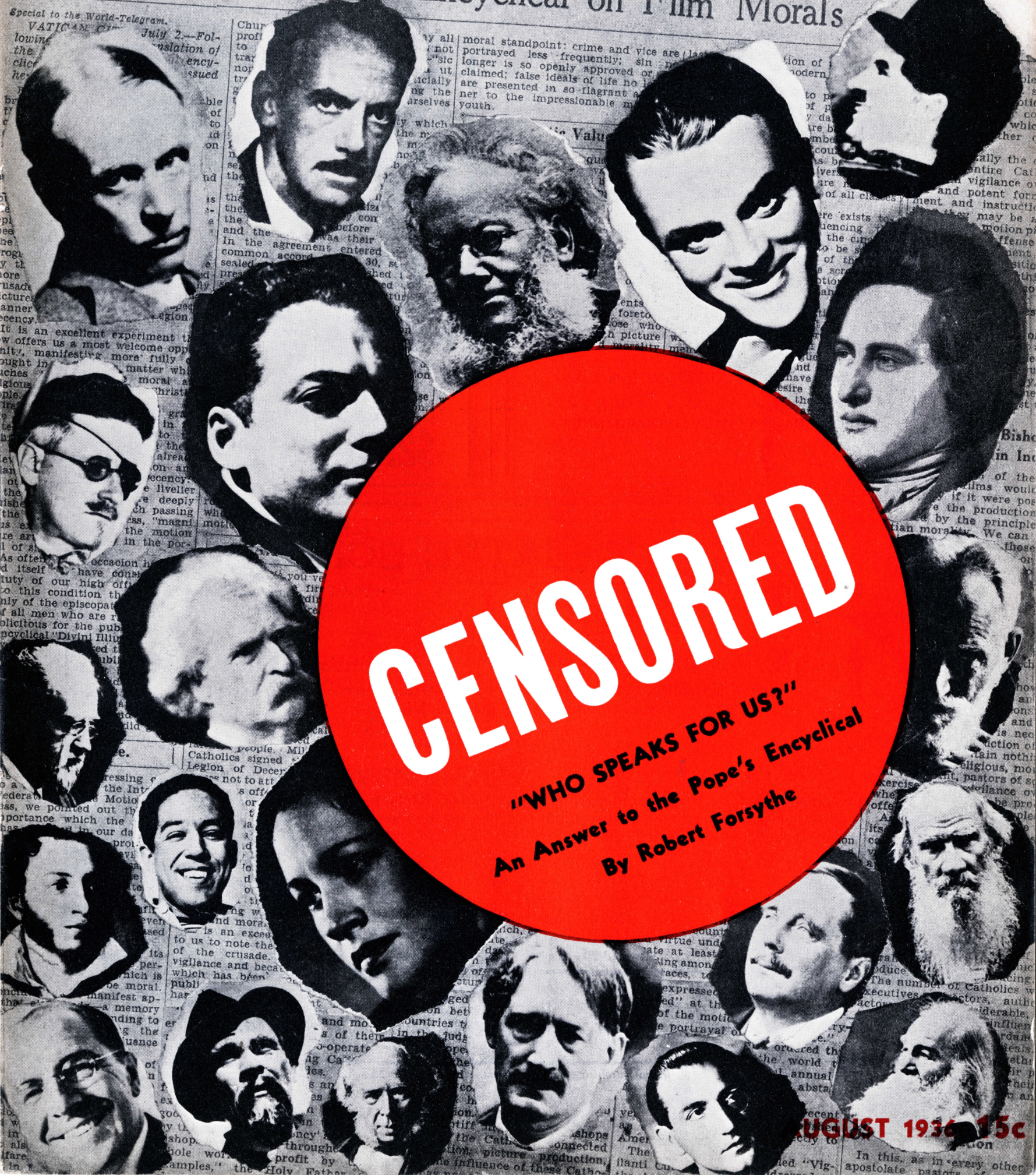


New Theatre

Text of the Pope's Encyclical on Film Morals



CENSORED

"WHO SPEAKS FOR US?"
An Answer to the Pope's Encyclical
By Robert Forsythe

AUGUST 1936 15c

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NEW THEATRE

AUGUST, 1936

Mr Robert Forsythe's challenging reply to the Pope's Encyclical calling for world-wide censorship of the motion picture states an issue of immediate concern to every liberty-loving American. Forsythe points out that although censorship on the surface is concerned with immorality, actually it constitutes suppression of *ideas*.

Since there can be no real separation between ideas and the life that gives them birth, censorship at its worst aims at the suppression of "dangerous thoughts" at their very source—life itself. The sufferings of Galileo and Copernicus and the martyrdom of Bruno are fresh in the memory of man. The censorship of the great early moderns, Zola, Ibsen, Flaubert, Strindberg, Hauptmann and Shaw found a counterpart later in America in the attacks of the righteous on the works of Anderson, Dreiser, Lewis, O'Neill and, more recently, on writings ranging from the protest plays of Odets and Wexley to such works as *The Children's Hour*, *Tobacco Road* and *Within the Gates*. In Germany, the slaying of the great working class actor Hans Otto, the uprooting of Pabst, Wolf, Lang, Piscator and Reinhardt from the land they had ennobled by their contributions are but the natural corollaries to the suppression of progressive ideas by the forces of reaction. The German terror finds its counterpart in Italy, outside the very doors of the Vatican, where truth-tellers face death or imprisonment at the hands of the Fascisti and not even the Pope dares protest Mussolini's murderous methods of silencing a Matteotti or of bringing civilization and Christianity to Ethiopia. The road from censorship to the concentration camp is not a long one.

Everyone who prizes freedom must fight against the slightest encroachment on hard won civil liberties. For the powers that be always seek to gag men who speak for the people. Maxim Gorki and Ernst Toller, whose lives and writings are treated in this issue, paid with many years' imprisonment for their fearless championing of what

they held to be the truth. If fascist influences gain power in the United States, they will not be content with merely banning the film version of a book like *It Can't Happen Here*. The author himself will suffer the fate of Gorki and Toller.

We are now asked to sit back and acquiesce, even to participate in the gagging of the most modern and popular art. To date, there has not been the slightest evidence that the motion picture industry is opposed to the world-wide extension of the Legion of Decency as proposed by the Pope. It would be a mistake to attribute its silence to abject cowardice alone. The truth of the matter is that the motion picture industry is not interested in ideas, as it has declared on innumerable occasions. In fact, it distrusts ideas. Will Hays, the Presbyterian Elder, and the Pope are undoubtedly in agreement that ideas are dangerous and lead to unrest. The defense of the freedom of expression in the movies therefore rests with progressive forces the world over. It is unthinkable that at this stage in the world's history the forces of medievalism can be permitted to retard the further advance of civilization without a struggle.

Militant action by determined local groups and national organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Committee Against Censorship of the Theatre Arts has succeeded in forestalling censorship action against plays and movies. However, the forces of sanity and progress are not as well organized as the forces of reaction. The real lesson to be learned from Forsythe's article is that all progressive forces in this country must unite on an unprecedented and nation-wide scale for the full protection of our constitutional rights.

On our cover are the photographs of a few of those who have had to endure censorship of one form or another, clerical or secular: Sinclair Lewis, Eugene O'Neill, Henrik Ibsen, James Cagney, Charlie Chaplin, Heinrich Heine, James Joyce, Clifford Odets, Emile Zola, Mark Twain, Her-

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Ils voudraient éteindre jusqu'au Soleil.

THEY WOULD EXTINGUISH EVEN THE SUN.

DAUMIER

bert Spencer, James Barton, of *Tobacco Road*; Ann Revere of *The Children's Hour*; Pushkin, H. G. Wells, Leo Tolstoy, Henri Barbusse, G. W. Pabst, Langston Hughes, Fritz Lang, Walt Whitman and George Bernard Shaw.

Scab Bureau

At the very moment the Dramatists' Guild and the New York theatre managers were deadlocked on the details of the recently signed basic agreement, the Hollywood producers saw fit to "recognize" the problems of the younger playwrights and forthwith organized the Bureau of New Plays, headed by Theresa Helburn of the Theatre Guild. According to its syllabus, the Bureau aimed to assist new playwrights of talent, to give them recognition and the means to continue their work. At first glance, it looked good—annual prizes of \$3,000 awarded six prize-winning plays, and several yearly

fellowships ranging up to \$2,500. But all the plays written under the terms and conditions set down by the Bureau of New Plays are held by the producers who have the sole right of production, for which they specify a "fair and liberal agreement on the lines of the *old basic agreement*." This is plainly an attack on the closed shop, an attempt to weaken the victory of the Dramatists' Guild which assures the playwright a 60-40 split in picture sales and the 10-year reversion clause.

NEW THEATRE knows of two cases wherein young dramatists, offered fellowships by the Bureau of New Plays under the old contract, correctly turned down the bids although it meant foregoing financial security. It is clear that Theresa Helburn's Bureau, like the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, is a front behind which the Hollywood producers carry on their endless assaults on the unionization of the industry.

Time Marches On!

The press and the newsreels of this country continue to watch the remarkable developments of France's People's Front government with narrowed hostile eyes. Read the dispatches or see the newsreels to find out what is actually transpiring in Paris, and you receive, free of charge, the information that the People's Front is tearing itself apart and cannot last beyond the day after tomorrow.

The screen show *The March of Time*, gives in its latest issue a first class example of biased opinion substituted for factual reporting. Luridly, the sequence surveys the events bringing the People's Front into power, and offers two white hopes against a "red menace." These include Colonel La Rocque and his petty fascist organization the Croix de Feu, and the French peasantry. *Time* marches on to the trumped up conclusion that the French farmer is growing restless with the new regime. Carefully, it forgets to explain that the new government has passed important, needed laws for farm relief, as well as establishing significant legislation for industrial workers.

This sort of misrepresentation does not represent reporting, but a sort of infantile wish-fulfillment, pleasant to the senses of Hearst, and other odorous figures of the American scene. Strictly speaking, it is not even conscious propaganda for reaction. On the other hand, the Pathé newsreel version of the People's Front is in the truest tradition of the yellow press. With all the virulence and blatancy of a war-time atrocity story we are shown the demon of communism spreading its tentacles over Europe to crush out the last remaining democracies. Only Hitler and Mussolini, we are informed, can save the world.

Thousands of American workers and anti-fascists who witness the Pathé newsreels and *The March of Time* are subjected to a series of violently astigmatic lens impressions that imply motion in reverse where, actually, progress has been achieved. All of which emphasizes the necessity in America, and in the world over, of a new cinema which will be free to portray the life of our times.

In France, simultaneous with the rise of the People's Front, a new group, Cine-Liberte, has been formed to accomplish this very purpose. The new organization is calling upon spectators and creative cinema workers to form an independent film movement which will not censor the realities of war, oppression, and fascism for the benefit of France's ruling class. Cine-Liberte numbers among its members such important men as Leon Moussinac, Jean Renoir, Henri Jeanson, Pierre Chenal, and others, and plans to co-

operate with similar groups in other countries.

Here in America, steps toward the organization of independent film production units and new film audiences have already been taken. Obstacles hold these movements back. But real necessity demands that obstacles be overcome. Americans cannot depend upon the *March of Time*, Pathé, or Hearst's *Metrotone News* for the truth about the living world.

