Stow the gab, you guys! Keep diggin' . . .

FIRST SOLDIER: They stink! Bury them!

SERGEANT: All right, Fanny. From now on we'll perfume 'em before we ask you to put them away. Will that please you?

FIRST SOLDIER: I don't like the way they smell, that's all. I don't have to like the way they smell, do I? That ain't in the regulations, is it? A man's got a right to use his nose, ain't he, even though he's in this god-damn army. . .

SERGEANT: Talk respectful when you talk about the army, you!

FIRST SOLDIER: Oh, the lovely army. . . (*He heaves up clod of dirt.*)

SECOND SOLDIER: Oh, the dear army. . . (*He heaves up clod of dirt.*)

THIRD SOLDIER: Oh, the sweet army. . . (*He heaves up clod of dirt.*)

FIRST SOLDIER: Oh, the scummy, stinking, goddamn army. . . (*He heaves up three shovelfuls in rapid succession.*)

SERGEANT: That's a fine way to talk in the presence of death.

FIRST SOLDIER: What do you expect, Sergeant, we're just common soldiers.

SECOND SOLDIER: Come on. Let's put 'em away. I'm getting blisters big enough to use for balloons here. What's the difference? They'll just be turned up anyway, the next time the artillery wakes up.

SERGEANT: All right! All right! If you're in such a hurry—put 'em in. . .

(*Two SOLDIERS jump out of the grave and start carrying the bodies and passing them down into the trench where the other two SOLDIERS lay them down, out of sight of the audience.*)

SERGEANT: Put 'em in neat, there.

FIRST SOLDIER: File 'em away alphabetically, boys. We may want to refer to them, later. The general might want to look up some past cases.

FOURTH SOLDIER: This one's just a kid. I knew him a little. Nice kid. He used to write dirty poems. Funny as hell. He don't even look dead. . .

FIRST SOLDIER: Bury him! He stinks!

SERGEANT: If you think you smell so sweet, yourself, Baby, you oughta wake up. You ain't exactly a perfume-ad, Soldier.

THIRD SOLDIER: Chalk one up for the Sergeant.

FIRST SOLDIER: You ain't a combination of roses and wistaria, either, Sergeant, but I can stand you, especially when you don't talk. At least you're alive. There's something about the smell of dead ones that gives me the willies. . . Come on, let's pile the dirt in on them. (*The SOLDIERS scramble out of the grave.*)

SERGEANT: Hold it.

THIRD SOLDIER: What's the matter now?

SERGEANT: We have to wait for the chaplains. They gotta say some prayers over them.

FIRST SOLDIER: Oh, for Christ's sake, ain't I ever going to get any sleep tonight?

SERGEANT: Don't begrudge a man his prayers, soldier. You'd want 'em, wouldn't you?

FIRST SOLDIER: God, no. I want to sleep peaceful when I go. . . Well, where are they? Why don't they come? Do we have to stand here all night waiting for those guys to come and talk to God about these fellers?

THIRD SOLDIER: (*Plaintively*) Who's got a cigarette?

SERGEANT: 'Tenshun! Here they are!

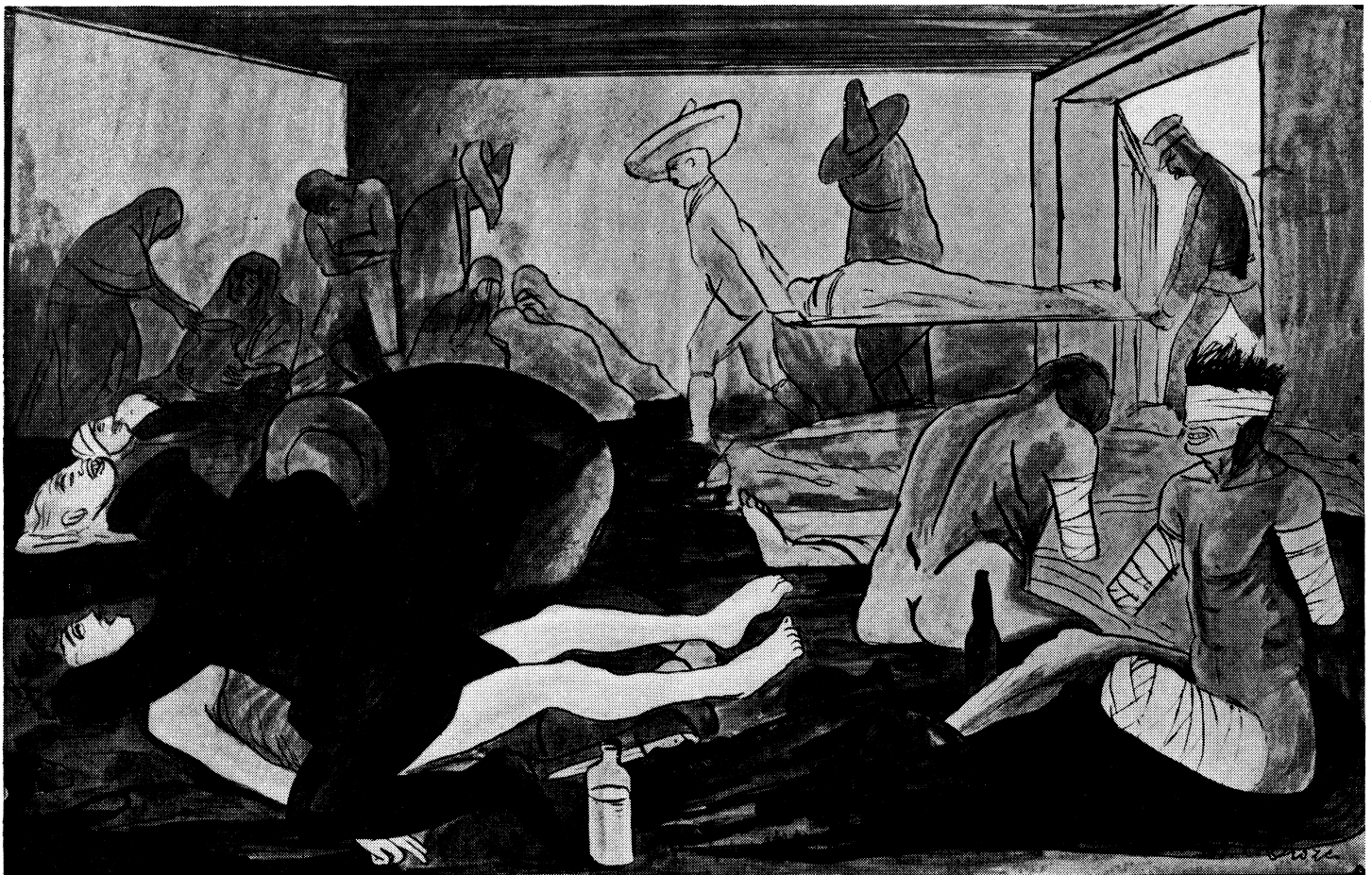
(*A Roman-Catholic PRIEST and a RABBI come in.*)

PRIEST: Is everything ready?

SERGEANT: Yes, Father.

FIRST SOLDIER: Make it snappy! I'm awful tired.  
 PRIEST: God must be served slowly, my son.  
 FIRST SOLDIER: He's gettin' plenty of service these days—and not so slow, either. He can stand a little rushin'.  
 SERGEANT: Shut up, soldier.  
 RABBI: Do you want to hold your services first, Father?  
 SERGEANT: There ain't no Jewish boys in there, Reverend. I don't think we'll need you.  
 RABBI: I understand one of them is named Levy.  
 SERGEANT: Yes. But he's no Jew.  
 RABBI: With that name we won't take any chances. Father, will you be first?  
 FIRST SOLDIER: I want to get it over with! Bury them! They stink!  
 PRIEST: Young man, that is not the way to talk about one of God's creatures.  
 FIRST SOLDIER: If *that's* one of God's creatures, all I can say is, He's slippin'.  
 PRIEST: My son, you seem so bitter. . .  
 FIRST SOLDIER: For Christ's sake, stop talking and get this over with. I want to throw dirt over them! I can't stand the smell of them! Sergeant, get 'em to do it fast. They ain't got no right to keep us up all night. We got work to do tomorrow. Let 'em say their prayers together! God'll be able to understand.  
 PRIEST: Yes. There is really no need to prolong it. We must think of the living as well as the dead. As he says, Reverend, God will be able to understand. . .  
 (He stands at the head of the grave, chants the Latin prayer for the dead. The RABBI goes around to the other end and recites the Hebrew prayer. In the middle of it, a groan is heard, low, but clear. The chants keep on. Another groan.)

FIRST SOLDIER: I heard a groan. (The RABBI and PRIEST continue.) I heard a groan.  
 SERGEANT: Shut up, soldier!  
 FIRST SOLDIER: (Gets down on one knee by side of grave and another groan.) Stop it! I heard a groan.  
 SERGEANT: What about it? Can you have war without groans? Keep quiet! (The prayers go on. Another groan. The FIRST SOLDIER jumps into the grave.)  
 FIRST SOLDIER: It's from here! Hold it! (Screaming.) Hold it! Stop those god-damned parrots! (Throws a clod of dirt at end of trench.) Hold it! Somebody down here groaned. (A head appears slowly above the trench rim. A man stands up slowly, facing the rear.)  
 FIRST SOLDIER: He's alive.  
 SERGEANT: Why the hell don't they get these things straight? Pull him out!  
 FIRST SOLDIER: Stop them! (As the services go on.) Get them out of here! Live men don't need them.  
 SERGEANT: Please, Father, this has nothing to do with you. There's been some mistake. . .  
 PRIEST: I see. All right, Sergeant. (He and RABBI join hand in hand and leave. All the SOLDIERS are hypnotically watching the man in the trench, arisen from the dead. The CORPSE passes his hand over his eyes. The men sigh, horrible, dry sighs, another groan is heard from the trench.)  
 FIRST SOLDIER: (In trench.) There! It came from there! I heard it! (A head, then shoulders appear as the SECOND CORPSE stands up. He passes his hands over his eyes in the same gesture which drew sighs from the men before. There is absolute silence as they watch the arisen CORPSES. Then, silently, a THIRD CORPSE rises, next to the FIRST SOLDIER. The FIRST SOLDIER screams, scrambles out of



"THE WOUNDED"—OROZCO

Collection Alma Reed



"THE WOUNDED"—OROZCO

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*the trench, and stands watching. There is no sound save the very light rumble of the guns. One by one the CORPSES arise and stand in their places, their backs to the audience. The SOLDIERS don't move, scarcely breathe. They stand there, a frozen tableau. Suddenly, the SERGEANT talks.)*

SERGEANT: What do you want?

FIRST CORPSE: Don't bury us.

THIRD SOLDIER: Let's get the hell out of here!

SERGEANT: Stay where you are! I'll shoot the first man that moves. *(Drawing pistol.)*

FIRST CORPSE: Don't bury us. We don't want to be buried.

SERGEANT: *Christ! (To men.)* Carry on! *(He rushes off, calling.)* Captain! Captain! Where in hell is the Captain. . .? *(His voice fades, terror-stricken. The SOLDIERS watch the CORPSES, then slowly, all together, start to back off.)*

SIXTH CORPSE: Don't go away.

SECOND CORPSE: Stay with us.

THIRD CORPSE: We want to hear the sound of men talking.

SIXTH CORPSE: Don't be afraid of us.

FIRST CORPSE: We're not really different from you. We're dead.

SECOND CORPSE: That's all. . .

FOURTH CORPSE: All—all. . .

FIRST SOLDIER: That's all. . .

THIRD CORPSE: Are you afraid of six dead men? You, who've lived with the dead, the so-many dead, and eaten your bread by their side when there was no time to bury them and you were hungry?

SECOND CORPSE: Are we different from you? An ounce or so of lead in our hearts, and none in yours. A small difference between us.

THIRD CORPSE: Tomorrow or the next day, the lead will be yours, too. Talk as our equals.

FOURTH SOLDIER: It's the kid—the one who wrote the dirty poems.

FIRST CORPSE: Say something to us. Forget the grave, as we would forget it. . .

SECOND SOLDIER: Do you—do you want a cigarette. . .?

SERGEANT: *(Re-enters with CAPTAIN.)* I'm not drunk! I'm not crazy, either! They just got up, all together—and looked at us. Look—look for yourself, Captain. *(The CAPTAIN stands off to one side, looking. The SOLDIERS stand at attention.)*

SERGEANT: See?

CAPTAIN: I see. *(He laughs sadly.)* I was expecting it to happen—some day. So many men each day. It's too bad it had to happen in my company. Gentlemen! At ease! *(The SOLDIERS stand at ease. He leaves. The guns roar suddenly. Fadeout.)*

*(The spotlight is turned on another section of the stage. Discovered in its glare are Three GENERALS, around a table. The CAPTAIN stands before them.)*

CAPTAIN: I'm only telling you what I saw, gentlemen.

FIRST GENERAL: You're not making this up, Captain?

CAPTAIN: No, General.

SECOND GENERAL: Have you any proof, Captain?

CAPTAIN: The four men in the burial detail and the sergeant.

THIRD GENERAL: In time of war, Captain, men see strange things.

CAPTAIN: Yes, General.

SECOND GENERAL: You've been drinking, Captain, haven't you?

CAPTAIN: Yes, General.

SECOND GENERAL: When a man has been drinking, he is not responsible for what he sees.

CAPTAIN: No, sir. I am not responsible for what I saw. I

am glad of that. I would not like to carry that burden, along with all the others.

FIRST GENERAL: Come, come, Captain, confess now. You were drinking and you walked out into the cold air over a field just lately won and what with the liquor and the air and the flush of victory. . .

SECOND GENERAL: Take another drink with us now and forget your ghosts.

CAPTAIN: They weren't ghosts. They were men—killed two days, standing in their graves and looking at me.

FIRST GENERAL: Captain, you're becoming trying. . .

CAPTAIN: I'm sorry, sir. It was a trying sight.

SECOND GENERAL: Forget it! A man is taken for dead and put in a grave. He wakes from his coma and stands up.

It happens every day—you've got to expect such things in a war. Take him out and send him to a hospital!

CAPTAIN: Hospitals aren't for dead men. What are the generals going to do about it?

THIRD GENERAL: Don't stand there croaking, "What are the Generals going to do about it?" Have 'em examined by a doctor. If they're alive send them to a hospital. If they're dead, bury them! It's very simple.

FIRST GENERAL: Take a doctor down with you. Have him make out an official report. And let's hear no more of it.

CAPTAIN: Yes, sir. Very good, sir. *(Wheels to go out):*

SECOND GENERAL: Oh, and Captain. . .

CAPTAIN: *(Stopping.)* Yes, sir.

SECOND GENERAL: Stay away from the bottle.

CAPTAIN: Yes, sir. Is that all, sir?

SECOND GENERAL: That's all.

CAPTAIN: Yes, sir.

*(The light leaves the GENERALS. It follows the CAPTAIN as he walks across stage. He stops, takes out a bottle, takes two long swigs. Fadeout.)*

*(The guns rumble louder. They have been almost mute in the preceding scene. We see the burial scene again. The DOCTOR is examining the CORPSES. He is armed with a stethoscope, and is followed by a soldier STENOGRAPHER and the FIRST and THIRD SOLDIERS, impressed as witnesses. The CAPTAIN observes.)*

DOCTOR: *(As he finishes examining the FIRST CORPSE.)* Number one. Evisceration of the lower intestine. Dead forty-eight hours.

STENOGRAPHER: Number one. Evisceration of the lower intestine. Dead forty-eight hours. *(To the SOLDIERS.)* Sign here. *(They sign.)*

DOCTOR: *(Examining SECOND CORPSE.)* Number two. Bullet penetrated the left ventricle. Dead forty-eight hours.

STENOGRAPHER: Number two. Bullet penetrated the left ventricle. Dead forty-eight hours. Sign here. *(The SOLDIERS sign.)*

DOCTOR: Number three. Bullets penetrated both lungs. Severe hemorrhages. Dead forty-eight hours.

STENOGRAPHER: Number three. Bullets penetrated both lungs. Severe hemorrhages. Dead forty-eight hours. Sign here. *(The SOLDIERS sign.)*

DOCTOR: Number four. Fracture of the skull and avulsion of the cerebellum. Dead forty-eight hours.

STENOGRAPHER: Number four. Fracture of the skull and avulsion of the cerebellum. Dead forty-eight hours. Sign here. *(The SOLDIERS sign.)*

DOCTOR: Number five. Destruction of the genito-urinary system by shell-splinters. Death from hemorrhages. Dead forty-eight hours. Umm. *(He looks curiously at the CORPSE'S face.)* Hmm. . . *(Moves on.)*

STENOGRAPHER: Number five. Destruction of the genito-urinary system by shell-splinters. Death from hemorrhages.

Dead forty-eight hours. Sign here. (*The SOLDIERS sign.*)  
DOCTOR: Number six. Destruction of right side of head from superorbital ridges through jaw-bone. Hum. You'd be a pretty sight for your mother, you would. . . Dead forty-eight hours.

STENOGRAPHER: Number six. Destruction of right side of head from super-orbital ridges through jaw-bone. You'd be a pretty sight for your mother, you would. Dead forty-eight hours. Sign here.

DOCTOR: What are you doing there?

STENOGRAPHER: That's what you said, sir.

DOCTOR: I know. Leave out, "You'd be a pretty sight for your mother." The generals wouldn't be interested in that.

STENOGRAPHER: Yes, sir. Sign here. (*The SOLDIERS sign.*)

DOCTOR: Six, is that all?

CAPTAIN: Yes, Doctor. They're all dead?

DOCTOR: All dead.

CAPTAIN: A drink, Doctor?

DOCTOR: Yes, thank you. (*He takes a long drink from the proffered bottle. Holds it, pockets stethoscope with the other hand. Stands looking at the CORPSES, lined up, facing rear. He nods, then takes another long drink. Silently hands bottle to the CAPTAIN, who looks from one CORPSE to another, then takes a long drink. The STENOGRAPHER follows them out of sight when they leave. The two SOLDIERS, left behind, edge nearer to the CORPSES.*)

FIRST CORPSE: (*To the THIRD SOLDIER.*) Do you want a cigarette?

THIRD SOLDIER: (*Accepting with an embarrassed half-grin.*) Thanks, Buddy. I-I-I'm awful sorry. I—thanks. (*He takes the cigarette and saves it carefully. Blackout.*)

(*Spotlight on the GENERALS, facing the CAPTAIN and the DOCTOR.*)

FIRST GENERAL: (*Holding the DOCTOR'S reports.*) Doctor!

DOCTOR: Yes, sir.

FIRST GENERAL: In your reports here you say that each of these six men is dead.

DOCTOR: Yes, sir.

FIRST GENERAL: Then I don't see what all the fuss is about, Captain. They're dead—bury them.

CAPTAIN: They refuse to be buried.

THIRD GENERAL: Do we have to go into that again? They're dead. Aren't they, Doctor?

DOCTOR: Yes, sir.

THIRD GENERAL: Then they aren't standing in their graves, refusing to be buried, are they?

DOCTOR: Yes, sir.

SECOND GENERAL: Doctor, would you know a dead man if you saw one?

DOCTOR: The symptoms are easily recognized.

FIRST GENERAL: You've been drinking, too.

DOCTOR: Yes, sir.

FIRST GENERAL: The whole damned army is drunk! I want a regulation announced tomorrow morning in all regiments. No more liquor is to be allowed within twenty miles of the front-line upon pain of death. Got it?

SECOND GENERAL: Yes, General. But then how'll we get the men to fight?

FIRST GENERAL: Damn the fighting! We can't have stories like this springing up. It's bad for the morale! Did you hear me, Doctor, it's bad for the morale and you ought to be ashamed of yourself!

DOCTOR: Yes, sir.

FIRST GENERAL: Thank you, sir!

THIRD GENERAL: This had gone far enough. If it goes any

further, the men will get wind of it. We have witnessed certificates from a registered surgeon that these men are dead. Waste no more time on it. Bury them! Did you hear me, Captain?

CAPTAIN: Yes, sir. I'm afraid, sir, that I must refuse to bury these men.

THIRD GENERAL: That's insubordination, sir.

CAPTAIN: I'm sorry, sir. It is not within the line of my military duties to bury men against their will. If the General will only think for a moment he will see that this is impossible.

FIRST GENERAL: The Captain's right. It might get back to Congress. God only knows what *they'd* make of it!

THIRD GENERAL: What are we going to do then?

FIRST GENERAL: Captain, what do you suggest?

CAPTAIN: Stop the war.

CHORUS OF GENERALS: Captain!

FIRST GENERAL: (*With great dignity.*) Captain, we beg of you to remember the gravity of the situation. It admits of no levity. Is that the best suggestion you can make, Captain?

CAPTAIN: Yes, but I have another—If the Generals would come down to the grave themselves and attempt to influence these—ah—corpses—to lie down, perhaps that would prove effective. We're seven miles behind the line now and we could screen the roads all day to protect your arrival.