"Let Freedom Ring" Tour

The *Let Freedom Ring* Acting Company is still at it. Actors from the original company that produced *Bury the Dead*, *Hymn to the Rising Sun* and *Private Hicks* are reviving Albert Bein's Broadhurst and Theatre Union success for a tour of the textile towns under auspices of the United Textile Worker's Union. Its official opening was held at Convention Hall, Camden, N. J., before 5,000 RCA strikers. Its New England headquarters will be Providence, R. I., where the Woolen and Worsted Federation is showing it on July 31st and August 2nd. Other cities already booked are Woonsocket, R. I.; Lawrence and Franklin, Mass.; Hartford and New Haven, Conn., and Paterson, N. J. Other trade unions, the Farmer-Labor Party and theatre organizations, who wish information about bookings, may reach the Let Freedom Ring Company at 143 Academy Avenue, Providence, R. I. The prices of seats will be 25 cents and 50 cents, and the company will divide gate receipts, over and above expenses, with the sponsor.

The granpap of the clan is still played by Will Geer. Victor Killian, Jr., plays the sheriff. David Clark is the mill owner. Herta Ware is the mountain girl turned prostitute. Zelda Cotton and James Deenan provide the love interest. The rest of the cast includes New England favorites such as John Lenthier, and New Theatre League Sunday-nighters from *Hymn to the Rising Sun*, and *Angelo Herndon*, such as Agnes Ives, Cyril Mills, James O'Rear, Richard Fredericks, Murray Montgomery, Nell Converse and MacRovner. Brookwood Labor College provides the bus for transportation of the Company. The Actors' Repertory Company and Labor Stage, Inc., are to be thanked for their help with rehearsals. We look with interest on this tour and urge all theatre and cultural groups and individuals to support the first New Theatre stock company.

Towards a National Theatre

Readers of Mark Marvin's article calling for a National Theatre, published in our July issue, will no doubt be anxious

to know whether or not any serious action has been taken in line with his suggestion for a national congress of theatre workers to initiate the campaign and plans for such a desirable set-up as a national theatre would guarantee. The sad truth is that no indication of action has been forthcoming from the leading theatre workers whom Mr. Marvin suggested should initiate this tremendously necessary move for a national theatre. Mr. Marvin believes that he might have possibly made a mistake by appealing to the executives of the Project and other theatrical organizations for action and not directly to the "rank and file." The rank-and-file of the Projects and all theatre workers interested in a national theatre should consider the issuing of a demand for a national theatre congress through their trade-unions or any other organizations they may belong to. While it is true that adequately reliable rumor (and cold logic) indicate that the Federal Theatre Projects will be continued at least until after election, the Project workers (and other theatre persons who may ultimately have to seek Federal Theatre Project employment) must remember that winter follows the elections and no one likes to contemplate a cold winter spent in unemployment. In publishing the article calling for a National Theatre, NEW THEATRE (and the New Theatre League) are not engaging in academic discussion; but intend to press the issue just as surely and firmly as circumstances, economic change, and cultural need are pressing American theatre workers and the American theatre



ROSE McCLENDON

audiences towards action in this all-important matter. *Forward to a national theatre in America!*

Prize Play Contest

It is our hope that the \$200 Prize One-Act Play Contest announced in our July issue will uncover a new talent as rich as Clifford Odets and Irwin Shaw, two young and unknown playwrights who catapulted to fame overnight with one-act plays written and produced for the new theatre movement. However, as in the cases of Paul Green, Albert Maltz, Langston Hughes and John Wexley last season, a number of established playwrights are working to complete new one-act plays before the closing date of the contest, October 1st. Whether the winner is a new or an established playwright, the winning play (as well as all others deemed worthy of purchase and production) is assured of immediate production. The need for one-act plays cannot be overemphasized. Theatre groups the country over, amateur and professional, are eager to get new short plays. The phenomenal success of such plays as *Waiting for Lefty*, *Bury the Dead*, *Till the Day I Die*, *Private Hicks*, and *Hymn to the Rising Sun* has aroused nationwide interest in the one-act play. Playwrights who missed reading our July issue with the full details of the contest and John W. Gassner's excellent article, *Towards a One-Act Theatre*, may still secure a copy by writing NEW THEATRE. The contest details and rules may also be obtained from "The \$200 Prize Play Contest," P. O. Box 300, Grand Central Annex, New York City.

Rose McClendon

The death of Rose McClendon at the height of her dramatic powers is a sad loss to her friends and to the theatre. Famous for her work in *In Abraham's Bosom*, *Porgy*, *The House of Connolly*, and many other plays, the great Negro actress, a year before her death, had come to the realization that the only hope for her people was in unity with the white working class against its common exploiters. She spoke of *Stevedore* and *They Shall Not Die* as life's hopes come true. And she spent every spare moment up to her death working for the creation of a theatre where such dramas would be played before the very people whose persecution and oppression they protested. On the economic front, through Actors' Equity, she was able to gain recognition for many Negro actors. No one has done more to advance the Negro in the theatre. We mourn the loss of one of the finest actresses and finest women the American stage has known.



ROSE McCLENDON

Who Speaks for Us?

BY ROBERT FORSYTHE

AT first glance it would seem that the extraordinary thing about the Pope's encyclical on the movies was its belatedness. It was pointed out almost immediately and with a slightly wounded air by Mr. Martin Quigley, ardent Catholic and editor of the Motion Picture Daily, that the Holy Father could surely not have Hollywood in mind because Hollywood had already been cleaned up by Mr. Joseph I. Breen, the Catholic layman acting as censor with the consent of the film companies. Mr. Quigley, perhaps a bit desperate, lifted one paragraph from the encyclical which went as follows: "*In particular you, venerable brethern of the United States, will be able to insist with justice that the industry in your country has recognized and accepted its responsibility before society.*"

A full reading of the encyclical, however, dispelled any such comfort for Mr. Quigley. What the Pope meant by the foregoing paragraph was not that he praised Hollywood for its success in elevating the films but that it warned the "venerable brethern of the United States," i.e., the Catholic bishops, to keep an eye on Hollywood, which had promised many

things in the way of decency but needed watching. It was saying, in brief, that Hollywood, having accepted the principle of outside censorship, was not to be allowed to beg off. It was true that the encyclical had favorable things to say about the success of the Legion of Decency campaign and Mr. Quigley was justified, by way of appeasing his best advertisers, in getting what pleasure was possible out of his headline, "U. S. Film Gains Praised In The Pope's Encyclical," but he was not telling the story. Since it was hardly possible that the Pope was expecting to influence the policy of Soviet films and nobody knowing the present state of censorship in England could get agitated about the evils to be expected from that source, it was certainly Hollywood which was the object of the encyclical.

The reaction in Hollywood might well have been one of shock at such ingratitude and cruelty. After placing itself in the hands of such good Catholics as Mr. Quigley and Mr. Breen, the industry found that its efforts were being ignored and something more was being demanded. Mr. Will Hays was quick to point out

that a recent report of the Legion of Decency revealed only four productions condemned since the industry had undertaken its own clean-up campaign under Mr. Breen. But all of the successive statements of the Beverly Hills gentry, brave as they attempted to be, gave indications of their awareness that the Trojan Horse which had been led through the studio gate by Mr. Joseph I. Breen was beginning to disgorge its occupants.

Since the Church is not known for its stupidity, it could only be agreed that the encyclical was in no sense behind the times but was an important document foreshadowing future action. The point about censorship is that it never openly announces its destination. As Bernard Shaw noted in denouncing the English censorship of the stage, the provision by which control of the theatre is in the hands of the Lord Chamberlain (with no recourse possible elsewhere) arose from a desire of Walpole in 1737 to curb the attacks of Henry Fielding on parliamentary corruption. "*Walpole, unable to rule without corruption, promptly gagged the stage by a censorship which is in full force at the present moment.*" Walpole, naturally, said nothing about protecting himself from Fielding's attacks, but placed the matter on a high moral plane. Would a father like to have his sixteen-year-old daughter sit through a play by Fielding, etc., etc.? The censorship, which was so easily imposed, has never been lifted. It has never been lifted because every censorship which starts out as a moral crusade ends as an instrument for suppressing thought.

The spectacle of William Randolph Hearst denouncing Mae West for immorality is not so hilarious as first appears. As an expert at perverting ideas, Mr. Hearst is not unaware of the moral position to be attained by defending the home against sin. His extra-marital life with Marion Davies at San Simeon hardly entitles him to honorable mention as a Great Moral Force, but it was significant that the Legion of Decency campaign had its most fervent support from the Hearst newspapers, stories of its successes appearing on the same pages with pictures of young ladies from the Paradise or Hollywood Clubs who were giving living examples of the truth that the human form, in a Hearst newspaper, is a thing of beauty.

But Hearst was not fundamentally concerned with Mae West, any more than any censorship is concerned primarily

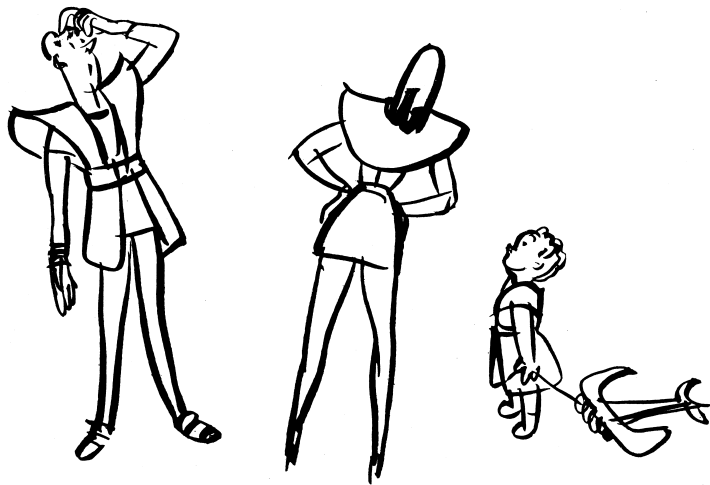


DRAWINGS BY JOHN GROTH

with sin. He was concerned with the censorship of ideas, just as the Catholic Church, sincere as it may be, is concerned with ideas. It is interested in protecting the home, the family and, most important of all, the *status quo*. If it were only on the matter of sexual relations, we might conceivably join the Pope in his crusade. We could easily do without Mae West, although we are less offended by the buxom lady than we are by most of the ideas which pass as art in Hollywood. Nothing is so immoral to us as a series of pictures calculated to show that the life of Carole Lombard will be open to anybody who yearns hard enough and learns not to complain. The half-truths, the distortions, the evasions which constitute the average Hollywood film will not offend the eye of the most moral because they pander to the desire of settled individuals to feel that we are living in the best possible of worlds. From any decent view of life, such films are obscene and should be barred, but they will be hailed by Leagues of Decency just as long as the public taste is allowed to be perverted by such fabrications.

In Catholic circles a polite fiction is maintained that the Pope speaks only to his own flock, but in truth it is assumed that he speaks as the moral conscience of the world. But morals are as susceptible of variation as truth itself and who is to agree that Pope Pius, speaking to Hollywood, is speaking for mankind? Is the world which has fought Catholic suppression in the arts and sciences now to accept an edict from the Vatican which seeks to control the greatest medium of expression left to man? The Catholic countries have never been known for their hospitality to novel thought. The list of banned books in present-day Ireland must by this time rival in numbers the *Index Expurgatorium* itself.