FIRST GENERAL: Umm—uh—usually, of course, that would be—uh. . . We'll see. In the meantime it must be kept quiet! Remember that! Not a word! Nobody must know! God only knows what would happen if people began to suspect we couldn't even get our dead to lie down and be buried! This is the God-damnest war! They never said anything about this sort of thing at West Point. Remember, now a word, nobody must know, quiet as the grave, Mum! Ssssh!

SECOND AND THIRD GENERALS: Ssssh!

(*The light fades, but the hiss of the Generals hushing each other is still heard as it falls on another part of the stage, where two soldiers are on post in the front lines, behind a barricade of sand bags. The sound of guns is very strong. There are flashes of gun-fire.*)

BEVINS: (*A man past 40, fat, with a pot-belly, greying hair showing under his helmet.*) Did you hear about those guys that won't let themselves be buried, Charley?

CHARLEY: I heard. You never know what's gonna happen next in this lousy war.

BEVINS: What do you think about it, Charley?

CHARLEY: What're they gettin' out of it, that's what I'd like to know. They're just makin' things harder. I heard all about 'em. They stink! Bury 'em. That's what I say.

BEVINS: I don't know, Charley. I kind of can see what they're aimin' at. Christ, I wouldn't like to be put six foot under now, I wouldn't. What the hell for?

CHARLEY: What's the difference?

BEVINS: There's a difference, all right. It's kinda good, bein' alive. It's kinda nice, bein' on top of the earth and seein' things and hearin' things and smellin' things.

CHARLEY: Yeah—smellin' stiffs that ain't had time to be buried. That sure is sweet.

BEVINS: Yeah, but it's better than havin' the dirt packed onto your face. I guess those guys felt sorta gypped when they started throwin' the dirt in on 'em and they just couldn't stand it, dead or no dead.

CHARLEY: They're dead, ain't they? Nobody's puttin' them under while they're alive.

BEVINS: It amounts to the same thing, Charley. They should be alive now. What are they? A parcel of kids. Kids shouldn't be dead, Charley. That's what they musta figured when the dirt started fallin' in on 'em. What the hell are they doin' dead? Did they get anything out of it? Did anybody ask



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them? Did they want to be standin' there when the lead poured in? They're just kids, or guys with wives and young kids of their own. They wanted to be home readin' a book or teachin' their kid C-A-T spells cat or takin' a woman out into the country in an open car with the wind blowin' . . . That's the way it musta come to them, when the dirt smacked on their faces, dead or no dead. . .

CHARLEY: Bury them. That's what I say. *(There is the chatter of a machine gun off in the night. BEVINS is hit. He staggers.)*

BEVINS: *(Clutching his throat.)* Charley—Charley. *(His fingers bring down the top sandbag as he falls. The machine gun chatters again and CHARLEY is hit. He staggers.)*

CHARLEY: Oh, my god. . . *(The machine gun again. He falls over BEVINS. There is quiet for a moment. Then the eternal artillery again. A spotlight picks out the FIRST GENERAL, standing over the prone forms of the two soldiers.)*

FIRST GENERAL: *(In a hoarse whisper.)* Sssh! Keep it quiet. Nobody must know! Not a word! Sssh! *(Blackout.)* *(A spotlight picks out another part of the stage—a newspaper office. EDITOR at his desk, REPORTER before him, hat on head. The REPORTER has only one arm.)*

REPORTER: That's the story! It's as straight as a rifle-barrel, so help me God.

EDITOR: *(Looking down at manuscript.)* This is a freak, all right. I never came across anything like it in all the years I've been putting out a newspaper.

REPORTER: There never was anything like it before. It's somethin' new. Somethin's happening. Somebody's waking up.

EDITOR: It didn't happen.

REPORTER: So help me God, I got it straight. Those guys just stood up in the grave and said, "The hell with it, you can't bury us!" God's honest truth.

EDITOR: It's an awful funny story. *(Into telephone.)* Get me Macready at the War Department.

REPORTER: What about it? It's the story of the year—the story of the century—the biggest story of all time—men gettin' up with bullets in their hearts and refusin' to be buried. . .

EDITOR: Who do they think they are—Jesus Christ?

REPORTER: What's the difference? That's the story! You can't miss it! You goin' to put it in? Lissen—are you goin' to put it in?

EDITOR: Hold it. *(Takes telephone.)* Macready!

REPORTER: What's he got to do with it?

EDITOR: I'll find out. What're you so hot about, anyway? Hello! Macready? Hansen from the New York. . . Yeah. . . yeah. . . Lissen, Macready, I got this story about the six guys who refuse to be. . . yeah. . .

REPORTER: What does he say?

EDITOR: O.K., Macready. Yeah. If that's the way the government feels about it. . . *(Hangs up.)*

REPORTER: Well?

EDITOR: No.

REPORTER: For Christ's sake, you've got to. People have a right to know.

EDITOR: In time of war people have a right to know nothing. If we put it in it'd be censored, anyway. . .

REPORTER: Ah, this is a lousy business.

EDITOR: Write another human-interest story about the boys at the front. That'll keep you busy. You know—that one about how the boys in the front line sing, "I can't give you



ROUSSEAU



anything but love" before they go over the top.

REPORTER: But I wrote that last week.

EDITOR: It made a great hit. Write it again.

REPORTER: But—those guys in the grave, Boss. Lloyd's 're givin' three to one they won't go down. That's a story. . .

EDITOR: Save it. You can write a book of memoirs twenty years from now. Make that "I can't give you anything but love" story a thousand words. And make it snappy. The casualty lists run into two pages today and we got to balance them with something. . . (Blackout.)

(A rumble of guns. The burial trench again. At one side the three GENERALS with the CAPTAIN.)

CAPTAIN: There they are, Gentlemen.

SECOND GENERAL: Who do they think they are. . .?

THIRD GENERAL: It's against all regulations. I'd show 'em.

FIRST GENERAL: Quiet, please, quiet. Let's not have any scenes. . . This must be handled with authority—but tactfully. I'll talk to them! (He goes over to brink of grave.) Men! Listen to me! This is a strange situation in which we find ourselves. I have no doubt but that it is giving you as much embarrassment as it is us. . .

SECOND GENERAL: (Confidentially to THIRD GENERAL.) The wrong note. He's good on artillery, but when it comes to using his head, he's lost. . . He's been that way ever since I knew him.

FIRST GENERAL: We're all anxious to get this thing over with just as quickly and quietly as possible. I know that you men are with me on this. There's no reason why we can't get together and settle this in jig time. After all, there's no reason why you men would really want to stay above ground, is there? No. I grant, my friends, that it's unfortunate that you're dead. . . But being dead, why should you wish to make believe you're alive? In the final analysis, gentlemen, that is what you're doing. I'm sure that you'll all listen to reason. Listen, too, to the voice of duty, the voice that sent you here to die bravely for your country. Gentlemen, your country demands of you that you lie down and allow yourselves to be buried! Our flag must fly at half-mast and droop in the wind while you so far forget your duty to the lovely land that bore and nurtured you. Every voice that cries from America begs you to lie down. The voices of the pure women of America, standing bravely beside their men in this war, mothers, sisters, wives, the voices of the little children of America who must be protected from the grim horror of this war, the voices that come from Maine, from Iowa, from Kentucky, from California, from the mountains and the plains of your native land, calling to you to lie down to be buried and honored as brave soldiers of the republic who have fought the good fight and have perished nobly in it. (He wipes away a tear, overcome.) I. . . I find it difficult to go on. I love America, Gentlemen, its hills and valleys. If you loved America as I did, you would not. . . ah. . . (He sniffles briskly, dabbing at himself with a large handkerchief.) I have studied this matter and come to the conclusion that the best thing for all concerned would be for you men to lie down peacably in your graves and allow yourselves to be buried. (He waits. The CORPSES don't move.)

THIRD GENERAL: It didn't work. He's not firm enough. You've got to be firm right from the beginning or you're lost.

FIRST GENERAL: (To CorpSES.) Men, perhaps you don't understand. I advise you to allow yourselves to be buried. (They stand motionless.) You're dead, men, don't you realize that? You can't be dead and stand there like that. Here—here—I'll prove it to you! (He gets out the doctor's reports.) Look! A doctor's reports. Witnessed! Witnessed by Privates McGurk and Butler. This ought to show you! (He waves the reports, glaring at the CORPSES, shouting.) You're dead,

officially, all of you! I won't mince words! You heard! We're a civilized race, we bury our dead. Lie down! (He reads from another paper.) Private Webster! Private Schelling! Private Morgan! Private Driscoll! Private Levy! Private Dean! As Commander-in-Chief of the Army as appointed by the President of the United States in accordance with the Constitution of the United States, and as your superior officer, I command you to lie down and allow yourselves to be buried. Lie down! (They stand, silent and motionless.) Tell me—What is it going to get you? Answer me! I asked you a question, men. Answer me! If I were dead I wouldn't hesitate to be buried. Answer me. . . what do you want? (As they remain silent.) Tell me! Answer me! Why don't you talk? Explain it to me, make me understand. . .

SECOND GENERAL: (Whispering to the THIRD GENERAL.) He's licked. It was a mistake moving him off the artillery.

THIRD GENERAL: They ought to let me handle them.

FIRST GENERAL: (Bursting out.) Lie down! (The CORPSES stand immobile. He rushes out, moaning.) Oh, God, oh, my God. . . (Blackout.)

(Spotlight, red, picks out two WHORES on a street corner.)

FIRST WHORE: I'd lay 'em all right. They oughta call me in. I'd lay 'em. There wouldn't be any doubt in anybody's mind after I got through with 'em. Why don't they call me in instead of those Generals? What do Generals know about such things? (Both whores go off into fits of wild laughter.) Call the War Department, Mabel, tell 'em we'll come to their rescue at the prevailing rates. (Laugh wildly again.) We're willing to do our part, like the papers say—share the burden! Oh, my Gawd, I ain't laughed so much. . . (Laugh again. A MAN crosses their path. Still laughing, but professional.) Say, Johnny, Johnny, what'che doin' tonight? How'd ya like. . .? (The man passes on. The women laugh.) Share the burden—Oh, my Gawd! (They laugh and laugh and laugh, clinging to each other. Blackout, but the laughter goes on.)

(The THIRD SOLDIER'S voice is heard singing *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* as the light comes upon the Burial Scene. The four soldiers of the burial detail and the SERGEANT are seated some distance from the grave.)

THIRD SOLDIER: This is a funny war. It's rollin' downhill. Everybody's waitin'. Personally, I think it's those guys there that—(He gestures to grave.)

SERGEANT: Nobody asked you. You're not supposed to talk about it.

FIRST SOLDIER: Regulation 2035a.

SERGEANT: Well, I just told ya. (The SERGEANT breaks in on the SECOND SOLDIER'S song.) Say, lissen, think about those guys there. How do you think they feel with you howlin' like this? They got more important things to think about.

SECOND SOLDIER: I won't distract 'em. I got an easy-flowin' voice.

SERGEANT: They don't like it. I can tell.

FIRST SOLDIER: Well, I like to hear him sing. And I'll bet they do, too. I'm gonna ask 'em. (He jumps up.)

SERGEANT: Now, lissen! (The FIRST SOLDIER slowly approaches the grave. He is embarrassed, a little frightened.)

FIRST SOLDIER: Say, men, I—(The CAPTAIN comes on. The FIRST SOLDIER stands at attention.)

CAPTAIN: Sergeant. . .

SERGEANT: Yes, sir!

CAPTAIN: You know that none of the men is to talk to them. . .

SERGEANT: Yes, sir. Only, sir. . .

CAPTAIN: All right. (To FIRST SOLDIER.) Get back.



GOYA

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**FIRST SOLDIER:** Yes, sir! *(He salutes and goes back.)*

**SERGEANT** *(Under his breath to the FIRST SOLDIER):* I warned ya.

**FIRST SOLDIER:** Shut up! I wanna lissen to what's goin' on there! *(The CAPTAIN has meanwhile seated himself on the edge of the grave and has brought out a pair of eye-glasses, which he plays with as he talks.)*

**CAPTAIN:** Gentlemen, I have been asked by the Generals to talk to you. My work is not this. *(He indicates his uniform.)* I am a scientist, I might even say a philosopher, my uniform is a pair of eye-glasses, my usual weapons test-tubes and books. At a time like this perhaps we need philosophy, need science. First I must say that your General has ordered you to lie down.

**FIRST CORPSE:** We used to have a General.

**THIRD CORPSE:** No more.

**FOURTH CORPSE:** They sold us.

**CAPTAIN:** What do you mean. . .sold you?

**FIFTH CORPSE:** Sold us for twenty-five yards of bloody mud.

**SIXTH CORPSE:** A life for your yards of bloody mud.

**CAPTAIN:** We had to take that hill. General's orders. You're soldiers. You understand.

**FIRST CORPSE:** We understand now. The real estate operations of generals are always carried on at boom prices.

**SIXTH CORPSE:** A life for four yards of bloody mud. Gold is cheaper.

**THIRD CORPSE:** I fell in the first yard.

**SECOND CORPSE:** I caught on the wire and hung there while the machine gun stitched me through the middle to it.

**FOURTH CORPSE:** I was there at the end and thought that I had life in my hands for another day, but a shell came and my life dripped into the mud.

**SIXTH CORPSE:** Ask the General how he'd like to be dead at

twenty. *(Calling, as though to the Generals.)* Twenty, General, twenty!

**CAPTAIN:** Other men are dead.

**FIRST CORPSE:** Too many.

**CAPTAIN:** Men must die for their country's sake, if not you, then others. This has always been. Men died for Pharaoh and Caesar and Rome two thousand years ago and more, and went into the earth with their wounds. Why not you?

**FIRST CORPSE:** Men, even the men who die for Pharaoh and Caesar and Rome, must, in the end, before all hope is gone, discover that a man can die happy and be contentedly buried only when he dies for himself or for a cause that is his own and not Pharaoh's or Caesar's or Rome's. . .

**CAPTAIN:** Still—what is this world, that you cling to it? A speck of dust, a flaw in the skies, a thumb-print on the margin of a page printed in an incomprehensible language.

**SECOND CORPSE:** It is our home.

**FIRST CORPSE:** We have been dispossessed by force, but we are reclaiming our home.

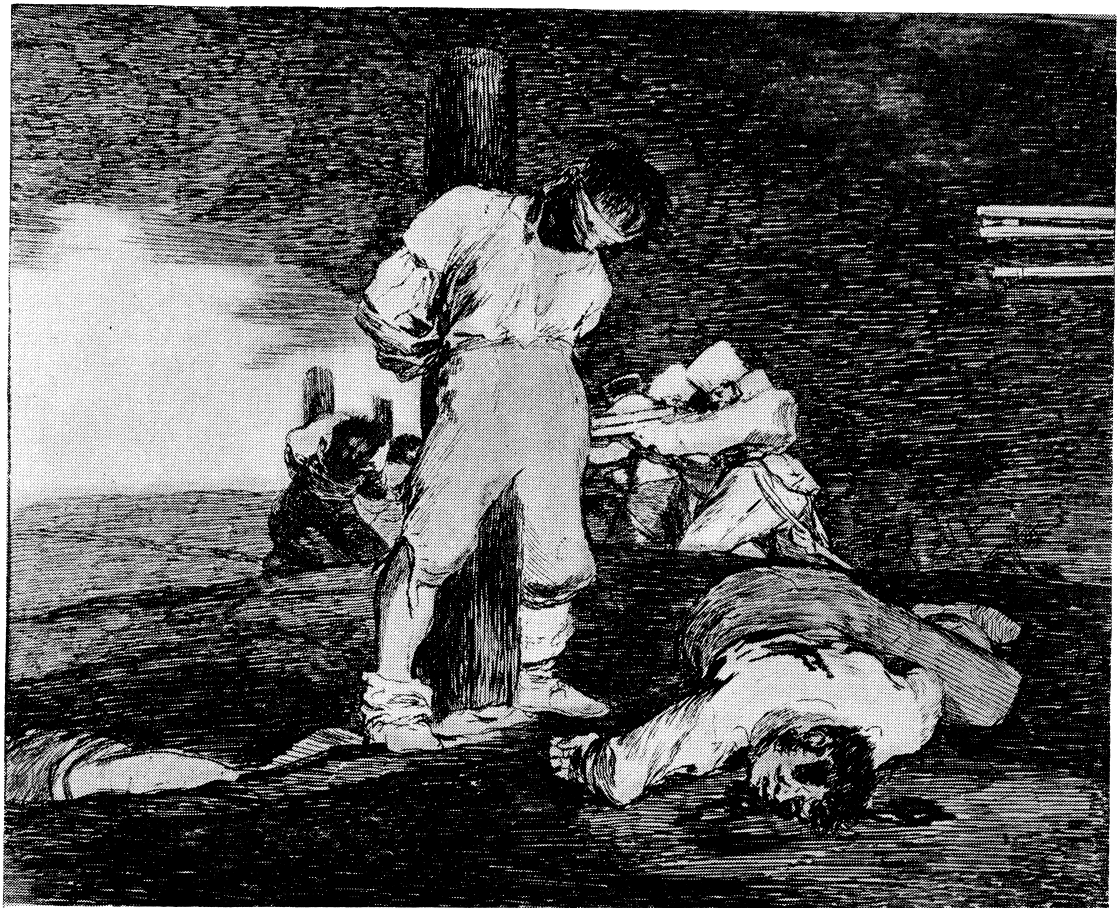
**CAPTAIN:** We have no home. We are strangers in the universe and cling, desperate and grimy, to the crust of our world, and if there is a God and this is his earth, we must be a terrible sight in his eyes.

**FOURTH CORPSE:** We are not disturbed by the notion of our appearance in the eyes of God.

**CAPTAIN:** The earth is an unpleasant place and when you are rid of it you are well rid of it. Man cheats man on this earth and the only sure things are death and despair. Of what use then, to remain on it once you have permission to leave?

**FIFTH CORPSE:** It is the one thing we know.

**SIXTH CORPSE:** We did not ask permission to leave. Nobody



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asked us whether we wanted it or not. The Generals pushed us out and closed the door on us. Who are the Generals that they are to close doors on us?

CAPTAIN: The earth, I assure you, is a mean place, insignificantly miserable.

CHORUS OF CORPSES: We must find out for ourselves. That is our right.

CAPTAIN: Man has no rights.

FIRST CORPSE: Man can make rights for himself. It requires only determination and the good-will of ordinary men. We have made ourselves the right to walk this earth, seeing it and judging it for ourselves.

CAPTAIN: There is peace in the grave.

THIRD CORPSE: Peace and the worms and the roots of grass. There is a deeper peace than that which comes with feeding the roots of the grass.

CAPTAIN: (*Looks slowly at them, in turn.*) Yes, gentlemen. . . (*turns away and walks off.*)

(*The FIRST SOLDIER moves slowly up to the grave.*)

FIRST SOLDIER: (To the CORPSES) I . . . I'm glad you . . . you didn't . . . I'm glad. Say, is there anything we can do for you?

SERGEANT: Lissen, soldier!

FIRST SOLDIER (*Passionately . . . harshly*): Shut up, Sergeant! (*Then very softly and warmly to the FIRST CORPSE.*)

Is there anything we can do for you, friend?

FIRST CORPSE: Yeah. You can sing. . .

(*There is a pause in which the FIRST SOLDIER turns around and looks at the SECOND SOLDIER, then back to the FIRST CORPSE. Then the silence is broken by the SECOND SOLDIER'S voice, raised in song. It goes on for a few moments, then fades as the light dims.*)

(*Different colored spotlights pick out three businessmen on different parts of the stage.*)

FIRST BUSINESS MAN: Ssh! Keep it quiet!

THIRD BUSINESS MAN: Sink 'em with lead. . .

SECOND BUSINESS MAN: Bury them! Bury them six feet under!

FIRST BUSINESS MAN: What are we going to do?

SECOND BUSINESS MAN: We must keep up the morale.

THIRD BUSINESS MAN: Lead! Lead! A lot of lead!

SECOND BUSINESS MAN: What's the matter with the Generals? What are we paying them for?

CHORUS: Sssshhh! (*Blackout.*)

(*Spotlight on the congregation of a church, kneeling, with a priest praying over them.*)

PRIEST: Oh Jesus, our God and Christ, Who has redeemed us with Thy blood on the cross at Calvary, give us Thy blessing on this holy day, and cause it that our soldiers allow themselves to be buried in peace, and bring victory to our arms, enlisted in Thy Cause and the cause of all righteousness on the field of battle. Amen. (*Blackout.*)

(*Spotlight on newspaper office.*)

REPORTER: Well? What are you going to do?

EDITOR: Do I have to do anything?

REPORTER: God damn right you do. They're still standing up. They're going to stand up from now till Doomsday. They're not going to be able to bury soldiers any more. It's in the stars. You got to say something about it.

EDITOR: All right. Put this in. "It is alleged that certain members of an infantry regiment refuse to allow themselves to be buried."

REPORTER: Well?

EDITOR: That's all.

REPORTER: (*Incredulous.*) That's all?

EDITOR: Yes, Christ, isn't that enough? (*Blackout.*)

(*A baby spotlight on the loudspeaker.*)

VOICE: It has been reported that certain American soldiers, killed on the field of battle, have refused to allow themselves to be buried. Whether this is true or not, the Coast-to-Coast Broadcasting System feels that this must give the American public an idea of the indomitable spirit of the American doughboy in this war. We cannot rest until this war is won—not even our brave dead boys. . .

(*The headquarters again.*)

FIRST GENERAL: Have you got any suggestions?

CAPTAIN: I think so. Get their women.

FIRST GENERAL: What good'll their women do?

CAPTAIN: Women are always conservative. It's a conservative notion—this one of lying down and allowing yourself to be buried when you're dead. The women'll fight your battle for you—in the best possible way—through their emotions. It's your best bet. (*Mocking.*) Always at your service.

FIRST GENERAL: Women—Of course! You've got it there, Captain! Get out their women! We'll have these boys underground in a jiffy. Women! By God, I never thought of it. . . Send out the call. Women! (*Fadeout.*)

VOICE: (*Mellow, persuasive.*) We have been asked by the War Department to broadcast an appeal to the women of Privates Webster, Schelling, Morgan, Driscoll, Levy, and Dean, reported dead. The War Department requests that the women of these men present themselves at the War Department Office immediately. It is within their power to do a great service to their country. (*Blackout.*)

(*The Spotlight illuminates the FIRST GENERAL, where he is in the pictures. It—it looks like a dump-heap. . .*)

FIRST GENERAL: Go to your men. Talk to them. Make them see the error of their ways, ladies. You women represent what is dearest in our civilization—the sacred foundations of the home. We are fighting this war to protect the foundations of the homes of America! Those foundations will crumble utterly if these men of yours come back from the dead. I shudder to think of the consequences of such an act. Our entire system will be mortally struck. Our banks will close, our buildings collapse—our army will desert the field and leave our fair land open to be overrun by the enemy. Ladies, you are all gold star mothers and wives and sweethearts. You want to win this war. I know it. I know the high fire of patriotism that burns in women's breasts. That is why I have called upon you. Ladies, let me make this clear to you. If you do not get your men to lie down and allow themselves to be buried, I fear that our cause is lost. The burden of the war is upon your shoulders now. Wars are not fought with guns and powder alone, ladies. Go ladies, do your duty. Your country waits upon you. Here is your chance to do your part, a glorious part. . . You are fighting for your homes, your children, your sisters' lives, your country's honor. You are fighting for religion, for love, for all decent human life. Wars can be fought and won only when the dead are buried and forgotten. How can we forget the dead who refuse to be buried? And we *must* forget them! There is no room in this world for dead men. They will lead only to the bitterest unhappiness. . . for you, for them, for everybody. (*Blackout.*)

(*Spotlight illuminates the trench where Private SCHELLING, the SECOND CORPSE, is talking to his wife. BESS SCHELLING is a spare taciturn woman, a farmer's wife, who might be twenty or forty or anything in between.*)

BESS SCHELLING: Did it hurt much, John?

SCHELLING: How's the kid, Bess?

BESS: He's fine. He talks now. He weighs twenty-eight pounds. He'll be a big boy. Did it hurt much, John?

SCHELLING: Is the farm going all right, Bess?



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BESS: It's going. The rye was heavy this year. Did it hurt much, John?

SCHELLING: Who did the reapin' for you, Bess?

BESS: Schmidt took care of it—and his boys. Schmidt's too old for the war and his boys are too young. Took 'em nearly two weeks. The wheat's not bad this year. Schmidt's oldest boy expects to be called in a month or two. He practices behind the barn with that old shotgun Schmidt uses for duck.

SCHELLING: The Schmidts were always fools. When the kid grows up, Bess, you make sure you pump some sense into his head. What color's his hair?

BESS: Blond. Like you. . . What are you going to do, John?

SCHELLING: I would like to see the kid—and the farm—and. . .

BESS: They say you're dead, John. . .

SCHELLING: I'm dead, all right.

BESS: Then how is it. . .?

SCHELLING: I don't know. Maybe there's too many of us under the ground now. Maybe the earth can't stand it no more. You got to change crops sometime. What are you doing here, Bess?

BESS: They asked me to get you to let yourself be buried.

SCHELLING: What do you think?

BESS: You're dead, John. . .

SCHELLING: Well. . .?

BESS: What's the good. . .?

SCHELLING: I don't know. Only there's something in me, dead or no dead, that won't let me be buried.

BESS: You were a queer man, John. I never did understand what you were about. But what's the good. . .?

SCHELLING: Bess, I never talked so that I could get you to understand just what I wanted while I—while I—before. . . Maybe now. . . There're a couple of things, Bess, that I ain't had enough of. Easy things, the things you see when you look outa your window at night, after supper, or when you wake up

in the mornin'. Things you hear when you're busy with the horses or pitchin' the hay and you don't really notice them and yet they come back to you. Things like lookin' at rows of corn scrapin' in the breeze, tall and green, with the silk flyin' off the ears in the wind. Things like seeing the sweat come out all over on your horse's fat flank and seein' it shine like silk in front of you, smelling horsey and strong. Things like seein' the loam turn back all fat and deep brown on both sides as the plough turns it over so that it gets to be awful hard walkin' behind it. Things like takin' a cold drink of water outa the well after you've boiled in the sun all afternoon, and feelin' the water go down and down into you coolin' you off all through from the inside out. Things like seein' a blonde kid, all busy and serious, playin' with a dog on the shady side of a house. There ain't nothin' like that here, Bess.

BESS: Everything has its place, John. Dead men have theirs.

SCHELLING: My place is on the earth, Bess. My business is with the top of the earth, not the under-side. It was a trap that yanked me down. I'm not smart, Bess, and I'm easy trapped—but I can tell now. I got some stories to tell farmers before I'm through—I'm going to tell 'em. . .

BESS: We could bury you home, John, near the creek—it's cool there and quiet and there's always a breeze in the trees.

SCHELLING: Later, Bess, when I've had my fill of lookin' and smellin' and talkin'. A man should be able to walk into his grave, not be dragged into it.

BESS: How'll I feel—and the kid—with you walkin' around—like—like—that?

SCHELLING: I won't bother you. . . I won't come near you.

BESS: Even so. Just knowin'—

SCHELLING: I can't help it. This is somethin' bigger'n you. . . bigger'n me. It's somethin' I ain't had nothin' to do with startin'. It's somethin' that just grew up outa the earth—like—like a weed—a flower. Cut it down now and it'll jump up in a dozen new places. You can't stop it. The earth's ready for it.

BESS: You were a good husband, John. For the kid. . . and me. . . won't you?

SCHELLING: (*Quietly*) Go home, Bess. Go home! (*Black-out.*)

(*The spotlight picks out the Fifth CORPSE, PRIVATE LEVY, where he stands in the grave, with his back to the audience. His woman, a pert, attractive young lady, is facing him.*)

JOAN: You loved me best, didn't you, Henry—of all of them—all those women—you loved me the best, didn't you?

LEVY: What's the difference, now, Joan?

JOAN: I want to know it.

LEVY: It's not important.

JOAN: It's important to me. Henry, you're not a live man, are you, Henry?

LEVY: No, I'm all shot away inside.

JOAN: (*Looking around fearfully.*) I don't like this place.

LEVY: I'm sorry they dragged you all through this to get you here, Joan.

JOAN: Must wars always be fought in the mud like this? I never expected it to look like this. It doesn't look like this in the pictures. It—it looks like a dump-heap. . .

LEVY: You've gotten your shoes muddy. They're pretty shoes, Joan.

JOAN: (*Forgetting, at the familiar tone of compliment, the place and the man from which it came.*) Do you think so, Henry? They're lizard. I like them too. It's so hard to get a good pair of shoes nowadays. You're so nice about such things, Henry.

LEVY: Do you still dance, Joan?

JOAN: Oh, I'm really much better than I used to be. There're so many dances back home nowadays. Dances for orphan



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relief and convalescent hospitals and Victory Loans. I'm busy seven night a week. I sold more Victory Loans than any other girl in the League. I got a helmet—one of their helmets. . . (*With a kind of shudder for the enemy.*) One with a bullet hole in it, for selling eleven thousand dollars worth.

LEVY: Out here we get them for nothing—by the million—bullet holes and all.

JOAN: That sounds bitter. You shouldn't sound bitter.

LEVY: I'm sorry.

JOAN: I heard Colonel Elwell the other day. You know Colonel Elwell, old Anthony Elwell who owns the mill. He made a speech at the Red Cross banquet and he said that was the nice thing about this war, it wasn't being fought bitterly by our boys. He said it was just patriotism that kept us going. He's a wonderful speaker, Colonel Elwell, I cried and cried.

LEVY: I remember him.

JOAN: Henry, do you think we're going to win the war?

LEVY: What's the difference?

JOAN: (*Shocked.*) Henry! What a way to talk! I don't know what's come over you, really I don't. You used to be such a charming man.

LEVY: (*Laughing a little.*) Poor little Joan. I won't talk any more.

JOAN: Why the papers say that if *they* win the war they'll burn our churches and tear down our museums and . . . and rape our women! (*LEVY laughs.*) Why are you laughing, Henry?

LEVY: I'm dead, Joan.

JOAN: Then why don't you let them bury you?

LEVY: There are a lot of reasons. There were a lot of things I loved on this earth.

JOAN: A dead man can't touch a woman.

LEVY: The women, yes—but more than the women, more than touching them. I got a great joy just from listening to women, hearing them laugh, watching their skirts blow in the wind, noticing the way their breasts bounced up and down inside their dresses when they walked. It had nothing to do with touching them. I liked to hear the sound of their high heels on pavements at night and the tenderness in their voices when they walked past me arm in arm with a young man. You were so lovely, Joan, with your pale hair and long hands.

JOAN: (*Touching it.*) You always liked my hair. No woman will walk arm in arm with you, Henry Dexter, while you cheat the grave. Not Doris, or that shifty-eyed Janet, or . . .

LEVY: No. But there will be the eyes of women to look at and the bright color of their hair and the soft way they swing their hips when they walk before young men. These are the things the earth still owes me, now when I am only thirty. A full seventy years, to be ended by an unhurried fate, not by a colored pin on a General's map.

JOAN: They're not only pins. They mean something.

LEVY: More? To whom? To the generals—not to me. To me they are colored pins. It is not a fair bargain—this exchange of my life for a small part of a colored pin.

JOAN: Henry, how can you talk like that? You know why this war's being fought—

LEVY: No, do you?

JOAN: Of course. Everybody knows. We *must* win. We must be prepared to sacrifice our last drop of blood.

LEVY: Do you remember last summer, Joan? My last leave. We went to Maine. I would like to remember that—the sun and the beach and your soft hands—for a long time.

JOAN: What are you going to do?

LEVY: Walk the world looking at the fine, long-legged, girls, listening to the sound of their light voices with ears that the generals would have stopped with the grave's solid mud.

JOAN: Henry! Henry! Once you said you loved me. For

love of me, Henry, go into the grave. For love of me!

LEVY: (*Lightly.*) Poor Joan! (*He lifts his hand toward her protectively. She recoils.*)

JOAN: Don't touch me!

LEVY: Go home, Joan. Go home. (*Blackout.*)

(*The spotlight picks out the THIRD CORPSE, PRIVATE MORGAN and JULIA BLAKE. She sobs.*)

MORGAN: Stop crying, Julia. What's the sense in crying?

JULIA: No sense. Only I can't stop crying.

MORGAN: You shouldn't have come.

JULIA: They asked me to come. They said you wouldn't let them bury you—dead and all.

MORGAN: Yes.

JULIA: (*Crying*) Why don't they kill me too? I'd let them bury me. I'd be glad to be buried—to get away from all this. I—I haven't stopped crying for two weeks now. I used to think I was tough. I never cried. Even when I was a kid. It's a wonder where all the tears can come from. Though I guess there's always room for more tears. I thought I was all cried out when I heard about the way they killed Fred. My kid brother. I used to comb his hair in the morning when he went to school. Then they killed you. They did, didn't they?

MORGAN: Yes.

JULIA: It's hard to know like this. I—I know, though. It—it makes it harder, this way, with you like this. I could forget easier if you—but I wasn't going to say that. I was going to listen to you. Oh, my darling, it's been so rotten. I get drunk. I hate it and I get drunk. I sing out loud and everybody laughs. I was going through your things the other day—I'm crazy. I go through all your things three times a week, touching your clothes and reading your books. You have the nicest clothes. There was that quatrain you wrote to me that time you were in Boston and. . . First I laughed, then I cried—it's a lovely poem—you would have been a fine writer, I think



A. de la Presse - 1865

Les statues de l'avenir.

J. de la Presse - 1865

DAUMIER

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Les statues de l'avenir.

DAUMIER

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you would have been the greatest writer that ever . . . I . . . Did they shoot your hands away, darling?

MORGAN: No.

JULIA: That's good. I couldn't bear it if anything happened to your hands. Was it bad, darling?

MORGAN: Bad enough.

JULIA: But they *didn't* shoot your hands away. That's *something*. You learn how to be grateful for the craziest things nowadays. People have to be grateful for something and it's so hard, with the war and all. Oh, darling, I never could think of you dead. Somehow you didn't seem to be *made* to be dead. I would feel better if you were buried in a fine green field and there were those funny little purple flowers jumping up around the stone that said, "Walter Morgan, Born 1913, Died 1936." I could stop getting drunk at night and singing out loud so that people laugh at me. The worst thing is looking at all the books you piled up home that you didn't read. They wait there, waiting for your hands to come and open them. Oh, let them bury you, let them bury you—There's nothing left, only crazy people and clothes that'll never be used hanging in the closets. Why not?

MORGAN: There are too many books I haven't read, too many places I haven't seen, too many memories I haven't kept long enough. . . I won't be cheated of them. . .

JULIA: And me, darling, me? I hate getting drunk. Your name would look so well on a nice simple chunk of marble in a green field. "Walter Morgan, Beloved of Julia Blake. . ." With poppies and daisies and those little purple flowers all around the bottom, and—(*She is bent over, almost wailing. There is the flash of a gun in her hand, and she totters, falls.*) Now they can put *my* name on the casualty lists, too—What do they call those purple flowers, darling? (*Blackout.*)

(*The spotlight follows KATHERINE DRISCOLL, as she makes her way from corpse to corpse, looking at their faces. She looks first at the SIXTH CORPSE, shudders, covers her eyes and moves on. She stops at the FIFTH CORPSE.*)

KATHERINE: I'm Katherine Driscoll. I—I'm looking for my brother. He's dead. Are you my brother?

FIFTH CORPSE: No.

(*KATHERINE goes on to The FOURTH CORPSE, stops, looks, moves on to the THIRD CORPSE.*)

KATHERINE: I'm looking for my brother. My name is Katherine Driscoll. His name—

THIRD CORPSE: No. (*KATHERINE goes on, stands irresolutely before the SECOND CORPSE.*)

KATHERINE: Are you—? (*Realizing it isn't her brother, goes on to the FIRST CORPSE.*) I'm looking for my brother. My name is Katherine Driscoll. His name—

DRISCOLL: I'm Tom Driscoll.

KATHERINE: Hel—Hello. I don't know you. After fifteen years—And—

DRISCOLL: What do you want, Katherine?

KATHERINE: You don't know me either, do you?

DRISCOLL: No.

KATHERINE: It's funny—my coming here to talk to a dead man—to try to get him to do something because once long ago he was my brother. They talked me into it. I don't know how to begin—

DRISCOLL: You'll be wasting your words, Katherine—

KATHERINE: They should have asked someone nearer to you—someone who loved you—only they couldn't find anybody. I was the nearest they said—

DRISCOLL: That's so. You were the nearest—

KATHERINE: And I was fifteen years away. Poor Tom—It couldn't have been a sweet life you led these fifteen years.

DRISCOLL: It wasn't.

KATHERINE: You were poor, too?

DRISCOLL: Sometimes I begged for meals. I wasn't lucky—

KATHERINE: And yet you want to go back. Is there no more sense in the dead, Tom, than in the living?

DRISCOLL: Maybe not. Maybe there's no sense in either living or dying, but we can't believe that. I travelled to a lot of places and I saw a lot of things, always from the black side of them, always workin' hard to keep from starvin' and turnin' my collar up to keep the wind out, and they were mean and rotten—and sad, but always I saw that they could be better and some day they were going to be better, and that the guys like me who knew that they were rotten and knew that they could be better had to get out and fight to make it that way.

KATHERINE: You're dead. Your fight's over.

DRISCOLL: The fight's never over. I got things to say to people *now*—to the people who nurse big machines and the people who swing shovels and the people whose babies die with big bellies and rotten bones. I got things to say to the people who leave their lives behind them and pick up guns to fight in somebody else's war. Important things. Big things. Big enough to lift me out of the grave right back onto the earth into the middle of men just because I got the voice to say to them. If God could lift Jesus—

KATHERINE: Tom! Have you lost religion, too?

DRISCOLL: I got another religion. I got a religion that wants to take Heaven out of the clouds and plant it right here on the earth where most of us can get a slice of it. It isn't as pretty a heaven, there aren't any streets of gold and there aren't any angels, and we'd have to worry about sewerage, and railroad schedules in it, and we don't guarantee everybody'd love it, but it'd be right here, stuck in the mud of this earth, and there wouldn't be any entrance requirement, like dying, to get into it. Dead or alive, I see that, and it won't let me rest. I was the first one to get up in this black grave of ours, because that idea wouldn't let me rest. I pulled the others with me—that's my job, pulling the others. They only know what they *want*—I know how they can get it.

KATHERINE: There's still the edge of arrogance on you.

DRISCOLL: I have heaven in my two hands to give to men. There's reason for arrogance.

KATHERINE: I came to ask you to lie down and let them bury you. It seems foolish now, but—

DRISCOLL: (*Tenderly.*) It's foolish, Katherine. I didn't get up from the dead to go back to the dead. I'm going to the living now.

KATHERINE: Fifteen years. It's a good thing your mother isn't alive. How can you say goodbye to a dead brother, Tom?

DRISCOLL: Wish him an easy grave, Katherine.

KATHERINE: A green and pleasant grave to you, Tom, when, finally—finally—green and pleasant. (*Blackout.*)

(*The light shows PRIVATE DEAN, the SIXTH CORPSE, where he stands in shadow listening to his mother, a thin, shabby, red-eyed woman of about forty-five. She is in the full light.*)

MRS. DEAN: Let me see your face, Son.

DEAN: You don't want to see it, Mom.

MRS. DEAN: My baby's face—Once before you. . .

DEAN: You don't want to see it, Mom. I know. Didn't they tell you what happened to me?

MRS. DEAN: I asked the doctor. He said a piece of shell hit the side of your head—but even so. . .

DEAN: Don't ask to see it, Mom.

MRS. DEAN: How are you, Son? (*DEAN laughs a little bitterly.*) Oh, I forgot. I asked you that question so many times while you were growing up, Jimmy.

DEAN: How did Alice take it when she heard?

MRS. DEAN: She put a gold star in her window. She tells everybody you were going to be married. Is that so?

DEAN: Maybe. I liked Alice.

MRS. DEAN: She came over on your birthday. That was before this—this happened. She brought flowers. Big chrysanthemums, Yellow. A lot of them. We had to put them in two vases. I baked a cake. I don't know why. It's hard to get eggs and fine flour nowadays. My baby, twenty years old. . . Let me see your face, Jimmy, boy.

DEAN: Go home, Mom. It's not doing you any good staying here.

MRS. DEAN: I want you to let them bury you, Baby. It's done now and over and it would be better for you that way. . .

DEAN: There's no better to it—and no worse. It happened that way.

MRS. DEAN: You had such a fine face. Like a good baby's. It hurt me when you started to shave. Somehow, I almost forget what you looked like, Baby. I remember what you looked like when you were five, when you were ten—you were chubby and fair and your cheeks felt like little silk cushions when I put my hand on them. But I don't remember how you looked when you went away with that uniform on you and that helmet over your face. Baby, let me see your face, once.

DEAN: Don't ask me.—You don't want to see. You'll feel worse—forever—if you see.

MRS. DEAN: I'm not afraid. I can look at my baby's face. Do you think Mothers can be frightened by their children's. . . ?

DEAN: No, Mom.

MRS. DEAN: Baby, listen to me, I'm your mother. Let them bury you. For your sake and mine and your father's, Baby.

DEAN: I was only twenty, Mom. I hadn't done anything. I hadn't seen anything. I never even had a girl. I spent twenty years practising to be a man and then they killed me. Being a kid's no good, Mom. You try to get it over as soon as you can. You don't really live while you're a kid. You mark time, waiting. I waited, Mom—but then I got cheated. They made a speech and played a trumpet and dressed me in a uniform and then they killed me.