It is only a Catholic matter because the Pope has made it so. The attempt of any religious body to demand control of the motion pictures of the world would need equally firm resistance. In writing about the backward state of various parts of New England after the Revolutionary War, Van Wyck Brooks in his *The Flowering of New England* writes: "At the moment, the state of mind of these inland regions,—even Connecticut, which faced the sea,—seemed hardly auspicious for the man of letters. It was not quickened by the mental currents that brought new light to the towns of the Eastern seaboard. It was wrapped in an atmosphere of gloom; and its doctrines of total depravity and the utter vanity of human effort paralyzed the literary sense. . . ." In short the effect of religious suppression and terror was as deadly as it has been in all ages. Progress has been



MR. WELLS' UTOPIA IS VISITED BY A STRANGER

brought about by constant warfare upon religion, magic and superstition. The fight is as serious now as it has ever been.

The action of the Legion of Decency in condemning *Things to Come*, the H. G. Wells fantasy which even managed to elude British censors, is something to be worried about. In this case no question of sexual morality can be raised because in the first part of the film people are too busy being massacred to think of the matter and later they become too beautiful and hygienic for such nonsense. But the Legion is not pleased even with this pasteurized version of life. They list the film, Class B—Objectionable in Part, and write: *Objection: The Wellsian theory of a mechanical age with the exclusion of any thought of a Higher Being is ex-*

pounded in this film. The difficulty of tackling any current theme under a blanket requirement such as that will be apparent immediately. In a film dealing with slum clearance, for example, it would be hard to credit a Higher Being with the construction of the new model apartment without at the same time hinting that a Higher Being might have been responsible for the former state of depravity and misery. Just what Mr. Wells could have done in his film short of presenting a mysterious figure waving a wand over the prophylactic characters is beyond us. The fact that we are to have, according to the British seer, air-cooled cities and rocket trips to the moon, seems to have agitated nobody but the Legion. The garments of the new-fangled creatures didn't win us but they were evi-

dently human beings despite that and for the Legion to state by implication that Mr. Wells was thinking of hatching his new people artificially from incubators rather than having them fashioned in the time-honored way is a libel on the picture and a too-patent indication of what may be expected from religious censorship of the films.

The record of American cities in which Catholic politicians and religious fervor controls public opinion is not good in the matter of the stage. The barring of *Tobacco Road* and *The Children's Hour* by Mayor Kelly in Chicago followed the action of Boston in suppressing earlier plays by Eugene O'Neill, *Within the Gates* by Sean O'Casey and *The Children's Hour* by Lillian Hellman. The latter play was barred before it had an opportunity of opening in Boston, the Mayor rejecting it in words which led to a suit for slander being instituted against him by Mr. Herman Shumlin, producer of the play. From the agitation which arose over the incident, an amendment was passed through the activities of the Massachusetts Theatre Alliance which placed censorship control in the hands of a committee consisting of the Mayor, Police Commissioner and a member to be elected from the city art department instead of being in the hands of the Mayor, the Police Commissioner and the Chief Justice of the Municipal Court of Boston. The former bill gave the committee the right to "revoke any licence at their pleasure." The new amendment provides for a "hearing of all persons interested." It was substituted for the notorious Dorgan Bill, which would have barred any theatrical production which "contains dialogue or action in its subject matter pertaining to homo-sexuality, incest, the portrayal of a moral pervert or sex degenerate or the use of subversive propaganda." We call attention to the latter phrase, in which the defenders of the public morals give the case of censorship away. Mr. Dorgan, being a bit more frank or a trifle less careful, had stated the case in its entirety. What the advocates of censorship are interested in is not the nakedness of a chorus girl or the smuttiness of a comedian's joke but in ideas. First, last and always . . . ideas!

The successive leg shows of Mr. Earl Carroll and Mr. George White and minor imitators of the Minsky order have not been bothered in Boston in years. If lust, carnality and incitements to seduction are objects of concern, another encyclical might be written on that subject alone, but it is notorious that the censors turn a glazed eye to such entertainments and only awaken when *Waiting for Lefty* reaches town. *Model Tenement*, a play by Meyer Levin which was scheduled as

the first production of the Federal Theatre Project in Chicago, was kept from the boards by the interference of Mayor Kelly acting in conjunction with Father Giles. The Project people in Washington were in no position to deny the wishes of a man who had carried Chicago and Illinois for Roosevelt. The most amazing part of Mr. Levin's experience with Father Giles was the reference to *Les Miserables*. Now there, said Father Giles, was a book which was on the *Index*. Yet the Legion of Decency has been able to recommend the film . . . because the film was not like the book. In the book the church failed Jean Valjean. So, naturally, the book was on the *Index*. But in the film, well, that was another story. . . .

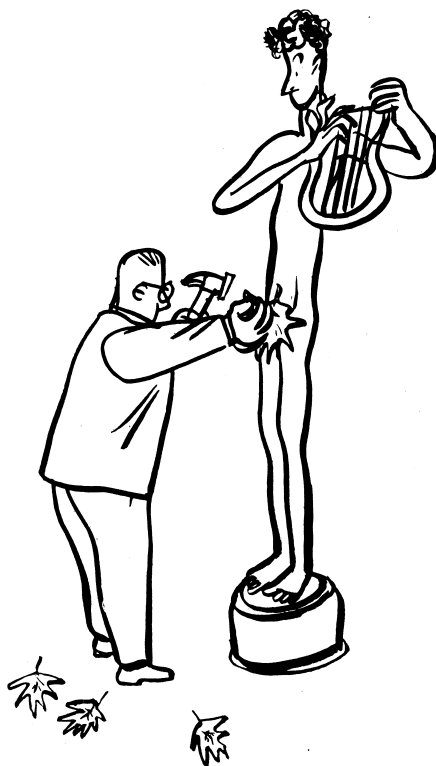
Mr. Levin's comment on this is important: "It didn't seem to occur to Father Giles that the Church had actually caused the film-makers to reverse the meaning of a world classic by an author who, being dead, had no come-back. He didn't seem to consider that a preponderant audience of non-Catholics was not interested in Catholic symbolism in their films."

The censorship of the cinema is now being followed by action aimed at taking over the radio. Variety has recently published the first reports of another decency move which was to do for the air what the Legion has done for Hollywood. It is significant only as a sign of progress. The radio is already censored to the hilt by the major companies. What else can be done to dry-clean a medium which is now the most concentrated blast of mediocrity ever invented is more than ordinary man can understand. But the

trend is plain. The stupendous efforts made to keep the book publishing business out of the hands of the blue noses is still so fresh in the minds of interested parties that anyone who has gone through that struggle will face the new one with fear. For it is coming. There are intermittent and often successful attempts made in New York toward the suppression of books. Many cases never come to light, being brought by a snooping Catholic female in Brooklyn, aimed against little book stores which are unable to fight and prosecuted by Catholic district attorneys who have no wish to thwart an ardent fellow-worshipper with a possible voting force behind her. A successful attempt at controlling both the movies and the radio will inevitably lead to censorship in all fields. If we are not mistaken New York state still has on its books the censorship law which makes it possible to padlock a theatre in which a condemned play has been presented. It has not been enforced in late years but there is nothing to prevent it and the effect upon frightened real estate proprietors, who already control the theatre life of New York, can be imagined.

The Church is utterly sincere in its censorship ideas. It feels that man is better off under discipline; it feels that "a little learning is a dangerous thing"; it is earnestly desirous of protecting its people from changes which will lead away from the authority of the Church and hence, in the Church's view, act to their detriment. But the stultifying aspect of that doctrine is apparent in the very statement. Because the Church believes so firmly in these tenets it is inevitably the major support of the powers which are currently dominant.

As Robert Briffault states in *Rational Evolution*: "But the revolt of the oppressed against power no more depends solely or chiefly upon physical force than does the exercise of oppressive power. Constituted power is guarded by defences more effective than any Pretorian guard. It is protected by ideas. . . . No resistance against unjust power can take place while the sanctioning ideas which justify that power are accepted as valid. While that first and chief line of defence is unbroken there can be no revolt. Before any injustice, any abuse or oppression can be resisted, the lie upon which it is founded must be unmasked, must be clearly recognized for what it is. Hence, every advance of justice, every step in moral progress, has been not an abstract ethical inspiration, but a process of intellectual criticism, a victory of rational thought over irrationalism. Thus it is that whatever growth of justice and moral sense sets the modern age above the barbarism of preceding periods, has invariably gone





sance and the 'Grand Siecle.' After them is a changed world, the modern world. It was those men who threw open the portals from the one into the other."

Whether the censorship comes from the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh or from the Pope in Rome or from the Caliph of Baghdad, the danger is equally great. When a single united group can capture control of the most powerful agency of public opinion the world possesses, the duty of those who cherish civil rights and the freedom of the human mind is plain. They must be prepared to fight. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the encyclical of Pope Pius, urging a world-wide censorship of the cinema, comes at a time when the struggle of the exploited of the universe comes even more closely to grips with the forces of monumental greed. Encyclicals are not issued as weekly bulletins. They come only when something of supreme importance is being considered. There was a strange silence from the Vatican while the fascist forces of Mussolini were murdering the Christian brethren of Ethiopia, but the matter of the world cinema warrants a document of such weight that it is cabled in full to the New York Times, filling the better part of a page. At a time when the world is in turmoil and when the malevolent forces of reaction are determined to defeat an honest portrayal of social conditions, we have a letter from Rome which seems, at first glance, singularly out-moded. At the very least it can be considered unfortunate that with democracy threatened from all sides support for un-democratic principles should have come from such a source, and there is a possibility that it may be more timely than first appears.

What we have to say about it is very little: the progress of civilization has been achieved by fighting religious suppressions. Are we prepared to give that up now at the request even of a voice from Rome? Speaking in a practical way, the Catholics in America are a minor group, less than 20,000,000 people. Unless we are Catholics do we wish to have our tastes in art set for us by an authority which we do not otherwise recognize? Is Hollywood, already defeated by a financial set-up which prevents any but the most accidental treatments of reality, to be further smothered by the repressions of a highly interested group? The public is entitled to truth and art and honesty. Is it going to sacrifice the chance of that at the demand of a minority which is so actively engaged and directly affected that it cannot even pretend to impartiality in its judgments?

What we should like to know is this . . . Who speaks for us? And who gave them permission . . . ?



hand in hand with the growth of rational thought."

And the implications of rational thought are precisely what the advocates of censorship wish to avoid. The campaign which begins as a sortie against nudity and carnality soon becomes a mass enveloping movement calculated to stifle all novelty of thought or faithfulness of depiction. It has always been so. The truth is a powerful thing but only rarely has it a chance to prevail. There are too many interests concerned with suppressing it for the sake of their own lives and comforts. The self-delusion of such interests is well known. Even those who profess to be philosophical rather than vicious find themselves discovering immorality in actions which are really only threats at their possessions. So censorship which begins as the purest reproach of vulgarity inevitably ends in suppression of thought.