MRS. DEAN: Oh, Baby, Baby, there's no peace this way. Please, let them. . .

DEAN: No, Mom.

MRS. DEAN: Then once, now, so that I can remember you, let me see your face, my baby's face. . .

DEAN: Mom, the shell hit close to me. You don't want to look at a man when a shell hits close to him.

MRS. DEAN: Let me see your face, Jimmy. . .

DEAN: All right, Mom. Look! *(He turns his face to her. The audience can't see his face, but immediately a spotlight, white and sharp, shoots down from directly above and hits his head. MRS. DEAN leans forward, staring. Another spotlight shoots down immediately after from the extreme right, then one from the left, then two more, from above. They hit with the impact of blows and MRS. DEAN shudders a little as they come, as tho she were watching her son being beaten. There is absolute silence for a moment; then she starts to moan, low, painfully. The moan rises to a wail. She leans back, covering her eyes with her hands, screaming. Blackout. The scream persists, fading, like a siren fading in the distance, until it is finally stilled.)*

*(The spotlight on the FOURTH CORPSE, PRIVATE WEBSTER, and his WIFE, a dumpy, sad little woman.)*

MARTHA WEBSTER: Say something.

PRIVATE WEBSTER: What do you want me to say?

MARTHA: Something—anything. Only talk. You give me the shivers standing there like that—looking like that. . .

WEBSTER: There's nothing that we can talk to each other about.

MARTHA: Don't talk like that. You talked like that enough

when you were alive—always seemin' to blame me because—well, because we didn't get along. It's not my fault that you're dead. . .

WEBSTER: No.

MARTHA: It was bad enough when you were alive—and you didn't talk to me and you looked at me as though I was always in your way and always went out when you wanted to have a good time.

WEBSTER: Martha, Martha, what's the difference now?

MARTHA: I just wanted to let you know. Now I suppose you're going to come back and sit around and ruin my life altogether?

WEBSTER: No. I'm not going to come back.

MARTHA: Then what. . . ?

WEBSTER: I couldn't explain it to you, Martha. . .

MARTHA: No! Oh, no—you couldn't explain it to your wife. But you could explain it to that dirty bunch of loafers down at that damned garage of yours and you could explain it to those bums in the saloon on F Street!

WEBSTER: I guess I could. *(Musing.)* Things seemed to be clearer when I was talking to the boys while I worked over a job with grease on my hands and a wrench in my pocket. And I managed to talk so people could get to understand what I meant down at the saloon on F Street. It was nice, standing there of a Saturday night, with a beer in front of you and a man or two that understood your own language next to you, talking about big things or little things, about Babe Ruth or the new oiling system Ford was putting out or the chances of us gettin' into the war. . .

MARTHA: It's different if you were rich and had a fine beautiful life you wanted to go back to. Then I could understand. But you were poor, you always had dirt under your fingernails, you never ate enough, you hated me, your wife, you couldn't stand being in the same room with me. . . don't shake your head, I know. Out of your whole life all you could remember that's good is a beer on Saturday night that you drank in company with a couple of bums.

WEBSTER: That's enough. I didn't think about it then. . . but I guess I was happy those times.

MARTHA: You were happy those times, but you weren't happy in your own home! I know, even if you don't say it! Well, I wasn't happy either! Living in three damned rooms that the sun didn't hit five times a year! Watching the roaches make picnics on the walls! Buying food that a real human being would've stuffed into the garbage pail!

WEBSTER: I did my best.

MARTHA: Eighteen-fifty a week! Your best! Eighteen-fifty, condensed milk, a two dollar pair of shoes once a year, five hundred dollars insurance, chopped meat. God, how I hate chopped meat! Eighteen-fifty, being afraid of everything, of the landlord, the gas company, scared stiff every month that I was goin' to have a baby! Why shouldn't I have a baby? Who says I shouldn't have a baby? Eighteen-fifty, no baby!

WEBSTER: I woulda liked a kid.

MARTHA: *(Caught up short.)* Would you? You never said anything.

WEBSTER: No. But it's good to have a kid. A kid's somebody to talk to.

MARTHA: *(Almost tenderly.)* At first. . . in the beginning. . . I thought we'd have a kid, some day. . .

WEBSTER: Yeah. Me too. I used to go out on Sundays and watch men wheel their kids through the park.

MARTHA: There were so many things you didn't tell me. . . Why did you keep quiet?

WEBSTER: We were talking through walls, after the first year.

MARTHA: You should have told me.

WEBSTER: I was ashamed to talk to you. I couldn't give you anything.

MARTHA: I'm sorry.

WEBSTER: In the beginning, it looked so fine. I used to smile to myself when I walked beside you in the street, Martha, and other men looked at you.

MARTHA: That was a long time ago.

WEBSTER: Things were good then. What happened to us, Martha?

MARTHA: Maybe I know.

WEBSTER: A kid would've helped.

MARTHA: (*Getting sharper.*) No, it wouldn't. Don't fool yourself, Webster. The Clarks downstairs from us have four kids and it didn't help them. The kids're dirty and they're sick all winter and they yell their blasted heads off. Old man Clark comes home drunk every Saturday night and beats 'em all with his shaving strap and throws plates at the old lady. Kids don't help the poor. Nothing helps the poor. I'm too smart to have sick, dirty kids on eighteen-fifty. . .

WEBSTER: That's it. . .

MARTHA: A baby in the house. A house should have a baby. But it should be a clean house, with a full icebox. (*Pause.*) Why shouldn't I have a baby? Other people have babies. Even now, with the war, other people have babies. They don't have to feel their skin crawl every time they tear a page off the calendar. They go off to beautiful hospitals in lovely ambulances and have babies between colored sheets! What's there about them that God likes, that he makes it so easy for them to have babies?

WEBSTER: They're not married to mechanics.

MARTHA: No! It's not eighteen-fifty for them. And now. . . now it's worse. Your fifteen dollars a month. You hire yourself out to be killed and I get fifteen dollars a month. I wait on lines all day to get a loaf of bread. I've forgotten what butter tastes like. I wait on line with the rain soaking through my shoes for a pound of rotten meat once a week. At night I go home and watch the roaches. Nobody to talk to, just sitting, watching the bugs, with one little light because the government's got to save electricity. You had to go off and leave me to that! What's the war to me that I have to sit at night with nobody to talk to? What's the war to you that you had to go off and. . .

WEBSTER: That's why I'm standing up now, Martha.

MARTHA: What took you so long, then? Why not a month ago, a year ago, ten years ago? Why didn't you stand up then? Why wait until you're dead! You live on eighteen-fifty a week, with the roaches, not saying a word, and then when they kill you, you stand up! You fool!

WEBSTER: I didn't see it before.

MARTHA: Just like you! Wait until it's too late! There's plenty for live men to stand up for! Eggs you can eat and butter and sunlight in your bedroom. A baby and lights at night and somebody to talk to! They're there, waiting. People have them! All right, stand up! It's about time you talked back. It's about time all you poor miserable eighteen-fifty bastards stood up for themselves and their wives and their dirty, rickety children! Tell 'em *all* to stand up! Tell 'em! Tell 'em! (*Blackout.*)

(*VOICES CALL. Speakers are sometimes spotted individually, sometimes in groups. Occasional VOICES call in the dark. The VOICES start low, almost in a whisper, not very fast, and grow in speed, intensity and volume as the scene progresses. They overlap each other often. The NEWSBOY'S VOICE, for example, is heard under the other voices, never by itself.*)

FIRST GENERAL: (*His hands to his lips.*) It didn't work. But keep it quiet. For God's sake, keep it quiet. . .

REPORTER: (*In harsh triumph.*) It didn't work! Now, you've got to put it in! I knew it wouldn't work! Smear it over the headlines!

EDITOR: Put it in the headlines—They won't be buried!

NEWSBOY: It didn't work! Extra! It didn't work!

BUSINESS MAN: (*Hoarse whisper.*) It didn't work! They're still standing. . .

DOWAGER'S VOICE: Somebody do something.

NEWSBOY: Extra! They're still standing!

DOWAGER: (*Frightened.*) Don't let them back into the country.

REPORTER: (*Triumphantly.*) They're standing. From now on they'll always stand! You can't bury soldiers any more!

FIRST SOLDIER: They stink. Bury them!

DOWAGER: What are we going to do about them?

BUSINESS MAN: What'll happen to our war? We can't let anything happen to our war. . .

PRIEST: Pray! Pray! God must help us! Down on your knees, all of you, and pray with your hearts and your guts and the marrow of your bones.

REPORTER: It will take more than prayers. What are prayers to a dead man? They're standing! Mankind is standing up and climbing out of its grave!

ANOTHER WOMAN: Have you heard? It didn't work.

NEWSBOY: Extra! Extra! They're still standing!

MRS. DEAN: My baby. . .

BESS SCHELLING: My husband. . .

JULIA MORGAN: My lover. . .

CHARLEY: Bury them! They stink!

CAPTAIN: Plant a new crop! The old crop has worn out the earth! Plant something beside lives in the old and weary earth. . .

NEWSBOY: Extra! It didn't work!

BUSINESS MAN: Somebody do something. Dupont's passed a dividend!

PRIEST: The Day of Judgment is at hand. . .

FIRST WHORE: Where is Christ?

FIRST SOLDIER: File 'em away in alphabetical order. . .

DOCTOR: We don't believe it. It is against the dictates of science.

FIRST WOMAN: Keep it quiet!

BESS SCHELLING: My husband. . .

JULIA MORGAN: My lover. . .

MRS. DEAN: My baby. . .

A CHILD'S VOICE: What have they done with my father?

DOWAGER: Somebody do something. Call up the War Department!

BUSINESS MAN: Call up Congress! Call up the President!

DOWAGER: Somebody do something.

FIVE VOICES: Put them down!

REPORTER: Never! Never! Never! You can't put them down. Put one down and ten will spring up like weeds in an old garden.

THIRD GENERAL: Use lead on them, lead! Lead put 'em down once, lead'll do it again! Lead!

A YOUNG CLERGYMAN: (*Spotted.*) Put down the sword and hang the armor on the wall to rust with the years. The killed have arisen.

PRIEST: The old demons have come back to possess the earth. We are lost. . .

A YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE: (*Very strong.*) The dead have arisen, now let the living rise, singing!

BUSINESS MAN: Do something, for the love of God, do something. . .

PRIEST: We will do something.

A YOUNG MAN: (*Insolent.*) Who are you?



"DANCE OF DEATH"—OTTO DIX

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PRIEST: We are the church and the voice of God. Those corpses are possessed by the devil, who plagues the lives of men. The church will exorcise the devil from these men, according to its ancient rite, and they will lie down in their graves like children to a pleasant sleep, rising no more to trouble the world of living men. The Church which is the Voice of God upon this earth, Amen. (*A chorus of "Amen's" blends with the reading.*) I exorcise thee, unclean spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ; tremble, O Satan, thou enemy of the faith, thou foe of mankind, who hast brought death into the world, who hast deprived men of life, and hast rebelled against justice, thou seducer of mankind, thou root of evil, thou source of avarice, discord, and envy. (*Silence. Then the CORPSES begin to laugh, lightly, horribly.*)

YOUNG WOMAN: (*Triumphantly.*) No. . .

CHORUS: No!

NEWSBOY: They're licked!

A MAN'S VOICE: This isn't 1918—This is today!

YOUNG WOMAN: See what happens tomorrow!

THE YOUNG MINISTER: The old order changeth, yielding place to new.

MAN'S VOICE: (*Triumphantly.*) Anything can happen now! Anything!

DOWAGER: (*Frantic.*) They're coming! We must stop them!

REPORTER: (*Sardonically.*) How?

BUSINESS MAN: We must find ways, find means. . .

REPORTER: (*Exulting.*) They're coming! There will be no ways, no means!

CHORUS: (*Strong mocking.*) What are you going to do? What are you going to do? (*They laugh.*)

THIRD GENERAL: Let me have a machine gun! Sergeant! A machine gun! (*The light comes up on the trench. A machine gun is set to the left of it. The GENERALS are clustered around it.*) I'll show them! This is what they've needed!

FIRST GENERAL: All right, all right. Get it over with! Hurry! But keep it quiet!

THIRD GENERAL: I want a crew to man this gun. (*Pointing to FIRST SOLDIER.*) You! Come over here! And you! You know what to do. I'll give the command to fire.

FIRST SOLDIER: Not to me you won't. This is over me. I won't touch that gun. None of us will. We didn't hire out to be no butcher of dead men. Do your own chopping.

THIRD GENERAL: You'll be court-martialed! You'll be dead by tomorrow morning. . .

FIRST SOLDIER: Be careful, General! I may take a notion to come up like these guys. That's the smartest thing I've seen in this army. I like it. (*To DRISCOLL.*) What d'ye say, Buddy?

DRISCOLL: It's about time. (*The THIRD GENERAL draws his gun, but the other GENERALS hold his arm.*)

FIRST GENERAL: Do it yourself.

THIRD GENERAL: Do it myself? Why should I?

SECOND GENERAL: It was your idea.

THIRD GENERAL: No, let somebody else do it.

FIRST GENERAL: Who?

ALL GENERALS: (*To each other.*) You!

THIRD GENERAL: Let's draw lots. The short straw. . . (*He puts out his hand, from which rise four straws. The GENERALS draw, the THIRD drawing last.*)

FIRST and SECOND GENERALS: You! It's you! Go ahead!



"DANCE OF DEATH"—OTTO DIX



"DANCE OF DEATH"—OTTO DIX

THIRD GENERAL: (*Stupidly.*) Me? Why me? Oh, my god! (*He looks down horrified at gun then slowly gets down on one knee beside it, the other GENERALS behind him. They sneak offstage. The CORPSES move together, facing the gun. VOICES call as the GENERAL jumbles with the gun.*)

YOUNG MAN: Never, never, never. . .

JULIA: Walter Morgan, Beloved of Julia Blake, Born 1913, died 1936.

MRS. DEAN: Let me see your face, Baby. . .

MRS. WEBSTER: All you remember is a glass of beer with a couple of bums on Saturday night.

KATHERINE: A green and pleasant grave. . .

BESS: Did it hurt much John? His hair is blonde and he weighs twenty-eight pounds. . .

JOAN: You loved me best, didn't you—best?

CAPTAIN: Four yards of bloody mud. . .

BEVINS: I understand how they feel, Charley. I wouldn't like to be under the ground now. . .

YOUNG WOMAN: Never! Never!

CHORUS: Never!

MRS. WEBSTER: Tell 'em all to stand up! Tell 'em! Tell 'em!

(*The CORPSES start to walk toward the left, not marching, but walking together, silently. The GENERAL stiffens, then starts to laugh hysterically. As the CORPSES reach the edge of the grave he starts firing, the gun shaking his shoulders. Calmly, in the face of the chattering gun, the CORPSES walk soberly toward the GENERAL. For a moment, they obscure him as they pass. In that moment the gun stops. The CORPSES pass on, off the stage, like men who have business that must be attended to in the not too pressing future. The GENERAL is seen slumped forward over the gun. There is*

*no movement on the stage for a fraction of a second. Then, slowly the four SOLDIERS of the burial detail break rank. Slowly they walk, exactly as the CORPSES have walked, past the GENERAL. The last soldier, as he passes the GENERAL, deliberately, but without malice, flicks a cigarette butt at him, then follows the other SOLDIERS off the stage. The GENERAL is the last thing we see, humped over his quiet gun, which points at the empty grave as the light dims, in the silence.*)

## CURTAIN

(Copyright applied for February, 1936.)

*Bury the Dead* was first performed for the benefit of NEW THEATRE and the New Theatre League at the 46th Street Theatre in New York on March 14th and 15th, by the *Let Freedom Ring* acting company, directed by Worthington Minor and Walter Hart. As we go to press, negotiations are under way for an extended run, with the probability that the play will open with the original cast at a Broadway theatre early in April.

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WILLIAM GROPPER



WILLIAM GROPPER





WILLIAM GROPPER

# From a Dancer's Notebook

BY BLANCHE EVAN

(*This is the second of two articles written by Miss Evan; the first, dealing with her experiences in the Wigman School, appeared in the March issue of NEW THEATRE. We urge readers to turn back to that article for the preface.*)

I must tie the loose ends of my training together; I must find a focal point around which dance technique, creative technique, and dance performance, can swing in rhythmic unity. Martha Graham, the most finished artist in the modern dance, must be able to point the way to such an integration. My course starts with her to-morrow.

*An Intensive Course at Martha Graham's—Summer, 1935.*

*The First Week:* Long before class begins each day, there is a hush in the studio comparable only to the tense moment before a curtain rise in the theatre. The girls quietly seat themselves on the floor and begin to stretch. I don't dare fling a "hello" to a class-mate across the room. It would seem out of keeping in this solemn atmosphere. Martha enters dressed in a beautifully designed costume of white silk wearing white fur slippers to match. It's only eleven a.m. but she has already completed her private rehearsal and practise period. She quietly reclines on the divan, wraps a thin blanket around her, one of the three studio dachshunds snuggles in beside her, and the class commences. The first sombre percussive chord on the piano intensifies this restrained atmosphere. We begin the famous Graham stretches.

Seated on the floor, with legs stretched wide, we are impelled head-first into a series of complicated shapes stretching every single muscle the body possesses. The body is placed in such positions that it becomes imperative to use intense muscular power to get you from one position to another. The terminology for the torso positions consists of three words: "release, contraction, forced release." Martha's explanation was very cryptic: "these body positions were derived from a state of breath, though in actuality they have nothing to do with breathing." We are not given any fundamental preparatory work on these spinal movements. We are immediately presented with the problem of executing difficult exercise-forms based on these three positions. There is no gradual progression from the simple

to the difficult. And I am very much amazed to find out, upon investigation, that the beginners, people who have never danced before, are given these same complex and strenuous exercises.

This lack of progression in technique really shocks me. Even we, who have had past training, find the work too extreme. For instance each day another girl complains (in the dressing-room) of over-stretched tendons around the knee. The students are very queer. They wouldn't dream of telling Martha this nor of even discussing objectively with her the good, and any possibility of bad, in these exercise-forms. And yet, when I go to Martha after class with doubts, she seems willing enough to enter into discussion. I think if the students treated her as a human being rather than as a goddess, many barriers that now exist between teacher and student would be removed.

*The Second Week:* We're off the floor now. We've arrived at the next series of exercises in which we stand in one place. Each series is worked out to set counts which are religiously adhered to. Many of the exercises are pure ballet in principle: the turn-out, the slow plié (knee-bend), battéments (kicks), leg extensions, elevations, etc. Some of these are given in pure ballet form, others have been changed to combine odd co-ordinations of the torso with the legs. It is interesting that Martha Graham, the most influential modern dancer of the day should be so influenced by the ballet. Even the arm positions in the exercises are variations of the five ballet arm positions. Perhaps eventually Martha will also incorporate into the technique some of ballet "allegro"—fast movement covering big areas of space and fast transitions between movements. The only way we move through space is in the Graham pattern of the walk, the run, and the leap.

Not the slightest deviation from these patterns is permitted. Why these are the only "correct" ways to perform these activities, we are not told. I ask girls who have been with Martha for years the why and wherefore of a Graham law, and they say, "There is no reason. This is the way to leap. Martha says so." Maybe Martha has reasons for this seeming dogma; she seems so convinced herself; but if so, I should like to know them.