Again I want to quote Briffault: "*When the King's permission was requested for the performance of Beaumarchais's comedy, The Marriage of Figaro, he exclaimed, 'But, Messieurs, if permission is granted to perform this play, one ought—to be quite consistent—to pull down the Bastille!' Figaro went through sixty-eight performances—and the Bastille did duly get pulled down. It was by those men, Bayle, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert, Volney, Holbach, Condorcet and their contemporaries, who cast aside all conventional formulas, resolved to think for themselves, and, what is, more, speak out boldly what they thought, to own no other sanction or criterion than rational thought, that the world has been transformed. Behind them and around them stood mediaevalism in all its ignorance and darkness and tyranny over life and mind, for all the superficial veneer of refinement laid over it by the renaiss-*



A SCENE FROM THE MOSCOW ART THEATRE'S ORIGINAL PRODUCTION OF GORKI'S "THE LOWER DEPTHS," 1902

Maxim Gorki—Dramatist of the Lower Depths

BY H. W. L. DANA

Maxim Gorki's death has deprived us not only of a great champion of the toiling masses and a great realistic writer of stories about their lives, but also a powerful dramatist of some fourteen plays, the full value of which we are only just beginning to appreciate. The story of how Gorki, rising from the lower depths, first came in contact with the Moscow Art Theatre and turned dramatist, of his constant conflict with the Tsar's dramatic censors, and of his final trilogy of plays written since the Russian Revolution is well worth examining in detail.

It was the spring of the century and the spring of the year—May, 1900—at Chekhov's beautiful villa overlooking the blue waters of the bay at Yalta in the Crimea. The Moscow Art Theatre had just finished its second season, had already produced two of Chekhov's plays, *The Sea-Gull*, from which it took its emblem and *Uncle Vanya*, and had come to Yalta to rehearse Chekhov's new play, *The Three Sisters*. Since Chekhov could not go to Moscow, the Moscow Art Theatre had come to Chekhov. There in the congenial atmosphere of Chekhov's home, were gathered together the gods of the theatre, Stanislavski and Nemirovich-Danchenko and their actors as well as various Russian writers of the day, Bunin, Kuprin, Chirikov and Chekhov himself—the flower of the Russian intelligentsia at the turn of the century, surrounded by the springtime luxuriance of the Russian Riviera.

It was into this circle of well-dressed and polished intellectuals that there came

a strange youth, dressed in a Russian peasant blouse. In his granite features they could see marks of the suffering and hardships he had already been through, but in his soft blue eyes they could also see the great compassion he felt for all who suffered. This was Alexei Maximovich Peshkov, former shoemaker's apprentice, poor tailor, bake-shop worker and Volga stevedore, who had already been to prison several times for his revolutionary activities, and who had just made a name for himself as a powerful realistic writer of short stories under the name of Gorki, meaning "the bitter one."

The leading actress of the Moscow Art Theatre, Olga Knipper, who was to become the wife of Chekhov the following year, said of Gorki's coming: "He shot like a rocket into our quiet intelligentsia life and startled us with his accounts of a world unknown to us." It was this unknown world that they wanted to know. As Gorki himself wrote: "I came from below, from the nethermost ground of life, where was naught but sludge and murk. I was the truthful voice of life, the harsh cry of those who still abode down there and who let me come up to bear witness to their hardship."

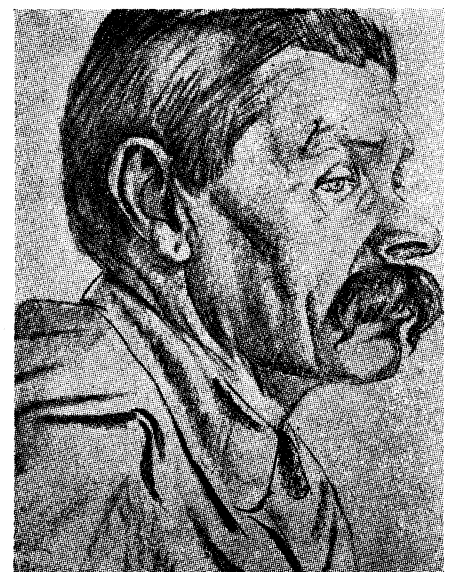
Nemirovich-Danchenko with his aristocratic square beard, "the Grand Duke of the Moscow Art Theatre," spoke of Gorki's "searching impetuosity turned inward," and felt "under Gorki's calm exterior the store-house of power in reserve, ready to hurl itself forth." It was this store-house that they wanted to tap. The Moscow Art Theatre had felt the need of

new blood. In these years leading up to the Revolution of 1905, they wanted someone who could satisfy Stanislavski's idea of a play expressing "discontent, protest, and the dream of a hero boldly speaking the truth."

Chekhov had met Gorki the year before and, although troubled by his "lack of restraint and measure," was deeply impressed by this stormy petrel of the Revolution. Chekhov said: "Gorki is a destroyer who must destroy all that deserves

● Maxim Gorki—"the man who, like Dante, emerged from hell, but not alone, who brought with him his companions in torment, his comrades in salvation."

—Romain Rolland.

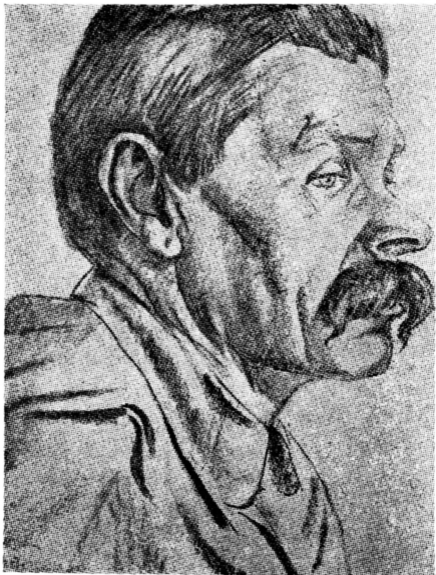




A SCENE FROM THE MOSCOW ART THEATRE'S ORIGINAL PRODUCTION OF GORKI'S "THE LOWER DEPTHS," 1902

● Maxim Gorki—"the man who, like Dante, emerged from hell, but not alone, who brought with him his companions in torment, his comrades in salvation."

—Romain Rolland.



destruction. In this lies his whole strength and it is for this that life has called him." Accordingly, Chekhov had invited Gorki to come to Yalta, meet the actors of the Moscow Art Theatre, writing: "Do come. Study the rehearsals and in five to eight days you will write a play!"

After the Moscow Art Theatre had gone, Gorki set feverishly to work writing plays. Chekhov bombarded him with letters: "Write! write! write!" Yet, instead of the "five to eight days" that the facile Chekhov had optimistically prophesied, Gorki worked for nearly two years on his first plays, *The Lower Depths* and *Smug Citizens*.

Meanwhile the file kept at Police headquarters under the heading of "A. M. Peshkov" was steadily increasing in size and the Moscow Art Theatre itself was at that time looked upon as too radical. It was thought that the censors might be less severe if they produced first a play dealing with the middle classes rather than with the proletariat. Accordingly they decided to open the season in their new Moscow theatre building with *Smug Citizens*. Yet even before that, while the Moscow Art Theatre was on tour, *Smug Citizens* was tried out at a private performance at the Mikhailovski Theatre in St. Petersburg. Gorki's election to the Imperial Academy had just been annulled by the authorities and the police feared a demonstration of the indignant masses by way of protest. The neighborhood of the theatre was guarded by mounted Cossacks. As Stanislavski said, it looked more like the preparations for a general battle than for a general rehearsal.

The Tsarist censors who were present at this dress rehearsal insisted in cutting out from the play all passages in which there was any criticism of the social order of that time. The smug citizen himself, Bessemenov, was not allowed to say: "The times are troubled. Everything is cracking to pieces." His rebellious son, Peter, was not allowed to say to his father: "Your truth is too narrow for us. It oppresses us. Your order of life is no use to us." The poor drunkard, Teterev, was not allowed to say: "In Russia it is more comfortable to be a drunkard or a tramp than to be a sober and hard-working man. It is better to drink vodka than to drink the blood of people—especially since the blood of people today is thin and tasteless and all their healthy blood has been sucked out."

It was above all, however, the grimy driver of a railroad engine, Nil, who terrified the censors as a prototype of the coming revolution. When Nil turns on the smug citizen, he was not allowed to say: "He who works is the master." Of course the Tsar's censors cut out his cul-

minating speech: "I and the other honest people are commanded by swine, by fools, by thieves. But they won't be in power forever. They will disappear and vanish as abscesses disappear from a healthy body."

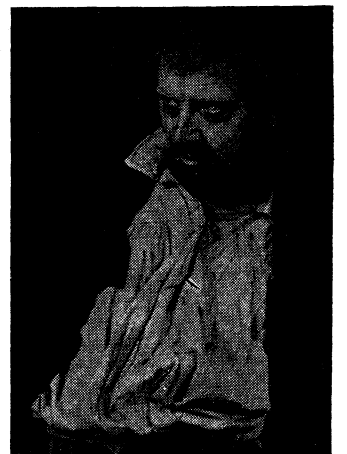
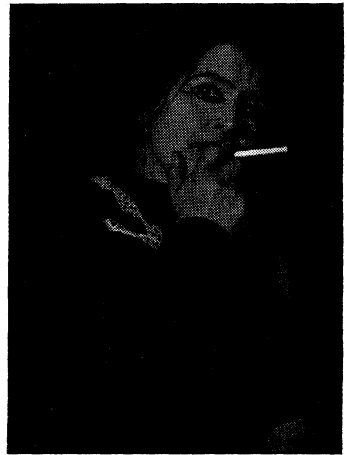
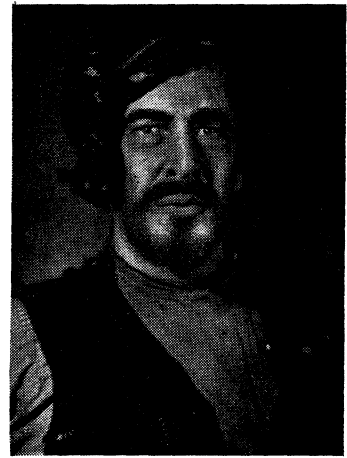
Such were some of the passages which I found crossed out by the red pencil of the Tsar's censor in the copy of Gorki's *Smug Citizens* which I found still preserved in what was the Imperial Library of St. Petersburg.

Emasculated as the play was, the Moscow Art Theatre opened their new theatre with it on October 25th, 1902, and the play was acted in other cities throughout Russia as well as in Austria and Germany. But it is only since the Revolution that the play can be seen in its original form and with its true force. During the last year a splendid production has been put on at the Theatre of the Red Army, in which I found all these revolutionary passages that had previously been suppressed brought out with their full vigor.

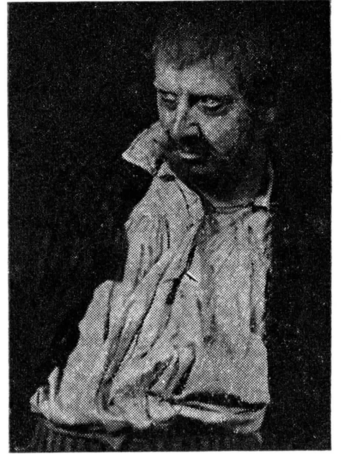
While *Smug Citizens* was opening the season at the Moscow Art Theatre, they were already rehearsing a still greater play: *The Lower Depths*. Gorki came to Moscow to read to them the manuscript of his masterpiece. Chaliapin and Andreyev as well as the actors of the Art Theatre were there to listen spellbound to his reading. Kachalov, perhaps the greatest living actor of today, tells how Gorki read "beautifully" and how, when he came to the scene where the pilgrim, Luka, tries to console old Anna on her deathbed, the actors held their breath in stillness and Gorki's own voice trembled and broke as he cried "The Devil take it!" and wiped away a tear with his finger, ashamed to let them see how much he was being affected by his own play.

Gorki's reading produced a wonderful effect. The actors became enthusiastic at the idea of incarnating these "creatures that once were men." Olga Knipper Chekhova, who was to play the part of the prostitute, Nastya, got Gorki to show her just how a street-walker would make a "dog's-paw" out of an old scrap of paper and roll tobacco into it to make a cigarette. Gorki "naively" offered to bring a street-walker to stay with the Chekhovs so that Madame Chekhov could "get a deeper insight into the psychology of an empty soul."

Gorki did take Stanislavski and half a dozen of the other actors on an expedition at night to the Khitrov Market, where they wandered through the dark and gloomy cellars of Moscow into a labyrinth of underground dens. Stanislavski gives a terrifying description of the rows of tired people, men and women, lying there on boards like corpses. When



• Members of the Moscow Art Theatre in "The Lower Depths": Stanislavski as Satin; Olga Chekhova as Nastya; Bulgakov as Bubnov; Kachalov as the Baron



• Members of the Moscow Art Theatre in "The Lower Depths:" Stanislavski as Satin; Olga Chekhova as Nastya; Bulgakov as Bubnov; Kachalov as the Baron

some of them were told the visitors intended to produce a play about people like them, they were so touched that they began to weep.

Before the play could be produced, the censors got busy. The head of the Chief Office of Printing Affairs, Professor Zverev (the name means "beastly"), cut out all the passages he thought dangerous. In the copy in the Imperial Library, I have found no less than fifty-four such passages cut out all together and many others modified:

Pepel was not allowed to say to the Baron: "You were a baron. There was a time when you didn't look on us as human beings." That would be disrespectful to the aristocracy. Kvashnya was not allowed to say: "I prayed to God for eight years and He did not help me." Otherwise it might shake faith in the existence of God. The characters were not even allowed to say: "The peasants are tired of asking for bread," or "It is impossible to live," or "Prisons do not do anybody any good," or "New times will produce new laws." Stanislavski, acting the part of Satin, was not allowed to let his voice boom through the theatre, crying, "Truth is the god of the free man!" or "It is good to feel that you are a man! Man is something loftier than toil. Man is more than filling his belly."

Yet even with all these challenging speeches cut out, there remained enough dynamite packed away in the play to produce a tremendous effect. When the first performance finally came on December 31st, the last day of that year, 1902, the realistic intensity with which the actors stressed their lines, spoken out of the darkness or *The Lower Depths*, was like hammering on dynamite. Never before or since has the Moscow Art Theatre had such a tremendous triumph. One enthusiast who was present wrote: "The old theatre had ceased to exist. The curtain rose and there appeared a new theatre. Life itself was poured onto the stage."

When the final curtain descended, pandemonium broke loose. As Stanislavski says: "There were endless curtain calls for the actors, the stage directors, and for Gorki himself. It was very funny to see him appear for the first time on the stage and stand there with a cigarette in his mouth, smiling and lost, not knowing that he was supposed to take the cigarette out of his mouth and to bow to the audience."

The play became such a success at the Moscow Art Theatre that the censors, who had allowed the play only because they were confident it would fail, now did not dare to stop it. They did, however, forbid its being acted by any other theatre in Russia. Yet the Moscow Art Theatre

acted it wherever they went on tour. In Imperial St. Petersburg the Tsarist press attacked it fiercely. Some of the aristocratic critics there claimed that they were so disgusted by *The Lower Depths* that they had the sensation of being forcibly ducked into a sewer.

Yet this powerful play, like the great censored plays of Ibsen, Strindberg, Hauptmann and Shaw, made its triumph around the world. The very next year, Max Reinhardt produced his famous version in Berlin under the title of *Nachtasyl* which ran for 500 nights, though the Kaiser Wilhelm II consistently refused to see it. In New York it was produced under this same title in German at the Irving Place Theatre long before it was produced by Arthur Hopkins under the title of *The Lower Depths*, or by Leo Bulgakov in a colloquial new translation under the title *At the Bottom*. It has been translated into every language and only a few years after the Russian-Japanese War, was acted in Japan. Productions of *The Lower Depths* along with his more recent plays, would be a fitting tribute to Gorki in the year of his death.

Since the Russian Revolution, *The Lower Depths* had been acted more often in the Soviet Union than any other play by any living Russian author. Upon Gorki's triumphant return to Moscow in 1928, I saw it acted for my seventh time; but this time in the presence of Gorki himself, with the majority of the original cast in their original roles—Stanislavski as Satin, Kachalov as the Baron, Moskvina as Luke, Vishnevski as the Tartar, Chekhov's widow as Nastya, and so on—only now they were able to utter the full text freely and frankly and fully. There they were representing the derelicts of the old social order, gathered together in that underground den in the brown shadows under the dim irreligious light of the lamp. It was like some great painting of Rembrandt—come to life. Out of the darkness I could hear the voices of the potential power of man even in the lower depths. Gorki's powerful play, written at the beginning of this century, marked a pivotal point in the history of Russia. In *The Lower Depths* one can already hear the onward march of the Russian Revolution.

From the down-and-outs of *The Lower Depths* and the petty bourgeois of *The Smug Citizens*, Gorki now turned to a third stratum of Russian society—the intelligentsia. The more "Gorki—the new sensation" was lionized by the highbrows, the more biting he was in his satire of them.

In *Summer Folk* Gorki pictures a group of futile intellectuals gathered in a summer cottage and in contrast to their com-

placent self-conceit, a few of their number who, wishing to find a way out, decide to leave these summer folk and do something useful, to build schools and hospitals in the provinces. At the first performance in the Komisarzhnevski Theatre in St. Petersburg on November 4th, 1904, most of the audience applauded when one of the rebellious characters, attacking the weakness of the intelligentsia, said: "You are not really intellectuals. You are just summer visitors in your own country, fussy people looking for your own personal comfort, doing nothing and talking disgustingly much. The working classes sent you ahead as intellectuals to find the best way out for them; but you have lost your own way and the workers now look on you as enemies who are living on their work."

The truth of this attack on the intelligentsia met an immediate response from the sturdy common people; but the aemic intellectuals squirmed in their orchestra stalls, wincing under the attack, and at the end, tried to hiss the play. Gorki came before the footlights and vigorously hissed back at them. As he said afterwards: "I certainly outhissed that bunch of highbrows!"

Within two months came the Revolution of 1905 and the Bloody Sunday of January 9th when the Tsar's officers shot down hundreds of the workers in their peaceful procession before the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. Immediately Gorki was inflamed with fury at this outrage. On account of the violence of his protests, he was arrested and imprisoned in the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. I have visited his cell there in that heroic prison, number 39 of the Trubetskoi Bastion. There it was that he wrote his next play—the tragicomedy, *The Children of the Sun*.

In this play he represents a sensitive woman, Lisa, who has seen "the blood on the snow," the shooting down of hundreds of men, women, and children in the streets. The result has been that she has suffered a nervous collapse in which she can no longer bear the sight of blood, and having seen so many deaths cannot bear the thought of death. Her brother, the chemist Propasov, enthusiastic about his scientific experiments, looks upon her and all who feel as she does as weaklings. In contrast to them, he sets up himself and the intellectuals who feel as he does as "children of the sun." Yet in his idealism, he is powerless against grim reality and, in a riot, the indignant people rush on the stage and attack the intellectuals.

The play was produced both by Komisarzhnevski in St. Petersburg and by the Moscow Art Theatre on the same day,

(Continued on page 28)

Ernst Toller—

The Playwright of Expressionism

BY CHARMION VON WIEGAND

The publication in English of seven plays by Ernst Toller,* the revolutionary German playwright now in exile in England, is of particular moment in America today. Both in form and content, these plays are bound to exert an influence on the American theatre, particularly the new theatre.

Ernst Toller is a German intellectual who fought in the World War and returned home sufficiently disillusioned with the old order to espouse the revolution in Germany. He took a leading part in the Bavarian uprising of 1918 led by the radical socialists, anarchists and communists, which was put down in cold blood by the German reactionary generals. Brought to trial in Munich for high treason, the left leaders were executed or sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Toller received a five-year sentence.

From his cell in the fortress of *Niederchönenfeld*, Toller issued the manuscripts of several books and plays. Three of these plays—*Massemensch*, *Der Deutsche Hinkemann* and *The Machine Wreckers*—were to have a tremendous vogue throughout Germany. They were written under the most difficult conditions, under stringent prison humiliations. Forbidden lights at night, Toller concealed a candle under the table and hidden there from the guard's prying gaze he poured out his ideas in dramatic and poetic form. The secret night vigils, the stealthy haste of composition, the turbulent eagerness to express and clarify his thoughts, the cruel isolation, the passionate hatred of the old society, all influenced his style and moulded it into expressionist form.

Toller was only twenty-five but already a national figure when the gates of *Niederchönenfeld* closed upon him for five long years. He was to leave his cell a mature man with prematurely gray hair. During the time, he had become one of the most popular dramatists of the German theatre, which, given a new lease of life by the revolution, was one of the most progressive experimental theatres in the world. Yet, when he was released, he had never seen a single one of his plays performed.

Massemensch was not Toller's maiden effort in the theatre. In 1917 he had begun an anti-war play called *Transfiguration*, which was completed in military

* *Seven Plays.* By Ernst Toller. Live-right. \$2.50.



ERNST TOLLER

prison. The play deals with Toller's own adolescent life and inner struggle to maturity. Toller was born in Bromberg in 1893. His father, a Jewish merchant, died before he was sixteen. After completing secondary school, the boy went to France to study at Grenoble. That summer the war broke out. Filled with youthful ardor and passionate love of country, Toller hurried home to enlist. There followed thirteen months of military service at the front. The sensitive, high-strung boy was exposed to the horrors of trench warfare. He was wounded in *Fôret des Prêtes*, sent home to a sanatorium, where his wounds healed. But his mind was scarred by war. Adjudged a war cripple, he went to study in Munich, then to Heidelberg. There he founded a peace organization, the League of Universal Youth. During the munitions strike in Munich Toller was arrested and was not set at liberty until the revolution broke out in Bavaria. Influenced by Kurt Eisner, journalist and poet, a leader in the radical socialist party, Toller joined the party. Eisner's assassination, at the hands of the reactionary Count Arco del Valley, deeply affected the young convert and caused him to give up everything and plunge with abandon into the revolutionary struggle. He became one of the leaders of the Independent Socialists.

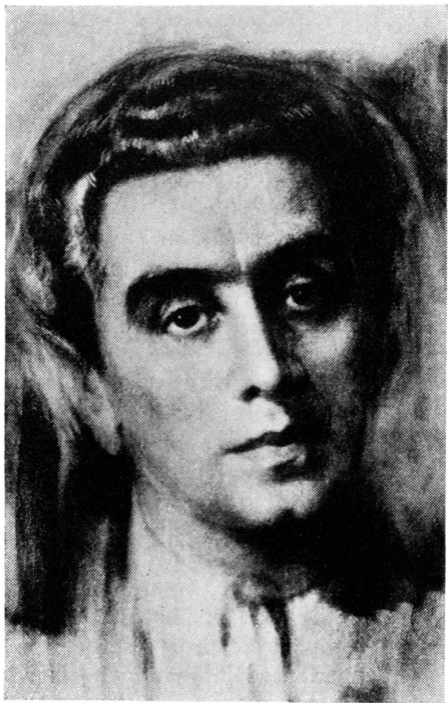
Transfiguration is written in thirteen staccato scenes, called "stations," after the stations of the cross. The action takes place in Europe "before the beginning of regeneration." Its prologue opens in the barracks of the dead with a macabre dialogue between two characters, Death-by-War and Death-by-Peace in which the war is held up to ridicule with grim humour. The play moves swiftly from its opening scene between the hero Friedrich and his mother and his friend to his enthusiastic enlistment for war. There follow scenes on troop trains, at the front, in no man's land, in a field hospital, back home at peace, working in an artist's studio. The hero, in the guise of representative characters in present-day life, tests the structure of society in a succession of scenes—a tenement, a prison, a worker's meeting. Finally, in a symbolic scene crossing an Alpine abyss, he follows his friend into the clouds. The closing scene is in a church. Every institution is revealed as bankrupt in present society and the play ends on the ecstatic note of:

"Brothers stretch out your tortured hands,
With cries of radiant, ringing joy.