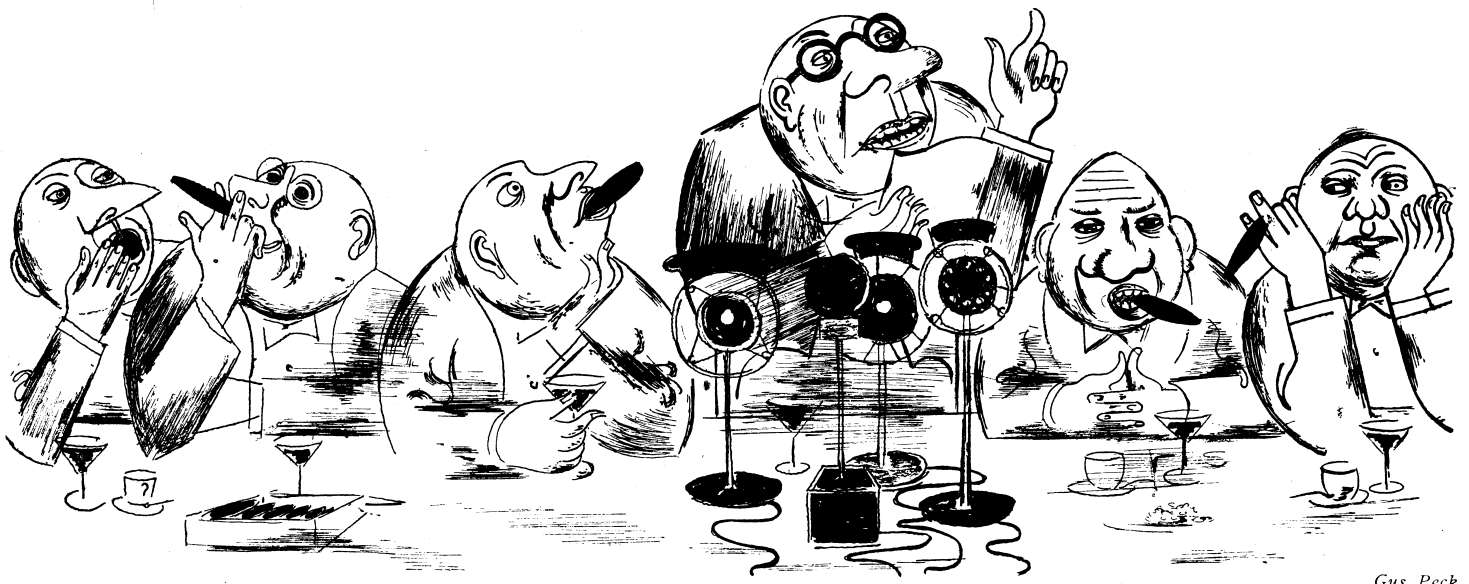
Through all the work, standing, or sitting, the head must be up, parallel with the ceiling, ("There is only one point

which is up—directly above the head, everything else is 'thinking up'"), down, parallel with the plane of the floor, or straight, looking ahead at the wall in front or in back of you, to the right or left side of you. Other positions of the head in technique are unconditionally branded as weak and sentimental—"un-classic." In any one of these six positions and in passing from one to the other, the eyes must be wide open, with "the gaze" at eye level, never cast down, never lifted up. Nothing seems to upset Martha more than to see a student's eyes wander out of the direct range of the eye level. She says that only with such directness of the eyes and of the head can the dancer "tip the sides of the room," of the stage, of the world—(don't you "tip" the world less by the way in which you hold your head than by what you say?)—that only so can you make space come to you, draw your audience around you; that the days are past when the dancer extended herself to her audience in rapt emotion.

The idea of using space as the Wigman method teaches, of dominating it through use rather than through an abstract tyranny over it, seems more significant to me. The Wigman and Graham systems might get together to advantage on this question of space. When will the dance world break through its separate ivory towers and meet on a common ground of dance research!

*Three Weeks Later:* There is a strong conflict in Martha Graham. The sources for her approach to the dance seem to spring from two opposing poles. In one sense she is a realist. She often makes reference to the "new race" which, she says, must be direct, concise, unsentimental. On other occasions, she appears the perfect mystic. In the middle of an exercise, she will suddenly sit up very straight and without any apparent connection, her voice quivering, she will tell us that the Orientals believe correctly that the only way one can concentrate is to sit with the weight of the body absolutely evenly divided, absolutely balanced. (To myself I think, Oh, Michelangelo, how well you concentrated on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, your poor neck twisted completely out of alignment with the rest of your body.) At such times, I feel suddenly separated from this powerful and lovable woman, as if my realistic background, the life of my generation,

(Continued on page 44)



Gus Peck

## The Academy's Last Supper BY HERBERT KLINE

*"... No one can respect an organization with the high-sounding title of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences which has failed in every single function it has assumed. The sooner it is destroyed and forgotten, the better for the industry."*

Screen Guilds' Magazine.

"I believe in the Academy, I believe in what it stands for, and I believe in its idealism," Irving Thalberg, MGM's self-styled "radical-capitalist" proclaimed at the recent annual awards banquet of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles.

The uninformed among the 1,200 guests may have wondered at Mr. Thalberg's vehement and seemingly uncalled-for protestation, but every producer present must have been greatly heartened by this emphatic testimonial of Leo's favorite keeper, for these gentlemen did not want to admit, even to themselves, that their main bulwark against the growing power of the Screen Guilds was vanishing before their very eyes. Mr. Thalberg's words gave them momentary surcease from the dreadful knowledge that, as far as ninety percent of Hollywood's talent was concerned, this was the Academy's Last Supper.

Three days before the annual awards dinner, every member of the Screen Guilds in Hollywood received the following telegram:

"You have probably been asked by your producer to go to the Academy dinner stop we find that this is a concerted move to make people think that Guild members are supporting the Academy

stop the Board feels that since the Academy is definitely inimical to the best interests of the Guilds you should not attend."

This telegram was signed by Robert Montgomery, James Cagney, Ann Harding, Chester Morris, Kenneth Thompson, Noel Madison, Warren William, Edward Arnold, Robert Armstrong, Franchot Tone, Joan Crawford, Edward G. Robinson, Lyle Talbot, Donald Woods, Spencer Tracy, Leon Errol, Fredric March, Lucile Gleason, Joseph Cawthorne, Dudley Digges, C. Henry Gordon, Paul Harvey, Claude King, Frank Morgan, Ralph Morgan, Alan Mowbray, Murray Kinnell and Mary Astor, among others.

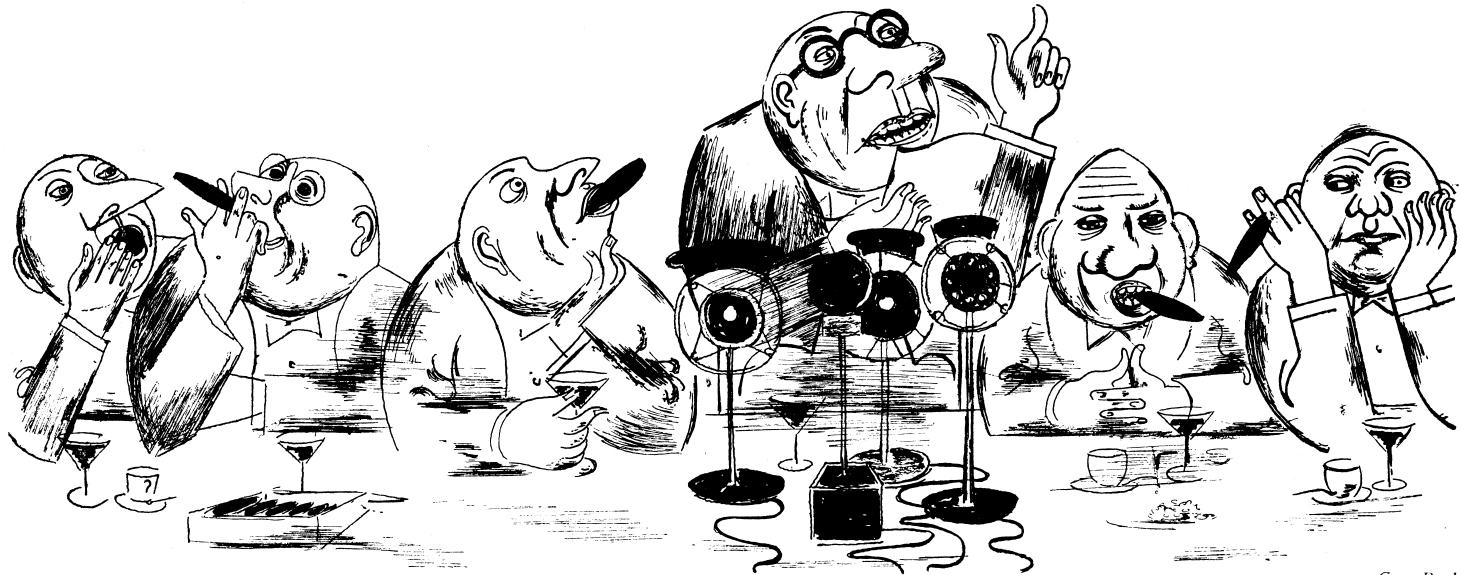
The response of the membership of both the Actors' and Writers' Guilds to the telegram was magnificent. Although in past years the Academy awards dinner has been attended by all the leading celebrities of the screen, a careful check of the published guest lists reveals that about twenty members of the Screen Actors' Guild and thirteen members of the Screen Writers' Guild were present. As was pointed out in the Screen Guilds' Magazine for March, 1936, "The photographers assigned to cover the occasion had great difficulty in bringing back enough negatives of picture 'names' to satisfy their editors. It was possible to photograph any number of producers, but unfortunately for the cameramen, producers are not in great demand for the rotogravure sections."

To understand this astonishing change of front, a brief summary of the Academy's history is necessary. It was organized by the Producers' Association in the heyday of Coolidge prosperity as a common meeting ground for executives and talent. Few thought of the Academy

as a company union until the bank closings in the spring of 1933. In fact, no one gave it much thought of any kind until that day in March 1933 when the writers, actors and directors were called together at their respective studios to be told by Mr. Louis B. Mayer of MGM, Mr. Harry Cohen of Columbia, Mr. Jack Warner of Warner Brothers, etc., that the whole country was in danger and that they had been elected to save it. After a little flag-waving and a short pep talk, each studio head suggested the same remedy: a fifty percent cut. There were scattered protests, but 99% of the film workers were forced to take the cut. The owners of course exempted themselves.

This maneuver had been engineered at a secret meeting called by the Producers Association the night before. The producers, the leading agents and the heads of the various Academy branches had been summoned by Louis B. Mayer to agree to cooperate in putting through a twenty-five percent cut. After this was agreed upon, Joe Schenck, by long distance telephone from New York City, gave Mayer the idea that a twenty-five percent cut was not enough. Before the evening was out the boys had all gotten together on the program for a fifty percent reduction. Since most of the companies were solvent enough to pay huge bonuses to their executives throughout this emergency period, the pay cut was plainly a steal of millions from the pockets of their employees.

The part played by the Academy representatives in putting over this wage cut exposed the dual nature of the organization—social salve and company unionism. Resignation after resignation came to the desks of the Academy officials. The Screen Guilds sprang up, under the



leadership of outstanding writers and actors. At first they were taken in by various government arbitration schemes. The history of these NRA negotiations as told by the Screen Guilds' leaders in their own magazine proves that the producers refused to play square with the Guilds. Now, after years of refusal to recognize the Guilds officially, the producers are attempting to revive the dying Academy. This was the meaning of the high-pressure efforts to insure a huge turn-out of actors and writers to the Academy's banquet. This was the explanation of the efforts to disguise the awards dinner as a purely social function to which members of the Guilds were invited on an urgently personal basis by the producers. It was an effort to make the movie world think that the Academy had but to call to get undivided support from the rank and file of the screen world's talent. It was intended as a practical demonstration of the idea that there was no basic difference between the Academy and the Guilds.

Today only a few misguided actors, directors and writers remain members of the Academy, while there are more than 5,000 members of the Screen Actors' Guild, more than 1,000 in the Screen Writers' Guild, and almost all the ace directors are members of the Screen Directors' Guild. These three groups not only represent the only sure protection of salary and working standards in the film industry, but the one hope of raising the standards of the motion picture from their present low artistic and intellectual level. This was made abundantly clear by Dudley Nichols in his by now famous letter to the Academy refusing the award for the adaptation of Liam O'Flaherty's *The Informer*. Mr. Nichols, the first winner to refuse an Academy award in the entire history of the organization, said ". . . I believe it to be the duty of every screen writer to stand with his own, and to strengthen the Guild, because there is no other representative autonomous organization for writers which aims at justice for employer and employee alike, and which is concerned solely with the betterment of the writing craft."

There is, however, a danger of underestimating the strength of the Academy. It is still the only recognized medium of arbitration; it is still the only repository of records concerning employer-employee relationships. James Cagney's recent suit against Warner Brothers was seriously handicapped by the fact that the Academy file on Cagney's victorious dispute with the studio four years ago had been conveniently lost. Until the Screen Guilds win complete recognition the Academy is still dangerous to the interests of the screen workers.

# FILM CHECKLIST

BY ROBERT STEBBINS

**THESE THREE:** An unusual concurrence of writing talent (Lillian Hellman), good direction (William Wyler), and stunning performances (especially Bonita Granville and Marcia Mae Jones) makes *These Three* well worth seeing. The problem involved in the screen play, namely, the havoc wreaked upon three innocent individuals by the lies of a hypochondriac child, is not exactly of universal significance or particular freshness these days. But the earnestness and mature skill of Miss Hellman's transcription from her own *The Children's Hour* forces the consideration and involves the sympathies of her audience.

**RHODES:** In its sum total an expertly conceived whitewashing of the celebrated diamond snatcher. Here you will find little of the shrieking imperialist jingoism the West Coast seems to find necessary at the slightest mention of the Union Jack. In fact *Rhodes* makes a half-hearted attempt to suggest that the methods of its principal character were not all they might be. Consequently, a film of the *Rhodes* stripe is far more subtle and effective in its pro-imperialist preachment and correspondingly more suspect. Mr. Huston's performance is presumably intended to go a long way toward making the wholesale defrauding and murder of the African natives palatable. Mr. Homolka, as Kruger, president of the Boers, performs with all the brilliance one has come to expect from a German emigre.

**FOLLOW THE FLEET:** Several months ago we suggested that there was great danger involved in typing Fred Astaire. We feared that if RKO persisted in turning out paler and still paler imitations of *The Gay Divorcee* the Astaire charm would go the way of the horse and buggy. To that extent we are to blame. It was never our intention, however, although this must be accepted in good faith, to have Astaire cast in sailor pants. The spectacle of Astaire wiggling his uncomfortable way through this rambling, rickety vehicle is a sight to make sore eyes. For the first time, the dance routines fail to click. In short, a decidedly minor and in the main regrettable Astaire offering.

**THE COUNTRY DOCTOR:** We never suspected we would be recommending this one. By all portents *The Country Doctor* promised such a welter of bathos and deluge of platitude as would leave

the theatres soggy for months afterward. We can only report a well-devised tale about a country company doctor and his unavailing struggle to get a hospital built by his employers. The sequences dealing with the birth of the five Dionnes are projected with unflinching humor and sensitiveness. The cast, with the exception of the two redundant juvenile leads, performs with great credit.

**KLONDIKE ANNIE:** The movie critics, as a rule perfect gentlemen where feminine movie stars are concerned, have displayed a hitherto unsuspected misogyny in the way they ganged up on Mae West in this, her most recent picture. For example, Mr. Frank S. Nugent of the New York Times, after one of the usual apocryphal tales about the Sinful One, goes on to find *Klondike Annie* mawkish and excessively stupid. Mae West at last stands revealed as a cinematic freak, no longer the cleansing wind blowing through the oppressive boudoir of sex. In this regard, it seems to me that the critics were always wrong about West. The great appeal of West was never frankness, rather innuendo, raised to such a consistent and monstrous level that the subject of her circumlocutions became ridiculous. Her famous "Come up and see me some time" was hardly an example of frankness. There was never a specific commitment to venery in that remark, although everyone knew what Miss West meant. Far from cramping Miss West's style, the campaign of the League of Decency may result in a greater development of her unique talents. At any rate, Mae is not slipping, and I, for one, am glad of it.

**ROAD GANG:** An inconsequential pastiche of styles and old movies, particularly *I Am a Fugitive*, that never justifies itself. Ostensibly about a chain gang, corrupt politicians, an honest district attorney, and a group of spiritual singing prisoners.

**LOVE BEFORE BREAKFAST:** Several years ago, in a film called *Twentieth Century*, a certain Carole Lombard replied to one of John Barrymore's hysterical addresses with a decidedly blatant and full-voiced *Blah!* Ever since then, she's been blahing all over the place and we are all apparently convinced of her great skill as a comedienne. Undoubtedly *Love Before Breakfast* was deliberately written around Miss Lombard's talents. I for one find La Lombard's efforts very far

removed from the humorous. As a foil, the labored Preston Foster is hardly scintillating. They impress one as the sort of persons who would steal pencils from a blind man for the fun of it, and probably incorporate the incident in their next scenario. In any event, if you don't think giving razor blades to an infant or imitating a cripple's gait funny, stay away from this one.

**WIFE VS. SECRETARY:** Given the title and the names of the principals, Clark Gable, Jean Harlow, and Myrna Loy, the jaundiced-eyed reviewer might be tempted to stay at home and compose his piece from the scraps he remembered of similar exercises on this theme. Not so the penner of these lines. He went to see the film. After this admission, we hardly expect any future judgment of ours to be respected by our readers.

**LE BONHEUR:** A lightweight and slightly moist wafer of a film from the French studios about an anarchist (Charles Boyer) who attempts to assassinate a popular screen actress to show his disgust for the foolishness of the public. Needless to say, Mr. Boyer falls in love with his victim. After completing his stretch, he joins her, for she has also learned to love him. But life is ever hard! He soon realizes there is too great a disparity between them and leaves her with the dubious consolation that he will always be able to see her in the movies.

**DON'T BET ON LOVE:** One of the recurrent nightmares that has greatly troubled the peace of mind of a nervous friend of mine concerns a performance of *Back to Methuselah*, with Gene Raymond and George Raft among the principals. When the time arrives for Raft or Raymond to begin their lines, my friend begins to perspire. Raft struggles and struggles but never gets beyond the first sentence. Just when it would seem

that my friend would choke with embarrassment, he awakens to find himself a trembling and sweating mass. Something of this terror communicated itself to me during the performance of *Don't Bet on Love* during which Raymond struggles to talk, talk, and talk, while winning some bet or other. It is one of the ironies of film production that Helen Broderick, who can really make herself understood, had little to do. Fortunately she makes the most of her limited chances and so the film is not entirely a loss.

**THE VOICE OF BUGLE ANN:** A deliberate play for the sympathy and box-office potentialities of dog owners. Lionel Barrymore, as the doting owner of the silver-throated Bugle Ann, murders the man (Dudley Digges) he thought silenced "the sweetest voice in the valley." Years later, after he has been pardoned, it turns out that he was wrong, but that doesn't seem to set him back much. Despite the shocking premise on which the film is built, it is shrewdly directed and at times achieves some interest.

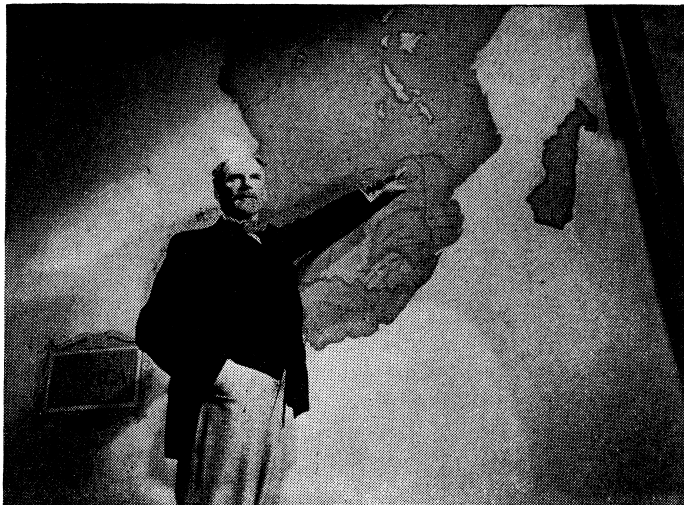
**COLLEEN:** Worth seeing, if only for Hugh Herbert's magnificent drollery. Mr. Herbert's remarkable creation, the demented millionaire Cedric Ames, is an exemplification of comedy at its most consummate. We shall not forget Mr. Ames' pathetic sigh, "Work, work, work!" after flipping through three telegrams and reciting a verse of *Mary Had a Little Lamb* into a dictaphone. Joan Blondell and Jack Oakie almost approach Mr. Herbert's effort with an hilarious travesty on adagio dancing. Miss Blondell's thrusts seemed to be particularly aimed at Ginger Rogers. The remainder of the film consists of the fatuous whimperings of Ruby Keeler and the inescapable Dick Powell. Still, I wouldn't stay away. Mr. Paul Draper's dancing style

somehow does not project, appearing rather frozen and even slightly effeminate.

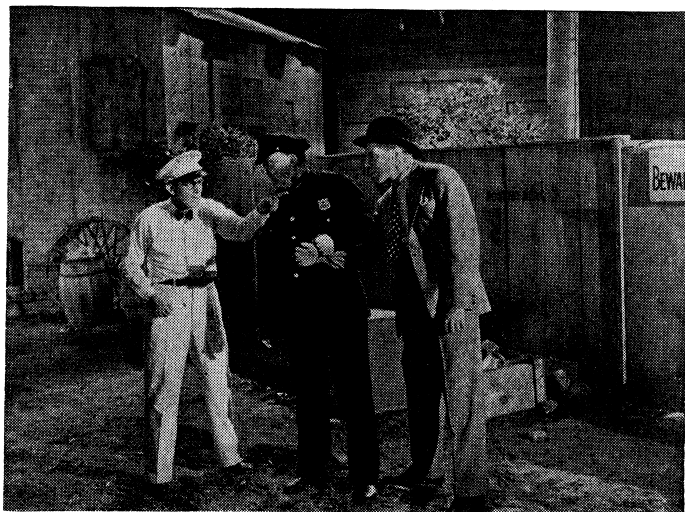
**THE WALKING DEAD:** Mediocre. Boris Karloff, an ingenuous pianist, who, it seems, has made a life-long study of Rubenstein's *Kammenei Ostrow*, is sent to the electric chair for a crime he is innocent of. The governor is apprised of this fact in time to halt the execution, after the first charge has been shot through Boris. Whereupon a famous doctor (Ed Gwenn) restores him to life amid the usual scientific hocus-pocus. Boris promptly sets about destroying the perpetrators of this frame-up resulting in his death. He accomplishes this merely by casting a baleful eye on his enemies and spluttering sepulchraly: "Why did you kill me?" Providence does the rest. As usual in this genre, the film falls decidedly below the trailer advertising it.