Stride freely through our liberated land
With cries of Revolution, Revolution!"

Transfiguration, which was produced in the beginning of 1919 by *Die Tribune*, an independent theatre of Berlin, is one of the first "conversion" plays written. Its prologue bears a striking analogy to Irwin Shaw's brilliant anti-war play, *Bury the Dead*, which made theatrical history on Broadway last season. Both plays employ the same theme and move toward a revolutionary solution; both stop short of a concrete program. Both attack the *status quo* and the war satirically; both offer no way out. Both represent the attitude of the petit bourgeois intellectual caught between classes in a moment of sharp social conflict.

Transfiguration is actually autobiography in dramatic form. Its passionate ecstatic style is typical of a whole series of ego-dramas (*Ich Dramas*) of the period—plays in which the author, thinly disguised, stammered his hatred, his inner rebellion against old forms and conventions of pre-war society, attacking the family, the church, the state and all organized institutions. Post-war Germany, defeated in war, balked in carrying out a thoroughgoing revolution, had reached a



ERNST TOLLER

stage of chaos and disillusionment. It had become a country of defeat, a nation reduced to neurotic despair and economic paralysis in which the decayed republic offered no impulse toward regeneration or vital social change.

Friedrich, the hero of Toller's first play, is an extreme type not an individual character; he is Man. The progression of his internal experiences form the only binding link in the play which consists of swiftly shifting scenes and countless characters without any plot. This is the dream technique of Strindberg's *Ghost Sonata* transposed into a nightmare vision of society. *Transfiguration* exhibits at once the lyric strength of expressionist technique and all its weakness.

Expressionism as a style in art, literature, music, and the drama was not specifically a product of the war. Many of its earliest works were written prior to 1914. Frank Wedekind, whose dramas portray the decayed, degenerate, sensual, perverted types of European society in a manner akin to George Grosz's masterly savage caricature, was a precursor of expressionism. Walter Hasenclever's drama, *The Son*, often called the first expressionist play, was written in 1913, but was not produced until after the war, when it became a popular success. Even such extreme forms of expressionism as the painter Kokoschka's short plays, *The Burning Bush* and *Murder, the Hope of Women*, were written between 1907 and 1911. Their apocalyptic style is prophetic of the breakdown of society after the war. Both plays were suppressed in production.

The most recent development of expressionism as an art form has been in Germany, but the style appears always in a period of social change and break-up during the transition from an old form of society to a new one. We have examples of expressionist art from the earliest historic epochs. For instance, the Fayum portraits, funerary paintings executed on wood for the mummy cases in Egypt during the first and second centuries A. D. are expressionist art of great power. Strikingly modern in effect, they mirror the change of consciousness from classic pagan society to the slowly emerging new Christian world. There can be no expressionist art today in Germany, not only because no art at all is possible under fascism but because a definite political party, representing a complete viewpoint is in power. Similarly there can be no expressionist art of any value in the U. S. S. R., because with the triumph of the proletarian revolution, society has undergone a basic change and all conditions are prepared for the development of a great classic art in all fields.

Massemensch has been considered Toller's masterpiece. Completed in prison in 1921, it was dedicated to the workers:

World Revolution
Mother of New
Power and Rhythm
Mother of New
Peoples and Patteras
Red Flames and Century in the Blood
of Expiation
The Earth Nails Itself to the Cross.

The play, Toller declares, "literally broke out of me and was put on paper in two days and a half. . . . My mind was tortured by visions of faces, daemonic faces, faces tumbling over each other in grotesque somersaults. In the mornings shivering with fever, I sat down to write and did not stop till fingers, clammy and trembling, refused to serve me. No one was allowed in my cell even to clean it. I turned with uncontrollable rage, against my comrade who asked questions or wanted to help me. The laborious and blissful work of pruning and remolding lasted a year."

Written in the clipped tumultuous rhythm of free verse, *Massemensch* kindled in its German audiences something of the troubled sombre ecstasy which Toller experienced in writing it. Nevertheless it remains a dialogue between the intellectual, Sonia, and the spirit of the *Masses, the Nameless One*, carried on against a background of worker choruses that have something of the lofty tragic note of Greek drama. It lacks, however, the three dimensional complexity and rich texture of reality, due, no doubt, to the fact that "the form was conditioned by the inward constraint of those days" and that "the immensity of the days of revolution had not yet formed an ordered mental picture, it still lived on in me as a kind of torturing spiritual chaos."

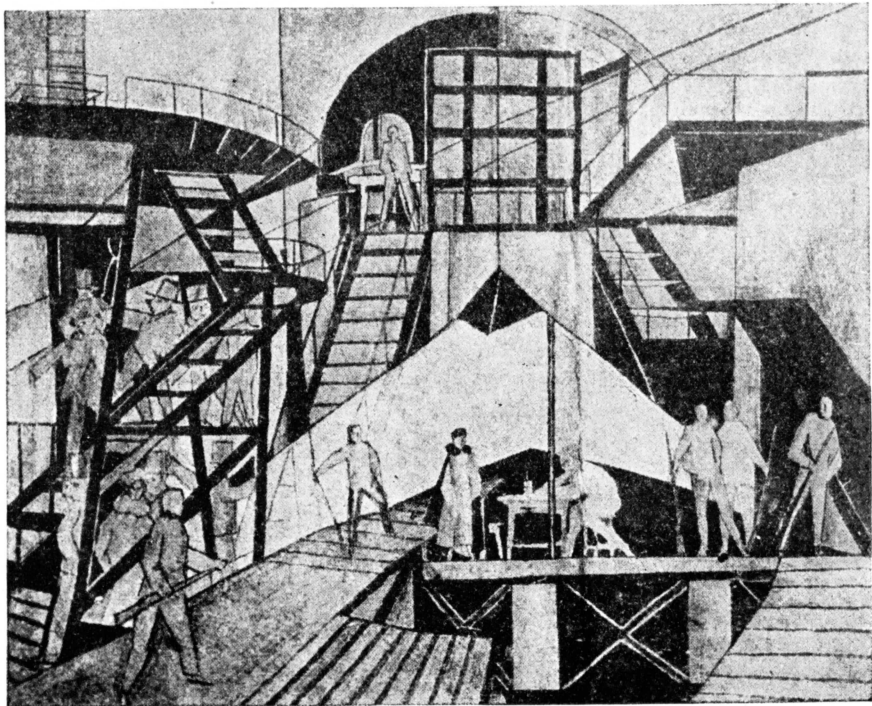
The word duel carried on between Sonia and the Nameless One paraphrases in modern terms the old dualistic struggle of Faust, the searcher for truth, and his subtle Mephisto double, the eternal compromiser with reality. That Toller has so understood it is proven by his comments on the play in his recent book on America and Russia, *Quer Durch*. It becomes apparent that for all his actual experience in the Bavarian Revolution, Toller had not yet clarified its meaning or understood the rôle of the proletariat as the leader of social revolution. Sonia, the heroine of *Massemensch*, a middle class pacifist intellectual, prefers to perish before the firing squad for her part in the revolt rather than escape at the risk of the gaoler's life. Such an attitude demonstrates that the Bavarian Revolution had not reached a sufficient ripeness for victory. How different, for example, is the conduct of Malraux's working class hero,

in the novel, *Days of Wrath*. He accepts without question the sacrifice of a comrade's life in order that he may be free from the Nazi torture prison to carry on his necessary work, a work for which he is willing to risk and even lose his life.

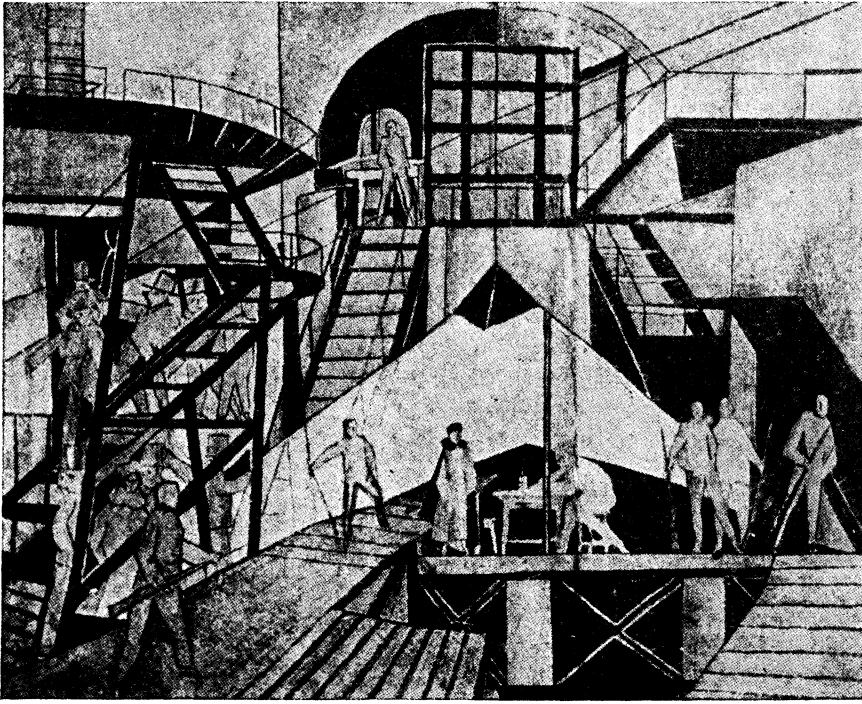
Massemensch was a historic landmark in the German theatre. It succeeded in dramatizing the class struggle, although in dream form, on the stage. Toller's next play, *The Machine Wreckers*, was a historical drama of the Luddite Rebellion of the weavers in England in the early nineteenth century. I saw the elaborate presentation of it in Berlin in 1922 at Reinhardt's *Grosses Schauspielhaus*. The enormous stage with realistic cyclorama of great dimensions was built up with a gigantic weaving machine against which the rebellious workers appeared like pigmies. In effect this dramatized the terror of the machine and the weakness of the workers, giving the play a defeatist feeling. Overloaded with mechanical and spectacular paraphenalia, the action was dwarfed and the production weakened. In itself *The Machine Wreckers* has not the compact simplicity of *Massemensch* so beautifully mounted by Jurgen Fehling, who now works in the *Volksbühne* for Hitler, the man who savagely destroyed every trace of working class organization.

The Machine Wreckers is set in Nottingham at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in England during the economic distress following the Napoleonic wars. It contains much of Shelleyan romanticism and revolt. In some of the scenes we hear Shakespearean echoes. But the play does not so much dramatize the desperate plight of the weavers, who destroy the machines which rob them of daily bread, as the modern intellectual's revolt in the post-war period against our machine-made civilization.

The prologue of *The Machine Wreckers* revives dramatically the historic debate in the House of Lords over the bill which made the destruction of a machine punishable by death. Lord Byron came to the defense of the workers but was outvoted. Based on the actual debate in the House of Lords, Byron's speech is the intellectual's plea for mercy, explaining the worker to the ruling class and asking for charitable treatment. The worker is portrayed as "the starved rabble," the intellectual as the patron saint of the working class. While such an attitude is undoubtedly historically correct, for the period, Toller does not differentiate in the play itself his own viewpoint from that expressed by the character Lord Byron. Such a charitable espousal of the working class cause, recalls the movement of the Russian intelligentsia in the 'eighties called "going to the people."



MASSEMENSCH—MEYERHOLD, 1922



MASSEMENSCH—MEYERHOLD, 1922

Jimmy Cobbett, the hero of *The Machine Wreckers*, is depicted as a conciliatory worker-intellectual, vainly trying to solve the class conflict by conciliatory methods. In sharp contrast, John Wibley, the proletarian, is portrayed as a blind force driven by hatred, physically repulsive because he is a cripple with a hump. Such bias voices the author's misunderstanding and fear of the worker. It is the attitude of the over-sensitive, protected intellectual who has no first-hand knowledge of the workers. Menshivism is echoed in the words of Jimmy Cobbett: "Persuasion serves our ends," while John Wibley is given the reply: "Blood is the lash to wipe out sloth." This is an intellectual's misconception of revolutionary agitation. It is further elaborated in the scene between Jimmy Cobbett and the mysterious Beggar, a sort of Teieras of the class struggle, who counsels Jimmy against the "new Gods" called "holy workmen."

Toller's next play, *Hinkemann*, is a German morality drama; it was completed in *Niederschonenfeld* in 1922. Despite its treatment of a difficult subject, its well-made form made it much easier to produce. *Hinkemann*, a symbol of Germany in defeat, is a soldier who has been maimed in the war in the same manner as the hero of *The Sun Also Rises*. *Hinkemann* returns home a living dead man, ashamed before his fellow workers, unable to face his beloved wife. Maggie betrays him with his best friend, while the unwitting *Hinkemann* anxious to provide her with comforts, at least, accepts a job in an amusement park performing as a strong man who bites the throats of

live rats and drinks their blood. The gist of the play is contained in the café conversation which *Hinkemann* has with his various friends, each one of them a representative of some political tendency in Germany which claims to be able to rescue the country. There is Singegott, the religionists; Max Knatsch, the liberal and anarchist; Michael Unbeschwert, the communist; Peter Immergleich, the stand-patter; all debate various panaceas for *Hinkemann's* sorry condition but find no solution. *Hinkemann* discovers Maggie's betrayal and, deeply wounded, feels that his is a living death: "A man who has no strength for dreams left has lost the strength to live." He begs Maggie to start a new life without him but she throws herself out of the window into the courtyard and is killed. Over her dead body *Hinkemann's* last words are: "Any day the Kingdom of Heaven may arise, any night the great flood may come and cover the earth." Despite many poignant scenes and its passionate upbraiding of war, the play remains inconclusive. In *Hinkemann* the scenes of bitter pessimism with his wife and in his address to the Priapus statue recall the mood of O'Neill's *All God's Chillun*, when the white wife addresses the African mask and rails against her marriage with a Negro.

Shortly after Toller's release from prison, in 1925, the *Kleine Buhne* of Prague produced a new satirical play of his, *Wotan Unbound*. *Wotan*, the barber, thinly conceals the identity of Wilhelm II and the play is a savage attack on the old regime which dragged Germany into war.

The plays written subsequent to Toller's imprisonment lack something of the tumultuous tense manner of the early period. In addition to plays, Toller had written a *Requiem for the Murdered Brothers*, a mass chorus, and a book of poems, *The Swallow Book*.

Hinkemann had its premiere in the State Theatre in Dresden in 1924. The reactionary elements of the city deliberately planned a first night riot. Money from a state charity was used to buy 800 tickets which were distributed with printed instructions and cues when to hiss and create disturbance. In the first scene, the director had inadvertently cut the cue for the riot and so it took place only with the second scene but assumed such dimensions that the performance could not be heard. A man sitting in a box was so alarmed that he had a heart attack. The anti-semitism already being fomented in Germany found utterance in the rioters screaming, "Let the dirty Jew die."

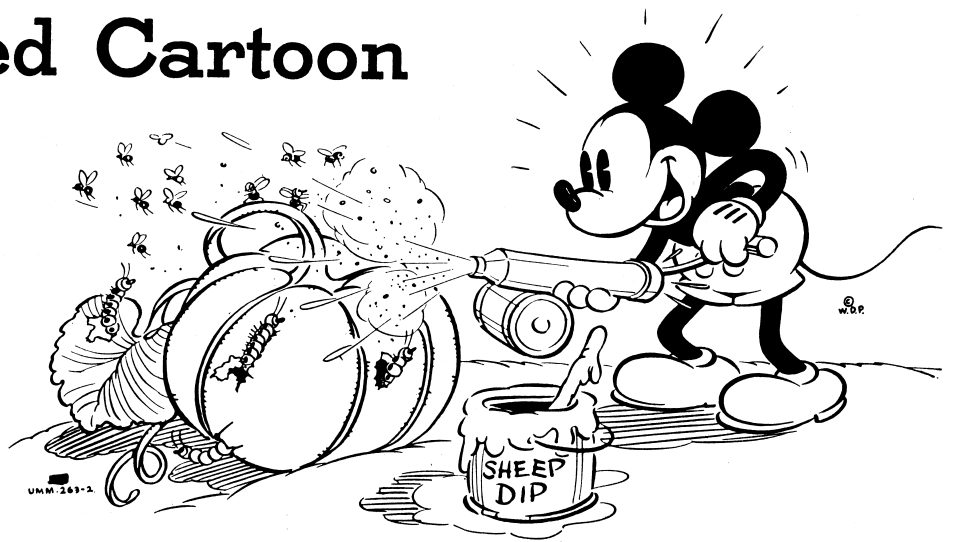
Piscator, the first creator of a social theatre in Germany and its most progressive director, chose as his first play for the new Piscator stage, located in the old *Theatre and Nollendorj Platz*, Toller's new drama, *Hurrah, We're Alive*. Staged in the most experimental manner, it introduced technical innovations by including radio and movies in the body of the play and thus enlarged its scope immensely. It tells the story of Karl Thomas, a revolutionary, who, having a sentence of death remanded, is kept in a lunatic asylum for seven years. He comes back to society to find it more of a madhouse than his prison. In a quick succession of simultaneous scenes the anarchy and absurdity of the capitalist system is revealed. Into three hours' performance Piscator succeeded in compressing a decade of contemporary German history. Piscator used the script like a movie scenario, to which it has a close resemblance, and constructed in visible three dimensional scenes behind a transparent screen the social and economic struggle going on in Germany. Such a play in 1927 was idissolubly welded with the audience which witnessed it. Each performance was a vivid symbol of the contemporary struggle being waged compressed into an experience of tremendous import.

Draw the Fires, written in 1931, is the last of Toller's revolutionary dramas. Dedicated to the memory of the sailors, Kobis and Reichpietsch, who were shot on the 5th of September, 1917, it dramatizes the mutiny of the German sailors at Jutland.

Toller's work is a confession of faith deeply personalized—a monologue with
(Continued on page 25)

The Animated Cartoon and Walt Disney

BY WILLIAM KOZLENKO



The animated cartoon, as exemplified by Walt Disney's successful film creations, occupies a singular place in the affections of movie-goers today. It would seem necessary, therefore, to determine the reason for its appeal, and especially for its appeal to adults, since most of its story plots are based on fairy tales, fables, myths, and similar extravagant narrative. The psychologist will undoubtedly tell us that this interest in make-believe reveals a desire to revert to an adolescent state; an inclination to escape from the rigors of a disordered existence. From another point of view, this interest may be traced to a latent desire on the part of adults to re-live the imaginative experiences of their childhood. In either case, however, the element of escape is perhaps the touchstone of the whole matter. The uniqueness of the animated cartoon lies in the fact that, of all film forms, it is the only one that has freed itself almost entirely from the restrictions of an oppressive reality. Its whole conception of life and of movement is based on fantasy. When the audience accepts the logic of fantasy, it also accepts its conclusions, and though the resultant situations may be unlike those of reality, it does not question them.

It is true that though the characters of the animated cartoons are mainly zoological (as in Disney's films), they reflect in many ways the behavior-patterns of human beings. But, in action, they continue where we leave off. The characters walk on air, fly over rooftops, swim under water, ride on clouds, and carry on other extravagant maneuvers which transcend the limitations of earthly life. The artist crosses the bridge from a world of limited movement to one of unlimited movement, which is, of course, *the dream*. Like in a dream, our actions are unrestricted and free: we do what we wish and how we wish it. And what is a frustration in real life is a consummation in a dream. All

our biological and material difficulties are solved: we win the girl, we suddenly find ourselves wealthy, we overcome obstacles that would be almost impossible to surmount in conscious life, we vanquish the "villain" (in whatever guise he may assume, such as our boss, or our neighbor, or our family, or even our environment). Like in a fantasy situation, our movements during the process of a dream are determined, as it were, by miracles. We get to places, not by walking or riding, but by flying; we find ourselves in situations that have neither antecedents nor causes. But, whereas there is a story plot in fantasy which holds its situations coherently together, this coherence or logic is absent in a dream. Things happen because we wish them to happen. In such a way do the incidents in an animated cartoon fulfill, in some measure, many of our unrealized objectives. What takes place before our eyes on the screen, takes place similarly in our dreams, and the pleasure we get from witnessing how easily Mickey Mouse, for instance, solves the most difficult problems in an almost haphazard and miraculous way, is a pleasure transferrable to ourselves.

In order to achieve a free interpretation of life, the method of fantasy must consequently be free. It cannot be tied down to laws that would tend to hamper its exploitation of fancy. To realize this exploitation to the fullest extent, fantasy must necessarily employ the technics of metamorphosis. Thus, in an animated cartoon, a tree comes to life and starts running; a flower begins to dance; the wind, in the shape of an old man, is seen chasing a rabbit; a cloud is suddenly converted into an umbrella; a fish appears from the water and begins to strut. Metamorphosis is indeed the perfect instrument of fantasy; and fantasy is the romantic realization of our dreams and wish-fulfillments.

Though the content of the animated

cartoon is based on fantasy, as we have just said, its situations and incidents are interpreted more or less in the light of contemporary events. The setting, manners, architecture and costumes of the fantasy narrative are altered to bring them up-to-date. This transition from a mythical place to a real one, this change from a hypothetical situation to an actual one, helps explain why so many of Disney's cartoons attain a certain contemporary significance. The unusual success of *Three Little Pigs*, for example, is a good case in point.

The story, though based on fable, was at once associated with the economic situation. Its lesson—if one wants to call it that—stressed the necessity of "sticking together," and suggested that only by building an "impregnable house" can the "big, bad wolf" be beaten. The wolf—long a symbol of hunger and privation—was accepted by all as representing the prevalent economic distress. This interpretation took on additional emphasis since it came at a time when President Roosevelt was asking for almost dictatorial powers; when bank failures and bankruptcies were rife; and when the President issued his famous appeal to the public to "stick together" (that is with him), and "not give up hope." The verse—"Who's afraid of the big, bad wolf?"—became a national hit. The public apprehended the subtle argument of the film, and the cartoon, which originally started out to delineate in color and animation a popular children's tale, was seized upon by the canny politicians and used to disseminate a heartening message (so called) to the people. And here fantasy succeeded where realism no doubt would have failed, especially the kind of trumped-up realism which emanates from Hollywood. And why would realism have failed? Obviously because on the plane of reality audiences would have refused to accept the conclusion that they weren't afraid of "the big, bad wolf."