**THE MILKY WAY:** Good entertainment. Fast moving and well stocked with valid gags. Miss Veree Teasdale is amazingly adroit in projecting her comedy lines. Lionel Stander and Adolphe Menjou performs with the skill we have come to expect of them, and Harold Lloyd has had the courage to remain a slightly unpleasant and mild ego-maniac to the very end.

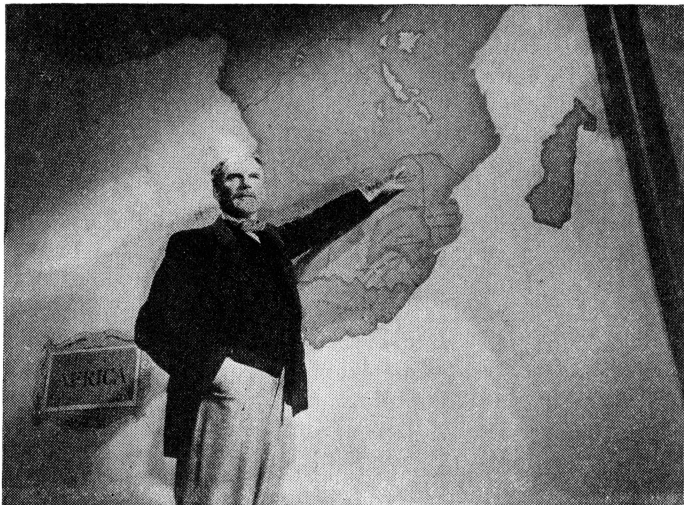
**THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE:** Photographed in Technicolor and directed by Henry Hathaway. Although the best outdoor color rendition to date, the process still leaves much to be desired. In general the tints are exaggerated and uncontrolled. Faces are still as ruddy as beef in the close-ups, the high lights are frequently over and the shadows almost always underexposed. As for the film proper, director Hathaway has managed to enliven the old story and there are good performances by Sylvia Sydney, Fred MacMurphy and Henry Fonda.



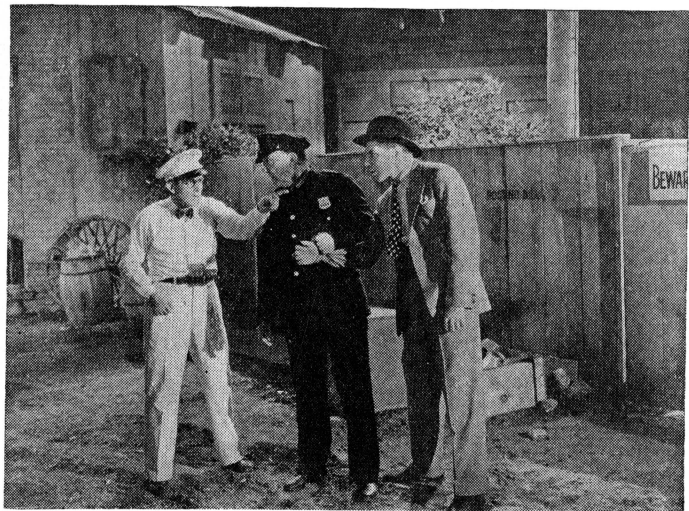
WALTER HUSTON IN "RHODES"



HAROLD LLYOD AND LIONEL STANDER IN "THE MILKY WAY"



WALTER HUSTON IN "RHODES"



HAROLD LLOYD AND LIONEL STANDER IN "THE MILKY WAY"

# Playwright Into Critic

BY CHARMION VON WIEGAND

There exist two popular superstitions which are closely related: one that the critic is always a frustrated artist and that therefore criticism is inevitably destructive; two, that the creative artist who invades the realm of criticism runs the risk of sterilizing his inspiration. This dual prejudice is based on the inspirational notion of art, which holds that it is produced solely out of instinct, intuition, and emotion without any conscious rational thought or logical development.

The truth is that in certain periods of history, criticism actually plays the first creative role in art—it must assume the pioneer task of clearing the ground in the no-man's land between two cultures—of destroying the debris of old ideas and old forms and constructing the unseen but necessary structural foundation on which future artists will build the beautiful edifices of a new world.

The best critics have always been creators—Michelangelo, Goethe, Poe, Shaw, Eisenstein. The creative artist turns to criticism, when he comes to a turning point in his creative work. Arrival at such a cross road involves the need to sum up and to analyse the past in relation to his own work and to the contemporary historic moment. By a method of resumé and analysis, the artist achieves a necessary clarification, which enables him to take the next step forward in his creative work.

John Howard Lawson has been one of the outstanding figures in contemporary drama in the post-war period. The author of seven plays which have reached production, he speaks with authority on the theatre. Still a young man, he has not yet fulfilled his complete promise. This is not due to any lack but rather to an overabundance of gifts, which makes the task of integrating them all the more difficult. Lawson has never feared to tread the difficult path of experimentation. From his first play, *Roger Bloomer*—one of the earliest native American expressionist dramas—he has gone forward to new forms and new themes. Yet in some respects, *Roger Bloomer* and *Processional* remain his most impressive achievements. I saw the première of *Roger Bloomer* in 1923 and I shall never forget the exhilaration which its new and emotionally fresh point of view produced in the stale atmosphere of the theatre of that time. Severely criticized on the technical side, Lawson then proceeded to

overcompensate for his first faults by becoming an expert craftsman. In thus turning his back too squarely on feeling and instinct, his later plays never quite seemed to recapture the poetic and tender quality of *Roger Bloomer*. He has yet to integrate his emotion and his thought into a completely unified form.

Now Lawson has again embarked on a new experiment; he was written a critical work. *The Theory and Technique of Playwriting* may well be the means by which he is preparing himself for a new kind of play. But the book stands on its own merits as an important contribution to dramatic criticism. It is a manual primarily addressed to serious students of the drama, and playwrights in particular. No mere set of school exercises, it contains some of the most brilliant and vital dramatic criticism in English since Shaw's inimitable prefaces. I can think of no manual of playwriting in English which attacks the problems of drama so basically at their root and relates so conclusively the social, economic, and philosophic thought of a given era to the specific field of drama.

Lawson is the first American critic to point out that to date we have had no systematic study of the history and traditions of dramatic technique and that the academic theoreticians such as William Archer, George Pierce Baker, and Brander Matthews, have "built no solid historical framework in which to place their theories." Lawson emphasizes that the "creative process of playwriting" is a unified and organic process.

The first half of the book is devoted entirely to the presentation of *theory*. The second half is occupied with an extensive *analysis of play construction*. I, for one, would have enjoyed having Lawson write two books. The first half of the manual could stand expansion and would then be able to include much important material, which had, of necessity, to be left out. In the first half of the book, Part I deals with the history of dramatic thought from Aristotle to Ibsen, Part II takes up the discussion of the main problems of drama from Ibsen through Shaw to O'Neill. Three first rate essays on the latter three dramatists are included in this section of the book.

With his Marxist searchlight, Lawson has lit up many dark corners in the history of dramatic criticism and has shown the underlying connections between the drama, criticism, philosophy and history

of a given period. This is an indispensable contribution to the critical thought of the drama. He has made no attempt to cover the whole history of the European theatre, but has restricted himself to those phases in dramatic history which seemed to him to have special bearing on the problems of contemporary American drama.

The story begins very appropriately with Aristotle, but skips discussion of the Middle Ages and the beginnings of European drama to take up the Renaissance. Here the emphasis on Machiavelli as the initiator of that movement toward reality in the theatre, which culminated in Ibsen, is most interesting. Pietro Arentino's remark, "I show men as they *are*, not as they should be," is the scientific attitude asserting itself in the drama; it marks the split between the old medieval world and the rising new world of the bourgeoisie. The short comment that is devoted to Shakespeare whets the appetite for more, especially the statement that the "threads of Machiavelli's ideas run through the whole texture of Shakespeare's plays."

From here on, Lawson devotes himself to tracing the development of the conflict of will and of the new fluidity of character which appear for the first time with Elizabethan drama and are carried to their logical conclusion in the drama of the 19th century. He explains how that boundless faith in man's ability to *do*, to know, to feel, dominated three hundred years of middle class development, until at the end of the 19th century we come to the breaking point—where the split between the real and the ideal, between politics and ethics, is as complete in Ibsen as in Machiavelli.

He gives a concise historic resumé of each important dramatic critic against the social and philosophic background of the time. For instance, he shows the importance of Lessing's work as a critic in uniting the social thought which led to the American and French revolutions and the philosophic thought which ended in Kant and Hegel. (Lessing's play *Emilia Galotti* was the first bourgeois tragedy which had a middle class heroine; previously only kings, queens and aristocrats were considered worthy of tragedy). The theme of bourgeois drama was further concretized by Diderot's statement that the middle class family was the microcosm of the social system. Lawson treats the plays of Goethe and Schiller in relation to Kant's philosophy



and to the rise of romanticism. He shows how Hegel's application of dialectics to aesthetics evolved the principle of *tragic conflict*, out of which Ibsen's theatre grew and traces the dual influences of Hegel, which led to materialism and idealism. He shows further how the course of romanticism flowed from Goethe and Schiller through Hugo to Zola's "emotional realism" and how a corresponding parallel movement developed *away* from reality.

In discussing free will and necessity, Lawson gives only passing attention to Schopenhauer, who was the first philosopher of the new age to make the *will* the central theme of his philosophy, and to produce thereby a whole set of ideas on tragedy from Hebbel to Ibsen. Metaphysics comes to a stalemate in Schopenhauer and it was left for Marx and Engels to give it the death blow. From this time on, the dramatists become the real interpreters of the philosophy of activism. Lawson, in putting Schopenhauer to one side, has passed over a dramatist who has had almost as much influence on the drama of central Europe as Ibsen and whose effects were felt long after the Norwegian was considered old fashioned—namely, the Swedish dramatist, August Strindberg. Neither the pre-war nor the post-war drama of Germany can be discussed without reference to his plays and they still remain pertinent even today.

In dealing with the post-Ibsen drama, Lawson formulates the essential character of drama as *social conflict—persons against persons, or individuals against groups, or groups against social or natural forces—in which the conscious will exerted for the accomplishment of specific and understandable aims, is sufficiently strong to bring the conflict to a point of crisis*. This definition is derived from Hegel's law of tragic conflict as interpreted by the French critic, Brunetiere, whom Lawson discusses at length in the chapter on Conscious Will and Social Necessity.

The last half of the book contains the treatise on play-writing. It analyses the dynamics and the mechanics of play construction—that is, the process of selecting and developing the theme, and the mechanical arrangement of the material in sequence to fit the requirements of the theatre. The fact that it is written in the abstract language of philosophy, seems to me to diminish its practical value for the aspiring playwright, although many of the ideas brought forth and the examples quoted are extremely stimulating. Here Lawson himself has not completely bridged the gap between theory and practice, which as he points out, has existed in the work of all former theoreticians.

Despite his acute analysis of the old academic playwriting manuals, such as Archer, Baker and Brander Matthews, he leans rather heavily on them in the section *Mechanics of Construction*, and divides his treatment into the time-honored sections of *Continuity, Exposition, Progression, The Obligatory Scene, Climax, Characterization, Dialogue and The Audience*. Nevertheless I doubt whether his detailed analysis of various plays and his interpretation of the laws of movement by which a play comes into existence, would insure the average student's preparing a satisfactory scenario of a play. The old manuals of playwriting were clearer in this one respect; they were addressed to the budding playwright who aspired to write successful plays for Broadway.

But Lawson is addressing himself to a new generation of playwrights, or so it seems, although he does not specify to whom he is speaking. For this reason, his "process of selection" does not seem to me entirely happy: he chooses *Design for Living, The Petrified Forest, The Silver Cord, and Both Your Houses* as "the most distinguished products of the English speaking stage," and neglect to discuss in detail a play like Susan Glaspell's *Inheritors*, which despite its technical faults, has real significance in the development of the American drama. Again, in treating of the theatre today, Odets seems to me a far more vital dramatist, and his play *Awake and Sing*, which mirrors so effectively the breakdown of the middle class in the crisis, both in its form and in its content, deserves a far more detailed analysis, than the successful plays chosen for this purpose which, excellent though they may be in themselves, offer no essential innovation in the theatre.

Lawson has given us a brilliant explanation of the meaning of the form of the well-made play, when in speaking of the French dramatists in the first half of the book, he says, "As capitalism became solidly entrenched there rose the need for a type of drama which would reflect the outward rigidity of the social system, which would give orderly expression to the emotion and prejudices of the upper middle class."

We are living today in a period when the contemporary dramatist, like the plastic artist, is faced with basic confusion—both in himself and in the external world. It becomes increasingly difficult for the sensitive creative individual to function at all. Everything which he had learned to consider as fixed and eternal seems to be undergoing rapid change and this change often appears destructive and disintegrating. It is not strange, therefore, that the play of today, when it ceases

to be merely formal imitation, is breaking its old form and thereby mirroring in miniature the stages in the collapse of bourgeois society. It is for this reason that the modern dramatists lack the *progression* and the sense of *unity* which make for great art. But before the new generation of playwrights can achieve any progression or unity on a creative level, they must make a basic choice. This is none other than the choice between an old world system in a state of decay and the new world which is just coming into existence. Hence the new playwright must leave the shell of the old well-made play behind and advance into new territory in search of the new content, which only in time can determine the new form.

Because of the basic choice imposed on the present generation by the historic situation, the *conversion* scene in the modern drama is of major importance. The economic crisis of 1929, by changing the content of life for the average person, produced a need for a different kind of play than the type which was popular in the days of "prosperity." A conversion play like *Peace on Earth* is therefore, in spite its weaknesses, of far more importance in the development of the American drama than a play like *The Shining Hour*. It seems to me that if Lawson had given more attention to a discussion of the audience, without whom a play does not completely exist, his choice of plays to illustrate the laws of playwriting would have been somewhat different.

For these reasons Lawson's book, which puts its finger on so many vital issues in the theatre today, requires a sequel, which will take up the controversial points. Beginning with the breakdown of the well-made play, the new book would move on toward the formulation of the basis of a working class theatre. We already have two traditions to draw on in the world today: the theatre of the USSR and the proletarian theatre of Germany prior to Hitler. Because the Russian theatre is expanding, in a country which has already had a successful revolution, it has less relevancy for America than the former German theatre, which developed under the difficult conditions of the post war period within the framework of the old economic system. There is every reason to believe that in the United States today there is a large audience ready for a new type of play and that this audience, especially the younger generation, is eager for experiment and for new ideas.

It is to be hoped that Lawson himself will write this necessary sequel to his *Theory and Technique of Playwriting*, which in itself is an extraordinary contribution to the literature of the theatre.

# Dance Reviews

BY EDNA OCKO

**Hear Ye! Hear Ye!** deals with murder in a night club; *Horizons* traces early American history, *The Mirror* sketches post-war defeatism and advocates class collaboration, a young dancer is critical of established pedagogic approaches and outlines one of her own, other dancers perform *Gigues*, *Hymns*, *Invocations*, and *Lullabies* to a polite audience of two or three hundred, and that briefly covers the formal dance activities of a month. One emerges from such fare with a bitter conviction that the dancer of today seems entirely lacking in an organized, intelligent point of view. He seems governed solely by personal esthetic and ideological canons. Although dancers are eager to establish contact with broader sections of the public, they fail to speak convincingly to people in terms of their contemporary experiences or background. Dancers are either unaware of these realities, or unwilling or incapable of interpreting them.

Ruth Page's ballet concerns itself with the testimony of three witnesses before a bored judge and jury in a murder trial. This is contemporary stuff; any newspaper tells you that. The material is presented in a form popular and specific enough to encourage attentive audiences; it has no technical subtleties, it uses descriptive pantomime freely. The music is colorful and fresh, the court scene with dummy jury and spectators is satirically conceived, and the characters clearly typified, from the prosecuting attorney to the "cokie." With all this in its favor one is sickened by its utter triviality, its lack of any respectable idea, and its snobbish indifference to one. This is the theatre for silly diversion and escape from boredom; it is not concerned with the art of the dance. Is there no choreographer who can take the courtroom, the jury, the lawyer, the witness stand, and create significant dance theatre? The Scottsboro trial, the Dimitroff trial, the trial of any worker on a frame-up charge, the "trials" of financial magnates, even the judgments rendered outside of courtrooms, such as the trial Southern mobs give innocent Negroes—all are within the province of dancing. But it must be a dance liberated from the squeamish reservations of individual performers and prepared to deal with real human, emotional values. If the present framework of the dance is not prepared to cope with such material then pioneers must break new ground. The dancer must be prepared to create new

approaches, new techniques, to accept a new understanding of the theatre, in order to accomplish a richer and fuller communication with a mass audience.

Unlike Ruth Page, Martha Graham is concerned with the wide recognition of her art as a powerful and meaningful social force. She seems conscious of present-day America, an America of strikes and picket lines, of bitter poverty and unproductive wealth. She is also aware that a large public demands that her dancing reflect this life. She writes "the dance reveals the spirit of the country in which it takes root . . . Our work is to create subject matter, significant and contemporary, for the American dance . . . As we increasingly find something significant to dance, we shall find more and more persons to dance for." These statements were published several months ago. Her new work, *Horizons*, reaffirms certain American traditions. We take exception not to her choice of material but to her failure to interpret her theme from a "significant and contemporary" viewpoint. By isolating her theme from contemporary references, and then stripping it of human, emotional qualities, Miss Graham makes unsuccessful her efforts to communicate with the very people for whom she is creating. The audience, as critic, becomes unwilling to justify the form in which the ideas are presented (in this case an experimentation with moving décors) when it is unmoved and indifferent to the content.

Out of historic events, searching social documents can be created, but it will probably remain with the younger dancer whose social vision is more profound to accomplish this task and find what in American history is worthy of recreation today: perhaps it will be the tradition in America that produced a revolutionary war, a Shay's Rebellion, a Haymarket, a Sacco and Vanzetti case, because it strikes closer to the temper of the American people than pioneer homesteading. At any rate, we cannot expect a public to praise an art work entirely removed from everyday realities, even though the original inspiration for the work may have been the artist's awareness of these realities.

We also are unwilling to accept the social interpretations of the Jooss Ballet, which produced *The Green Table* and *The Mirror*. *The Green Table* combined with its indictment against war a thoroughly defeatist attitude. Death only was con-

queror; it was useless to struggle, there was but the maudlin desire to sink into the welcoming and even tender embrace of death. According to Jooss, the maelstrom of war failed to give birth to any group prepared to struggle against it. In *The Mirror*, the solution he offers for humanity's betterment is the friendly union of Capitalism, the middle class and the workers, which is a fantastic interpretation of social forces in modern society.

To date the dancer has failed to grapple with the actual terms of life and to present in dance form works that clarify social issues and are a progressive force in society. Until this is accomplished the dance must play a minor role in the theatre arts.

## The National Dance Congress

**T**he National Dance Congress to be held in New York, May 20th-27th, will go a long way to convince the public mind as well as strengthen the faith of its own followers that there are dancers and organizations prepared to grapple with and solve the divers problems besetting the profession.

There is no art as unorganized economically as the dance. Recitals and students have ceased to supply the meager support they once gave the professional performer or teacher. The Dance Project is giving only temporary employment to a small fraction of dancers. Chorus Equity covers a small sector of the dance profession. There are thousands of dancers who have no economic protective association to support them.

No other art has been so miserably devoid of critical, impartial analysis, so misunderstood by a public, so confused in its ranks as to what direction to take for its own betterment as the dance. The recent resurgence of ballet activities, the confusion and contradictions existing in the modern dance, the popularizing of dance in the films—all these are phenomena that plead for discussion and interpretation.

There surely is a place for a dancer's organization on a nationwide scale, with an annual Congress and Festival, broad enough to deal with these cultural phases of the dance. There surely is a definite need also for an organization prepared to serve the best economic interests of dancers not covered by Equity.

It is to facilitate these plans that NEW THEATRE encourages support for this Dance Congress and urges that all interested organizations or individuals write to Joint Committee for Dance Congress, 66 Fifth Avenue, New York, for further information.

## Federal Theatre Plays

In the initial major Project productions, the creative impulse still seems too largely confined to sets and lighting, with the one conspicuous exception of The Living Newspaper, *Triple-A Plowed Under* edition.

Written to the point, in spare sharp language, *Triple-A Plowed Under* benefits from a severely plain and vivid mounting competently handled, an unobtrusive musical score, and a performance which is infinitely superior to anything else in the Project. In a sense such comparisons are unfair, for in The Living Newspaper there is no need for, indeed there can be no characterization. Players appear only to present points of view, submerging personality into an idea or a type. Nevertheless, the actors bite into their lines with vigor and sureness and the direction of Joe Losey keeps them moving at a pace which is in itself a major accomplishment. There is about the whole show a competent and exciting atmosphere. It emerges as a unit, in which the various elements of production find meaning and existence only as parts of the larger whole.

With the exception of The Living Newspaper, the difficulty of synthesizing the various elements of production was best overcome by the Negro Theatre's *Walk Together, Chillun*. Fortunate in the understanding and character of Manuel Easman's scenic design and in the lighting of Abe Feder, the Negro Theatre has attacked the unique problem of snaring and holding the interest of a social group which has never been welcomed into the theatre. *Walk Together, Chillun*, at the Lafayette, seized the bull by the horns.

An indictment of the Flemington, N. J., circus-trial, *American Holiday*, put on by the Popular Price division, offered a strong idea watered down by prolix writing and evasion of the necessary and full implications of the problem set up, and by the failure of the players to achieve more than a facile surface competence which never once endowed the script with the importance which it merited. Hence, *American Holiday* remained, though entertaining, curiously unimportant.

*Chalk Dust*, presented by the Experimental Theatre, proved interesting despite the shortcomings of its script and its lack of professional polish. Messrs. Clarke and Nurnberg started bravely on their attempted attack on the entrenched school system, but on the way they lost sight of their goal and were bogged down in a swamp of petty tangent themes. The set, cleverly and economically contrived,

was interesting only in itself, however, not in the use made of it.

JOHN MAKEPEACE.

## Hirsch Leckert

The new Artef production, *Hirsch Leckert*, deals with the early revolutionary movement in Russia, when assassination was the workers' sole weapon against administrative oppression and brutality. Once again the Artef players and their director Benno Schneider achieve miracles of characterization against the simplest of settings and with very little plot assistance. Hirsch Leckert, revolutionary shoe maker, escapes from prison, organizes a May Day demonstration, is flogged by the authorities, and fails in an attempt to assassinate the governor of the province. In its episodic nature and simple motivation, the play is reminiscent of Brecht's *Mother*; but it achieves its quality of epic heroism, not by abstraction, but by the richness of its individual characterization. The range of moods, from side-splitting farce at the expense of soldiers and police, to the somber intensity of the plotting scenes and the deep tenderness of Leckert's farewell to his wife, is very great; the players are invariably equal to it. Schneider's dynamic direction is in constant evidence; there is a May Day demonstration scene where his handling of a swirling, surging crowd on a tiny stage is breath-taking in its power and order. Only in the flogging scene, where shadows on the wall and the beating of a drum are supposed to convey the scenes of inhuman cruelty taking place off-stage, does the imaginative level of the production drop. And there are times when a certain exaggeration of posture and movement among some of the actors clash with the restraint and realism to which the production in general is keyed.

E. F.

## End of Summer

In *End of Summer* S. N. Behrman records meticulously and amusingly the noise of social controversy as it echoes, no louder than the clink of cocktail glasses, through the graciously curtained living-rooms of the medium-rich.

The daughter of a giddy, bubbly, well-massaged mother (Ina Claire) is in love with a college lad who has no money and "radical" ideas. The boy, afraid of wealth, declines to marry the girl to the accompaniment of some rather callow formulations about The Cause. His friend, worse-mannered but less foolish, is after the wherewithal to start a radical magazine. There are sundry incidents about the mother's affairs, the attempt of a climbing psychiatrist to marry the money that comes with either mother or daughter, the grandmother's death, etc. The mother, out of her experience with men, sends the daughter at the final curtain, to follow the boy into his poverty.

In fact what little plot there is, is labored. It is Mr. Behrman's skill in scenting out both the wit and the amusing witlessness of these people which gives the play its attraction. That, and Ina Claire's equivalent gift in characterization.

• • •  
*CALL IT A DAY*. By Dodie Smith; produced by the Theatre Guild; with Gladys Cooper and Philip Merivale.

Brooks Atkinson apologized for finding this opus unexciting. It seems to us the Guild, not Mr. Atkinson, should be begging pardon. If you are a comfortably-off commuter then this compendium of homely details on the bright side of family life may bring you a cheerful sense of security. If not, decidedly not. It may even make you wonder if this sort of middle-class Paradise was not well Lost. Or if it ever existed . . . M. D. T.

# ARTEF PLAYERS PRESENT HIRSCH LEKERT

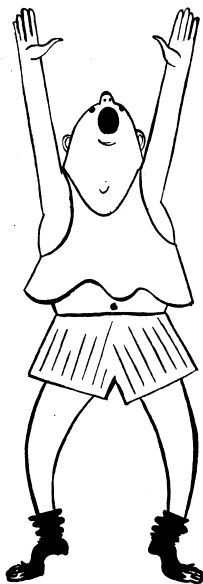
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## FIVE-FINGER EXERCISES FOR THE ACTOR—II

By BOB LEWIS

Gus Peck

With the audience as the receiver and the actor as transmitter of a stage play, the question always arises: "How can I, the performer, put myself across, or 'project' my feelings over the footlights?"

In the first article of this series, I gave some exercises for the actor's *concentration*, which is important for projection. Then, too, the actor should have stage energy (higher than normal or casual energy) and be in the proper state of relaxation; alive, active relaxation, not collapse. Before a rehearsal or performance, a good exercise to prepare oneself for the proper balance of energy and relaxation is as follows:

Stand with your feet about twelve inches apart and raise your arms high over your head, chest high, head back. Now stretch up as high as you can, rising up on your toes and trying to touch the ceiling with your fingertips. When you have reached the *highest* point, *do not collapse*, but relax *slowly* until you have reached your normal posture again. You should find yourself "tingling" and ready to act. Aside from these exercises, the most important factor for making the actor the ideal machine for the transmission of emotion, mood, character, etc., is "alive" and "apparent" sensory reactions. Inasmuch as the props the player uses on the stage are not "real" objects, though they may be "actual" (*i. e.*, the champagne that is supposed to make him smack his lips, groan with delight and murmur "Nectar of the Gods!" is quite apt to be slightly warm celery tonic), the feeling of reality must be enhanced by the actor's true sensory adjustment. The audience must not only accept the actor's word that it is champagne, but must believe him if it is also to believe the look he gives the duchess at the same moment he says "Nectar of the Gods!" (A look clearly designed to convey, "And so are you!")

*Exercises for the sense of touch:* Study how a handkerchief feels in your hand, the weight, the feel of the material as you rub it back and forth between your fingers. Try a silk one, too, and discover the difference in rhythm between linen and silk. Now, put the handkerchief away and attempt to duplicate the experience. Recreate again the weight and feel of the material, etc., exactly as if you had the object in your hand. Be sure you really *feel* the handkerchief in your fingers. *Do not imitate pantomimically* the gestures. The recreation of this sensory experience without the object is called "sense memory." Now go through the performance of putting on a hat, first with a real hat, then without a hat. Be careful that, in the second half of the exercise, you not only feel the hat in your hands, but also on your head, as the inner band touches your forehead, as the hat is pulled down, etc. Another good practice is to take off and put on your shoes and stockings. Do all these "sense memory" exercises very slowly, carefully, checking yourself at every moment to be sure

you have not "lost" the object. The performer can invent for himself many more "sense memory" exercises for developing the sense of "touch."

Article number three will continue to discuss exercises for the development of the other senses: hearing, sight, taste and smell. It is interesting to note in passing that the activity of the "sense memory" can be used *per se*, and for stylistic reasons, for example, in projecting an experience under circumstances where actual props are not in use, as in the Group Theatre's present production, *Case of Clyde Griffiths*.

## Books on the Ballet

*DANCE.* By Lincoln Kirstein. G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$5.00.

*DIAGHILEFF.* By Arnold L. Haskell. Simon & Schuster. \$3.75.

*TO THE BALLET.* Irving Deakin. Dodge. \$1.50.

*RUSSIAN BALLETS.* By Adrian Stokes. E. P. Dutton. \$2.50.

Lincoln Kirstein's *Dance* is one of the finest books on the history of the art to date. It traces the origins of dancing in primitive times through the Egyptian, Greek and Roman eras, carries it beyond the medieval and renaissance periods, where it emerges as ballet, and pursues its history until today. The factual material is presented with a fine regard for socio-historical background—an innovation in dance literature. The book, in addition, boasts of a comprehensive bibliography, a list of musical recordings for theatrical dancing, and an excellent selection of illustrations.

On the jacket of the book, the question is asked, "Why has dancing as an art become so important at the present time?" Unfortunately Mr. Kirstein's book does not answer that problem satisfactorily, though it presumes to do so. Mr. Kirstein sublimely omits to outline, almost as if determinedly convinced of its non-existence, the modern dance movement, by whom (for the last two decades at least), the torch of Terpsichore has been held aloft in the Western world. Outside of this, which is partially explained by Mr. Kirstein's passionate attachment to ballet, and his equally passionate conviction that the future of the dance in America practically resides in the School of the American Ballet, the work as a source book is deserving of the widest circulation and the highest recommendation.

The widest circulation of these books will probably be achieved by *Diaghileff*, by Arnold Haskell, however. As companion piece to *Nijinski*, although it primarily seeks to dispute several of that book's contentions, it affords its readers the same fascinating mélange of opinionated biography, enlivened by a generous sprinkling of anecdotes about great painters, musicians, dancers and artists who passed through the dynamic mould of Diaghileff and

his Ballets Russes. The definitive biography of this impresario has not been written this time, however; there is no overlooking the fastidious and irksome snobbishness of Haskell, and his anti-Soviet, anti-liberal viewpoints. This book is spotted with inferences of the superiority of "aristocratic" art over art for the masses; there are constant references to the ignorance of "propagandists on the Left," and to the faultiness of Marxist interpretations of art. In part he is echoing Diaghileff's own viewpoint. This man admittedly created for "aristocrats" who believe in "taste" and "flair." One of his greatest difficulties in production was the insistence by the musicians' union that the men be paid overtime. In his own company, "an abortive strike for increased salaries led to the instant dismissal of the offenders." This book fails of its purpose because Mr. Haskell who sets out as biographer, unwittingly is forced to become an apologist for his subject, and winds up with his readers less disposed to admire the great man than heretofore.

*To the Ballet*, by Irving Deakin is a small volume comprised of extended synopses of most of the ballets presented by the Monte Carlo company. It would serve its purpose best if sold in the lobby of the theatre during intermissions.

*Russian Ballets* by Adrian Stokes is an elaborate and flowery dedication to Colonel de Basil, director of the Monte Carlo Ballets. It becomes embarrassing at times for a lover of the dance to read the discursions of a self-professed balletomane. Each microscopic reaction to the delicate fluttering of a *tutus*, is laboriously recorded, analyzed, and rhapsodically put into print, under the mistaken assumption that a public is waiting with bated breath for so-and-so's ideas on the muted pizzicati of the strings and their effect on the ballerina's finger-tips.

ELIZABETH SKRIP.

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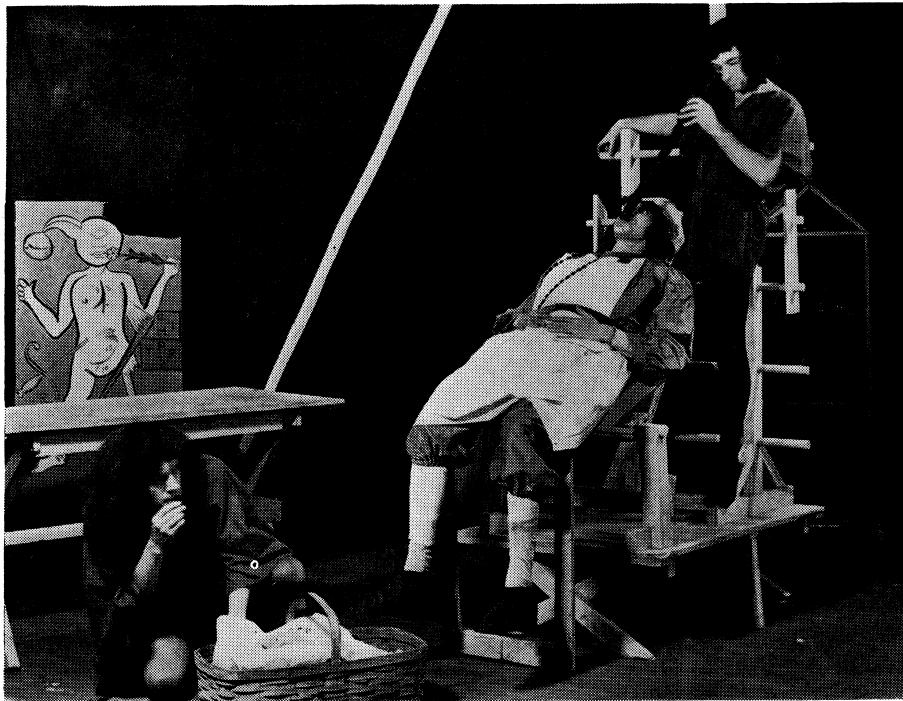
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# Shifting Scenes



THE THEATRE COLLECTIVE PRESENTS LOPE DE VEGA'S "THE PASTRYBAKER"

**T**HE New York Theatre Collective has just completed a week's run at the Provincetown Theatre in a bill of three one-act plays. The program was spirited and varied, ranging in mood from the broad farce of Lope de Vega's *The Pastrybaker* (in which two starving doctor's servants outwit a patient of their master's and make a meal of his basket of dainties) to the forceful realism of Albert Maltz's *Private Hicks* and the deft satire of Philip Stevenson's *You Can't Change Human Nature*. Stevenson pokes fun at the dilemma of the League for Impartial Justice during the stirring pre-Bunker Hill days of the American Revolution, thus exposing the vacillations and futility of all fence-sitters from then till now. In doing so he has written one of the first comedies of the new theatre movement.

The Collective, founded two years ago, has hitherto given only single performances of its plays; this bill marks its first extended presentation.

## In the Middle West

The first step in an anti-fascist cultural movement among the Germans in the Middle West has been the organization of the Chicago German People's Theatre, which last month produced Stefan Heym's one act play *Execution* under the direction of Rudolph Lothar. Played on a bare stage with only some chairs and tables, a black curtain and a swastika as scenery and props, and acted by workers with no previous stage training and experience, the dramatization of the worker Schulze's struggle against the Nazi authorities nevertheless stirred the audience profoundly.

By way of contrast, a correspondent from St. Louis, Douglas Jacobs, writes that the new theatre movement is being paid the compliment of imitation by some of its most hostile opponents. *Storm-Tossed*, written and directed

by a member of the Society of Jesuits, was produced in St. Louis by The Queen's Work, a national Jesuit publication, during the week of March 7th. According to announcements it is the first of a series of similar plays, and its promoters are definitely entering the field of the theatre. *Storm-Tossed* deals with a Communist-led strike; Marxist doctrines are subtly misrepresented, and the leader finally espouses Catholicism as the best solution to the world's problems. The strikers are depicted as drunken bums, incendiaries and stupid fanatics. Mr. Jacobs calls upon the readers of *NEW THEATRE* to watch for the production of *Storm-Tossed* in other cities, so that its anti-labor bias may be exposed, and the play boycotted.

## With the Groups

The Westchester County Drama Commission sponsored the one-act play program presented by the Negro Drama Union at the White Plains Little Theatre on February 28th and 29th. Among the plays were Paul Green's *In Abraham's Bosom* and Eugene O'Neill's *The Dreamy Kid*. . . . The last act of *Peace on Earth* was performed in Bayonne, New Jersey, by the Vanguard Players. . . . The Toronto Theatre of Action and the Students League joined to present two bills of one act plays to enthusiastic audiences on four successive evenings. The plays were *Waiting for Lefty*, *Private Hicks*, *America, America, Newsboy*, *Home of the Brave*, *Steel Gas* and *International Hook-Up*. . . . The New Orleans Group Theatre has successfully performed *Waiting for Lefty* and *Till the Day I Die*. . . . The Cincinnati New Theatre entered the Public Recreation Commission's annual amateur contest with *Private Hicks* with only ten days' rehearsal and was one of four groups selected for the finals. A National Guard officer who rushed on the stage to protest that it was "the most un-American

thing he had ever seen" was interviewed and enlightened by a committee of the cast. Subsequently the Group played *Hicks* to the United Auto Workers, the American League Against War and Fascism, and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. The Group is now rehearsing *Monkey House*, conducting a regular class in acting, and working towards an eventual Cincinnati People's Theatre. . . . The Newark Collective Theatre, bent on consolidating its position, is organizing an advisory board, issuing a broad statement of its policy to the general public, and planning the production of three full-length plays for the season of 1936-7. . . . *Private Hicks* is the latest production of the Montreal New Theatre group.

The Current Theatre of the League of Neighborhood Clubs is interviewing actors, stage designers and other theatrical workers; auditions are being held every Sunday in April at the Current Theatre, 192 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York, from 12 to 4 p. m.

## Labor Stage

Labor Stage has been holding a series of Sunday night symposiums at the Princess Theatre in New York City. The subject of the first symposium was "Why a Labor Theatre?" and the speakers were Elmer Rice, Harold Clurman of the Group Theatre, and Albert Maltz of the Theatre Union. The second session was devoted to the topic of "Why Labor Stage?" and was addressed by Mark Starr, Educational Director of the ILGWU, Frank Crosswaith, and others.

The Brookwood Players are sponsoring a round-table discussion on technical and creative problems in establishing a workers' theatre, at Brookwood, on March 29th. Outstanding workers in the new theatre movement will lead the discussion.

Brooklyn will witness the beginning of a new permanent organization for presenting social plays when the Brooklyn Progressive Players present Paul and Claire Sifton's *Blood On the Moon* for a run, opening on April 26th, at the Brooklyn Little Theatre. The group plans to present three plays a season, chosen from the works of the best modern playwrights.

## For Writers

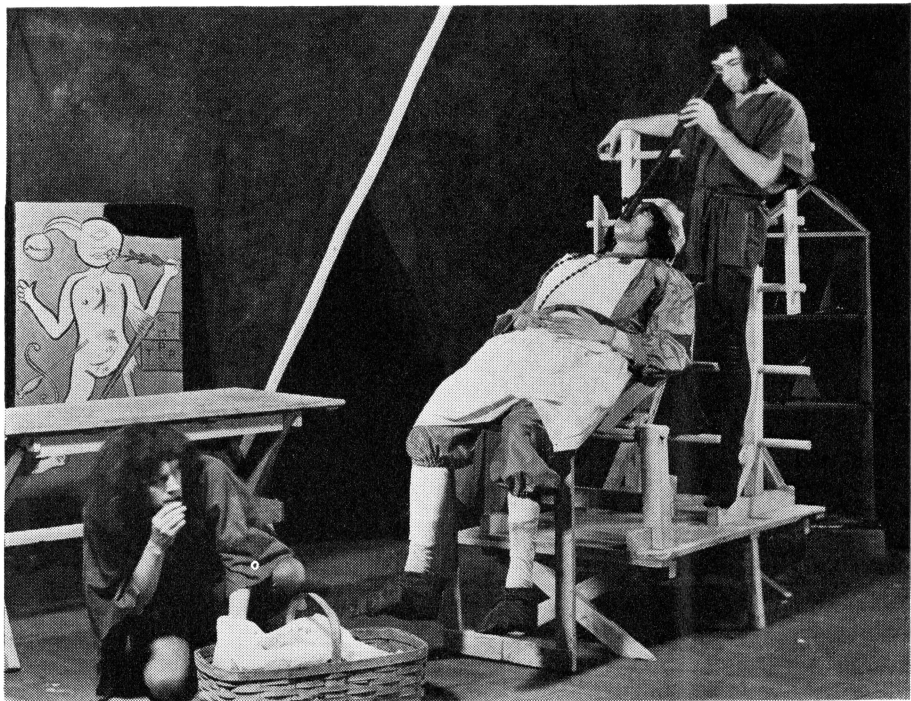
The Young Circle League, Youth Section of the Workmen's Circle, fraternal labor organization, has announced a one-act play contest for plays of social significance. Special consideration will be given to plays dealing with the Jewish scene in America. The judges are Alfred Kreymborg, David Pinski and Mark Schweid. The contest closes June 1st.

New Writers, Detroit's literary magazine, is interested in publishing one act plays and scenes from longer plays. Manuscripts should be sent to New Writers, 8200 Hamilton Boulevard, Detroit.

Arts In The Theatre, the Institute to be conducted at Triuna Island on Lake George next summer, offers a prize of \$50, and rehearsal with a view to public production, for the best original short work combining the features of poetry, music, dance and design. Thomas H. Dickinson is director of the Institute.

## The Relief Play Contest

The May issue of *NEW THEATRE* will carry the announcement of the first and second prize-winners in the current one-act play contest, dealing with the problems of white collar, professional, and other workers under the relief system. The contest has been jointly sponsored by the City Projects' Council, a New York organization of professional and white collar workers on the Public Works' Project, and the New Theatre League.



THE THEATRE COLLECTIVE PRESENTS LOPE DE VEGA'S "THE PASTRYBAKER"

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An evicted sharecropper takes refuge with his family in a church he himself helped build and is again evicted by church dignitaries. Four women, two girls, two men. Thirty cents.

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By PAUL PETERS

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

## NEW THEATRE LEAGUE

# An "Outside Reader" Looks In

Lillian Hellman, author of *The Children's Hour* recently refused an offer of \$2,500 a week from MGM stating that she wrote no better now than she did when she was a "reader" for them earning \$40 a week.

Who are these "readers," and what exactly is their work?

Imagine, if you can, Mr. Samuel Goldwyn, trying to sweat 1,300 odd pages of *Anthony Adverse* into a synopsis of ten. He would be as thoroughly wilted, at the finish, as the story itself. And yet the film industry's extensive corps of "inside" and "outside" readers, red-eyed and pale, achieves such feats daily.

Not that Mr. Goldwyn is likely to have read *Anthony Adverse*—Mr. Goldwyn hires "readers." Each of the major picture companies has its regular staff of "inside" readers. They receive a fixed salary ranging from \$25 a week at Universal to \$50 at Fox. But the bulk of the coverage is done by the so-called "outside" readers, and it is they who are the most harassed. Between three and four P.M. of each day the outside reader reports to the office of the story department, to bring in his previous day's work and to receive his next assignment. He is handed a book, bound, or in the form of galleys, page proofs, or manuscript, to take home, read and record in the next twenty-four hours.

What is behind this furious drive? Speed is the prime factor in story buying. The executives look to their story department to hand them a long lead ahead of the other studios. An unceasing competition goes on among the studios, a mad scramble for story material, which leads the studios even into the production of plays.

What does the reader do? He must read the assigned piece and write a report consisting of a detailed synopsis of the story, a short summary of the plot and a critical analysis of the dialogue, theme, locale, characters, literary quality and topical significance. He must regard background, style, genre, costs, physical and moral features of the story, have in mind the studio's stars, the feature directors' necessities and needs, and consider the general trends of current box office successes.

For this work, a long day's shift, the major companies pay per manuscript the following rates: Fox-Twentieth Century, \$3 for a play, \$5 for a book; Columbia, \$7.50; Universal, \$3; RKO, \$5; Paramount, \$6 to \$10; MGM, \$6; Warner's, \$5. Most studios pay these fees for "recommend" reports—for "non-recommend" reports, which are limited to a summary of the story and the critical analysis, the studios pay less than half the fee of a "recommend" report!

The actual work done, of course, is the same.

A regular "outside-reader," then, can average \$20 to \$25 weekly at Fox or RKO or Warners, while at Universal he must read two books a day to earn a fair living. Furthermore, this average is only assured him during the seasonal production of books and plays. When fewer books are issued and less new plays produced he often leaves the office empty-handed.

Besides the full-time readers, there are a swarm of part-time ones, newcomers just breaking in or specializing on foreign material. They too report every day whether or not there is work for them, although they very seldom get more than a half week's labor. When they receive reading matter, it is generally so poor that it cannot be "recommended" and their pay is consequently reduced by half, and they do not average more than \$12 weekly. The part-time reader remains a competitive threat to the full-time worker and is also utilized by the studios to level the wage scale.

Because the reader is in constant fear of losing his job, he is compelled to work at break-neck speed and the last few years, while rates of payment have dropped, the ranks of readers have been so swelled by the unemployed in the picture industry that it has not been possible for the regular readers to protest or organize effectively. Only once did they come close to going on strike. During the bank moratorium in 1932 when the panicky companies sliced salaries and wages from 50 to 75 percent, there was talk of strike among the readers, but they were not organized to carry on a strike. During the NRA the readers went unmentioned in the Motion Picture Code.

The reader not only sells his time but also a highly specialized training and a comparatively rich cultural background. Without true ability, a man could not begin to earn a living at the job.

As for advancement, he has almost no chance at all. The readers' personal opinions are not wanted, original ideas are unwelcome, and as a rule the story editor lets them understand in a hundred ways that they are not really employees.

What does the outside reader face? Unorganized and without representation, the reader is completely at the mercy of the studios and can become at any moment the jobless victim of the terrific competition within the movie industry. The readers must give their own answer to the question by banding together and organizing a union to protect themselves as wage-earners.

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# John Ford: Fighting Irish

(Continued from page 7)

You talk 'em down. Then they want you to continue whatever vein you succeeded in with the last picture. You're a comedy director or a spectacle director or a melodrama director. You show 'em you've been each of these in turn, and effectively, too. So they grant you range. Another time they want you to knock out something *another* studio's gone and cleaned up with. Like a market. Got to fight it every time. Never any point where you can really say you have full freedom for your own ideas to go ahead with."

"How do you explain such a crazy set-up?" I asked. "By block booking? The star system? The fact that it's first an industry and second an art?"

"I used to blame it largely on the star system," the large genial Irishman told me. "They've got the public so that they want to see one favorite performer in anything at all. But even that's being broken down. You don't think *The Informer* went over because of McLaglen, do you? Personally, I doubt it. It was because it was *about* something. I'm no McLaglen fan, you know. And do you know how close *The Informer* came to being a complete flop? It was considered one, you know—until you fellows took it up. You fellows *made* that picture. And that's what the producers are going to learn, are already learning, in fact: there's a new kind of public that wants more honest pictures. They've got to give 'em to 'em."

"How do you think they'll go about it?" I wanted to know. "That is, if they go about it at all."

"Oh, they will," he assured me. "They've got to turn over picture-making into the hands that know it. Combination of author and director running the works: that's the ideal. Like Dudley Nichols and me. Or Riskin and Capra."

The point startled me. "I thought directors were running the works completely now."

Ford snorted, amused. "Oh, yeah? Do you know anything about the way they're trying to break directorial power now? To reduce the director to a man who just tells actors where to stand?" He proceeded to describe a typical procedure at four of the major studios today. The director arrives at nine in the morning. He has not only never been consulted about the script to see whether he likes it or feels fitted to handle it but may not even know what the full story is about. They hand him two pages of straight dialogue or finally calculated action. Within an hour or less he is ex-

pected to go to work and complete the assignment the same day, all the participants and equipment being prepared for him without any say or choice on his part. When he leaves at night, he has literally no idea what the next day's work will be.

"And is that how movies are going to be made now?" I asked, incredulous. "Like a Ford car?"

He smiled wryly. "Not if the Screen Directors Guild can help it, boy. Hang around and watch some fireworks."

This Guild, of which Ford is one of the most embattled members, if and when it aligns itself with the Screen Actors Guild and the Screen Writers Guild, a not too distant possibility, will offer the autocratic money interests of the movies the most serious challenge of organization they have known to date.

Talk shifted to *The Informer*. Ford spoke of the great difficulty of persuading the studio that it ought to be tackled at all. He and Nichols arranged to take a fraction of their normal salaries for the sheer excitement of the venture; also, of course, to cut down production cost. Now, of course, the studio takes all the credit for the acclaim and the extraordinary number of second runs and for the Motion Picture Academy award—although Dudley Nichols' formal rejection of the award created considerable ructions. Nichols, it need scarcely be added, is one of the leading spirits of the Screen Writers Guild.

But what about the ending of the picture? I asked. Wasn't that a concession? So many of the criticisms had objected to it. Yes, said Ford, it was a compromise: the plan had been to show Gypo dying alone on the docks, and this had been just a little too much for the producers. Still, the religious ending was so much in keeping with the mystical Irish temperament, Ford maintained, that it was pretty extreme to characterize it as superimposed sentimentality.

How about more such pictures? What were the chances?

"If you're thinking of a general run of social pictures, or even just plain honest ones, it's almost hopeless. The whole financial set-up is against it. What you'll get is an isolated courageous effort here and there. The thing to do is to encourage each man who's trying, the way you fellows have done. Look at Nichols and me. We did *The Informer*. Does that make it any easier to go ahead with O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* which we want to do after *Mary of Scotland*? Not for a second. They may let

us do it as a reward for being good boys. Meanwhile we're fighting to have the Abbey Players imported intact and we're fighting the censors and fighting the so-called financial wizards at every point."

"Actually tackling social themes would be marvelous, of course," I put in at this point. "But what seems to us almost as important right now is to give the straight version of any aspect of life the movies *do* choose to handle. To avoid distortion and misrepresentation in favor of one interest or another. Don't you think that can be managed *within* this set-up?"

"It can and should!" he exclaimed. "And it's something I always try to do. I remember a few years ago, with a Judge Priest picture, putting in an anti-lynching plea that was one of the most scorching things you ever heard. They happened to cut it, purely for reasons of space, but I enjoyed doing that enormously. And there can be more things like that."

"Then you do believe, as a director, in including your point of view in a picture about things that bother you?"

He looked at me as if to question the necessity of an answer. Then: "What the hell else does a man live for?"

Ford, who is on record as having directed about a hundred pictures, selects *Men Without Women* as his favorite. His desire is to do a film about the men and women workers in the wings of film production; they are the only people in "the industry" who interest him at all. That this is not remotely near being the affectation it may sound like to some is attested by Dudley Nichols, who admires John Ford as one of the most fearless, honest and gifted men in Hollywood. Ford's house, says Nichols, is the same one he has lived in for fifteen years now; it has never occurred to him to "gold it up" or change it. No movie star or executive may ever be found visiting it. Electricians, property men and camera men are the people invariably hanging around—and in this choice of unprominent and unsung companions may very well be found the key to the fighting Irishman's life as a clear-eyed craftsman.

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## Drama versus Melodrama

(Continued from page 10)

factual pathos. Larry Meath, standing for nothing but a vague brand of idealism, indicates no way out. We all want manna from heaven, but how is it to be gotten? His inadequate attitude reflects upon his character, which is appealing without being in any sense compelling. If Larry Meath is not an agitator, too, then what in the name of common sense is he talking about on street corners, where he is allegedly very eloquent? The play only confuses the issue when it goes out of its way (perhaps as a sop to the British public and the censorship) to contrast him with another leader of the unemployed arbitrarily defined as an "agitator." He meets his death trying to head off an unemployment parade which the alleged agitator is leading through the Labor Exchange district. Confusion also arises from the unnecessarily melodramatic way in which the young man loses his position. The gambler and politician who desires Sally is made responsible for his being fired, although Larry might have become unemployed in the natural course of events without diminution of the pathos of the lovers' inability to get married. In fact *Love on the Dole* would be a poor play if it weren't such a moving one,—a contradiction in terms perhaps, but not when we consider that its power derives not from its structure but from the conditions it records.

Unfortunately much less can be said for Dan Totheroh's *Searching for the Sun*, which expired after an all-too-brief run at the Fifty-fifth Street Theatre. Allowing itself to be derailed by a see-sawing love-affair between two children of the road, it moved slowly, tended to become monotonous, and resolved nothing. Nevertheless, it was an effort in the right direction, and speaks well for the playwright's intentions. He has been trying to hew out a path for his unquestioned

talents for some time, but *Mother Lode* found him bogged in unwarranted romanticism and his last play left him stranded in the No-Man's-Land of sentimental pathos and inconclusive optimism. He may hew nearer the line the next time, and his sincere picture of the homeless and "unpossessed" encourages the hope that he will. Beyond sentiment for the sake of sentiment and beyond melodrama towards conclusive drama is the direction he must take.

"Beyond melodrama" is the last signpost observed by James M. Cain in the dramatization of his novel, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, which is understandingly mounted by Jo Mielziner and effectively performed by Mary Philips, Dudley Clements and Charles Halton. In the district attorney's office there is a superb scene showing the influence of insurance companies in trials. It gives one a troublesome view of the dispensation of justice in these states. Otherwise the burden of the story is the murder of an unpalatable husband by a young woman and her hobo lover, who might have been perhaps more appealing if Richard Barthelmess were less uncomfortable in his first appearance on the stage after two decades of "pictures." Though they escape the talons of the law, retribution overtakes them by an ironic twist of fate. If playwright Cain had eschewed sensationalism, deepened his characters, and realized the tragedy inherent in lives such as theirs he might have written something far more vital than a moderately exciting but uneven melodrama. From *Case of Clyde Griffiths* to *The Postman Always Rings Twice* is an instructive descent.

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## NEW THEATRE LEAGUE

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# From a Dancer's Notebook

(Continued from page 31)

were too far removed from her to make a true contact.

Perhaps it is this mystic strain in Martha which prevents her from saying clearly what she means. But understanding the reason does not help the situation. Her explanations of the exercise patterns continue to be very cryptic and very arbitrary. For instance, she repeats often that "technique must not be distorted; it must be pure and classic." There are many body positions which seem distorted to me. Martha insists on certain arm positions throughout all the technique which she says are classic in all dance and therefore must be considered classic in modern dance technique. Surely what is "classic" in the modern dance cannot be so arbitrarily determined at this time. On what basis is she determining what is classic, what is pure, what is not distorted? This she does not tell us. And this I want to know. The modern dance is bigger than a few sets of exercises. If Martha has found a theoretical base for the sound construction of body technique, that is infinitely more important to contribute that to the modern dance than these arbitrary arrangements of technique-forms.

For instance, we are learning a set number of "falls" to set counts: the fall on four, the fall on three, on two, and on one count; the fall on a "contraction," the backward fall on a "release." We are not taught primary basic laws governing body falls, we are not learning primarily to fall with ease, we are acquiring six patterns of falls until Martha invents a seventh for us. I have learned to execute these falls. What shall I do with them now? Does Martha give them to me as part of a dictionary of modern dance vocabulary? As a modern dancer, I object to *having* such a dictionary, even though the movement words *are* vigorous, direct, concise.

Where, oh where, can I learn about *principles* of falling! Where can I acquire a knowledge of the problems involved without falling into dogmatic ritual; and by the application of which I will achieve a *skill* in falling! Isn't technique just that? Isn't it merely power over your medium? Surely it is not a set of patterns, a sequence of releases and contractions. These patterns *must* become an academic modern dance vocabulary no different in essence from academic ballet vocabulary against which the modern dance originally revolted. Already I have seen Martha, and her students both, take these exercises and put them *in toto* into dances to express anything or noth-

ing. This is the inevitable result when the forms of technique become an end in themselves, when no clear relationship is made between technical theory and technical practise, *and* when no bridge is drawn between technical practise and creative technique.

\* \* \*

Martha says: "You must do a movement perfectly in the studio a thousand times if necessary in order that you may execute it once correctly on the stage." Or again, "You'll have to practise this movement every day for two and a half years, before you can execute it with perfection." This typifies the rigid discipline for which Martha Graham stands.

And for this we can thank her. She has created a dance scene wherein only slaves to professional discipline can hope to survive. She has shown us what the dance demands in actual physical labor. She demonstrates a drive toward work which slays the lazy but which acts as a potent stimulus for the earnest. She never lets you forget that as a dancer, you must strive for that perfection which performance demands; that everything in studio work has as its objective the stage and formal appearance. The theory is made a reality, when suddenly Martha springs from the divan to demonstrate a movement. It is a precious moment out of a Graham performance at the Guild Theatre.

But discipline in itself does not account for Martha's mastery over movement. The physical clarity of her slightest movement, that wonderful clear delineation, is something which we all need and which really characterizes her system of technique. Throughout all the exercises, from the simplest to the most complex, the muscles are kept at a pitch of tension way above the normal, making for the maximum tension of the body at every moment. "The body must always be in a state of listening." No part of the body is ever allowed to relax. "Relaxation plays no part in my work. I believe in relaxation through change, not through cessation."

This muscular tension is something beyond necessity. All these movements can be executed with half the strain, with much more ease, but Martha seems to believe that only by exaggerating muscular power beyond its functional use, can the body project its movement clearly into space. This muscular tension of every part of the body she believes should be present at all times, in order to insure clear delineation and strength of move-

ment. I think I have found a tie-up here between execution and projection which takes me completely by surprise. I could not understand why I should strain my muscles as Martha insisted when I could execute the movement just as well with the body calm and at ease. Neither Martha nor her devotees ever made it clear to me. But at last I think I've found the reason. The straining of the body in technique which Martha demands has nothing to do with the technique of movement, as such, but rather with the technique of projection. It is a principle which one can apply to any technique, and to any type of movement. I think back now to Pavlova, and I know that all the greatest dancers have known of it. "You must be fanatical when you dance, fanatical in the muscular sense." It is an intensity completely divorced from the specific intensity which the mood or the content of a movement may demand. "Dancing is physical. . . Your conception exists for your audience only as physical movement. . . Stop reacting to ideas. . . Dance exists only in action, not in reaction. . . Move and make your audience react to your *movement*. . . Stop thinking. . . The body comes first!" It is a fanaticism, a strength, an ecstasy, a *projection*, dealing purely and scientifically with the dancer's instrument. In this, Martha has made an invaluable contribution. But then she carries the theory into dance content, creating an approach to the dance which many of us have been fighting.

"A strong arm lifting is sufficient reason for the existence of the movement. The audience should not always look for a meaning. You cannot help but express strong ideas, if your movement is sufficiently strong muscularly." What richness can lie in an art built upon merely kinaesthetic response? In fact, Martha is a case in point. So many people, professionals and laymen both, admire her performances, they are tremendously *awed* by her; but they are not *moved* by her in those compositions which are based on the theory of kinaesthetic titillation.

Her *American Provincials*, which is a biting comment on society, evokes a warm reaction in the audience, immeasurably greater than that evoked by the "kinaesthetic" composition *Course*, even though the movements in the latter are strong in themselves. The superior values of a movement-of-content dance like *American Provincials* over a movement-of-movement dance like *Course* cannot be denied. The dance *Celebration* is a good example of my point, because, though on the whole it is a stirring composition, whole sections of meaningless movement are inserted to the detriment of

the dance for the sole purpose of singing a paean to the physical strength and acrobatic skill of the body. Why is movement form for its own sake any more justifiable than self-expression for its own sake? The greatest art has always used form not as an end in itself, but as a means with which better to express significant ideas.

Why cannot we apply Martha Graham's command over physical movement to the expression of vital ideas? Why must movement be used meaninglessly as padding in a dance? The modern dance revolted from the ballet because it wanted to go beyond virtuosity, it wanted to express ideas and emotions in movement, through movement. It is sophisticated these days to pooh-pooh Duncan. It might be a good check on modern dancers to return periodically to her "Art of the Dance" and to recall the *raison-d'être* of the modern dance.

The course is coming to an end. It has been very instructive and very stimulating. There is much here that as a professional I can utilize. But there is much which, if I am honest, I must discard. Many young dancers like myself desire clarity of form, but not only of the physical form. We are equally concerned with the intention which we feel must lie behind movement. The dance is embarking

on a new kind of realism that will carry it out of the curtained seclusion of the select concert, out to people, out into reality.

A year ago I asked of the Wigman method as today I ask of the Graham method: Where is the truce between discipline and freedom? What is the relation between basic technique and creative technique, between free improvisation and formal composition? What is the relation between the modern dance and specific content, between movement that says something clearly and communicatively to an audience—between that and the abstract medium of movement?

These are problems the Graham system of dancing leaves unanswered. These are the most important problems which face the modern dancers of today. Where shall we find the answers? We cannot forever travel back and forth among systems that can no longer satisfy our specific needs, technically and creatively. We must clarify these needs, and, in relation to them, take of these existing systems what can benefit us. We must objectively discard the rest. We must open new paths of source material to the dance. It is for us to begin to build an edifice that will more completely meet the demands of the young, experimental, social-minded dancers of today.

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## Backstage

The New Film Alliance is to be commended upon its enterprise in showing the brilliant documentary films of the distinguished Dutch director, Joris Ivens, now in this country. Unfortunately the showing took place too late to be reported in the April issue of *NEW THEATRE*. The editors feel so strongly the significance of Mr. Ivens' films that, although material on them has already appeared in previous issues, they will provide further and more detailed comment next month.

Sergei Eisenstein's *Film Forms: New Problems*, the first section of which appears in this issue, is based on a report to the Creative Conference on Cinematographic Questions in Moscow in January, 1935, delivered by the famous director of *Ten Days That Shook the World*, and other films. Eisenstein has recently been teaching in the State Film Institute in Moscow as well as preparing a text-book on the cinema. He is now working on a new film, *Behzin Meadow*, in which he is using professional actors for the first time since he returned from the stage to the screen.

*NEW THEATRE* thanks those subscribers who so generously responded to our letter of appeal for funds to print new one-act plays in our pages. We feel sure they will find it a more than worthwhile investment after reading *Bury the Dead* which their quick response has enabled us to publish in this issue.

As we go to press comes news that because of the protests following the New Haven Unity Players' victory in the Yale Drama Tournament with *Waiting For Lefty* last season, this year's tournament rules bar all "propaganda plays," although permitting "a minimum of profanity and blasphemy, in keeping with good taste!"

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