Since Disney's animated cartoons are not the only ones being shown today, it would be well to scrutinize the content of another type of animated cartoon: one almost as popular and representing a different aspect of psychological portraiture. I refer to the Popeye film. These films translate wish-fulfillment into terms of pure physical force: they are glorification of strength and violence. Popeye evinces no niceties of character. He is a tough, though apparently kind-hearted, pug. The salient features of his personality are illiteracy, stupidity, gruffness, and a pair of powerful muscles. (How versatile and refined, by comparisons, is such a subject as Mickey Mouse, who can play the piano, ride a horse, conduct a band, fly an airplane, build a house, and do other constructive things with equal proficiency.) In fact, every cartoon character of Disney's is distinguished by some personal trait. We identify little Donald Duck, who gets under everybody's feet, with a helpless irascibility; Pluto, the dog, is a good-natured, though clumsy, bumpkin; the wolf is a sly and incorrigible character, etc. In short, each of Disney's animal subjects is an intelligent being, reflecting the essential characteristics of his own species. What, conversely, does Popeye represent in human nature? Here is a man who, after swallowing the contents of a can of spinach (a remarkable symbol, incidentally, of metamorphosis), goes completely berserk, and with a series of powerful punches destroys buildings, knocks down trees, and annihilates men normally stronger than himself. His philosophy of action is the doctrine that with physical strength man can overcome every obstacle; and his justification for this display of unbridled power usually takes the form of saving his girl from the unsavory clutches of the gargantuan villain. We are speedily convinced by all this that if a man cannot get satisfaction by persuasion, he can certainly get it by a knockout blow.

In this connection we must deplore the recent tendency of Disney to glorify violence for its own sake, as exemplified by such cartoons as *Mickey's Polo Game* and others. Not only do *Mickey's Polo Game* and *Who Killed Cock Robin?* (in the latter we have in mind the treatment accorded Jim Crow) revel in unmotivated fury, but they depart entirely from their true character as fantasy by introducing screen personalities—Mae West, Bing Crosby, Laurel and Hardy *et al.*

During the course of this article, I have at times touched on the odious word "escape." It is necessary at this stage to distinguish between the escape that represents a sickly perversion of reality as

projected by numerous Hollywood movies and the Disney variety.

When an artist of the calibre of Disney can successfully remove himself to another world, and take us along with him, we do not have to give up anything of our organic world in order to share with him the pleasures and realizations of his world of fantasy. In short, he creates for us a world of image and fiction, which is related to some extent to our own dream world and which entails no unhealthy distortion of the world of fact. And, in this regard, we can say with Constant Lambert, the eminent British music critic, that: "There must be few artists of any kind who do not feel abashed when faced with the phenomenal inventive genius of Walt Disney, the only artist of today who exists triumphantly in a world of his own creation, unhampered by the overshadowing of ancient tradition or the undercutting of contemporary snobbism."

Since we have attempted an interpretation of the animated cartoon, as exemplified particularly by Disney's work, it would be interesting at this time to write about his technical methods. Such fine examples, as he gives us, of cartoon animation must have a carefully evolved formula.

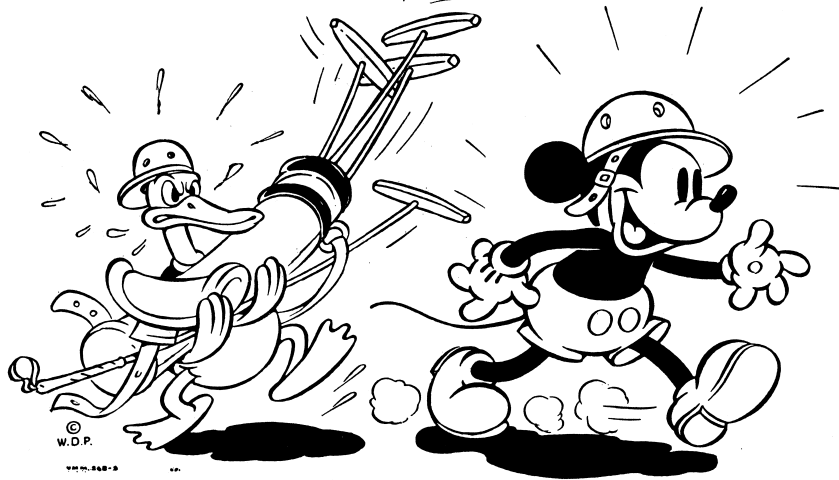
Disney's art is determined by many factors, as regards its processes of creation and production, but the most significant, in my opinion, is the fact that, though he is the governing spirit of his organization, the final creation of every cartoon is the result, not of one man—Walt Disney—but of the collective efforts of more than a hundred men who work with him. Yet the finished product reflects the tone and unique personality of that one man. Each cartoon, whether a *Silly Symphony* or a Mickey Mouse adventure, possesses those distinct qualities which distinguish Disney's work from any other in the same genre.

He is the director only in that he is the organizer and supervisor, but he believes

with Calvancanti that "no director can make a film by himself. He is dependent at every step upon skilled and specialized technicians. The best directors are those who can draw the individual ability from each member of their staff and direct the sum total towards the subject in hand."

Disney allows his fellow-workers complete freedom in their creative tasks. He attempts neither to hamper them in the projection of their own ideas nor does he seek to force upon them his own conceptions and treatment thereof. They are at liberty to work out their own creative impressions, develop them as best they can, and when ready, to submit them to the entire studio for approval. In short, it is the group as a whole, with all its departments—separate yet vitally inter-related—which decides on the merits of the stories submitted. Disney himself, though the "boss" of the organization, willingly submits to the opinions of his fellow-workers. If his idea is rejected in favor of another, he either discards it or changes it according to their specifications. For instance, *Three Little Pigs* was submitted by Disney to the members of his studio for a year before they finally approved it. And when we recall the extraordinary success of this film we realize the marvelous creative values engendered by collective collaboration.

A cartoon, from its inception as an incomplete story idea to the final process of filming, involves about four or five months of actual work. About half that time is devoted to the preparation of a carefully detailed scenario. For this specific function there is a story department, which consists of about a dozen writers. It is their job to conceive new ideas, rewrite old stories—such as fables, fairy tales, myths, romances—and work on material already accepted. It is here, in this department, that Disney's influence is most pronounced. Undoubtedly, the outstanding feature of a Disney film—apart from its remarkable craftsmanship, its schematic integration, its story coher-



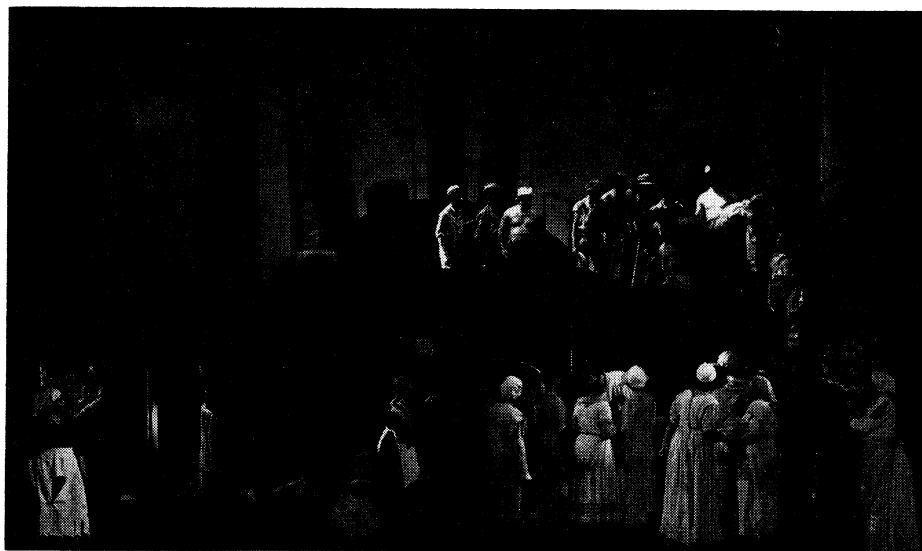
ence—is the extraordinary confluence of plot detail, treatment, music, and animation. It is Disney, by his acute suggestions, helps effect this final integration, for his suggestions, gags, and hints are most frequently accepted.

When a story has been found satisfactory for picture purposes, Disney and members of his story department get together, study all the possibilities for pictorial and musical exploitation, and, after thoroughly going over all the details, the story is then assigned to one of the dozen scribes to rewrite in the form of a page synopsis. This synopsis, when finished, is distributed to several score members of the studio: animators, the musical director, and all other persons connected with the production of this particular cartoon. Each member studies the draft, concentrating on his particular angle of the story, although everyone is at liberty to contribute gags, work out new little actions, and suggest new embellishments of the plot.

After about a fortnight, all the workers involved in the production of the cartoon get together and go over the pile of suggestions which each has brought with him. These suggestions, mostly in the form of rough drawings with written annotations, are presented, criticized, and discussed by Disney, a few associates of the story department, the director in charge of the cartoon (a sort of coordinating foreman), the lay-out man, the musical director, and several animators. Hurried sketches are made and passed around for criticism, during this conference. A composer, trying to correlate a particular rhythm or melody to a specific action sequence, rattles off a musical idea while another member rhythmically enacts an animal episode.

As soon as all the various phases of the work have been organized into a working conspectus—including a rough design of the action, a skeletal plan of the musical score, etc.—the actual work of assembling all this begins. A writer, having worked out a plan of the story, submits a detailed scenario which is illustrated by approximately fifty sketches of the main incidents in the action. The scenario is then turned over to the director of the production, who, with the aid of Disney and his associates, formulates a detailed time-sheet of every single movement. The time-sheet is developed further on the basis of beats in synchronization with the music, which is composed simultaneously with the script. In this manner, each movement has been synchronized with the music before either the music is recorded or the action animated.

(Continued on page 27)



ACCIDENT AT THE TURPENTINE-STILL.

Arthur Steiner
SETTING BY MANUEL ESSMAN.

Turpentine Workers

In *Turpentine*, by J. A. Smith and Peter Morrell, latest production of the WPA Negro Theatre of New York City, a group of Negro workers in the turpentine swamps rebel against the barbarous conditions prevalent in remote industrial regions of America and quit work for higher pay and better conditions in the face of the Sheriff's threat that "It's against the law to quit work." From bloodhounds and deputies' bullets they take refuge in the swamp, returning only to bargain directly with the big white boss himself. Inveigled into a death-trap in a church, they escape annihilation and (quite incredibly) win all their demands.

As realistic drama *Turpentine* creaks—and in the last few moments collapses like a punctured tire. At its best, as in the work scene at the turpentine still, the opening scene in the store, the preacher's sermon toward the end, it is rich folk stuff, well above the average first play. But the meeting scene I thought marred by a mechanical directional device of having characters pop out of the mass just long enough to deliver a line—breathlessly—and pop mechanically back again. And it has been objected that (from the Negro characters' point of view) the struggle assumes the guise of a racial rather than a class struggle—that the enemy is constantly identified as "the white man" or "the crackers"; but this seems to me inevitable in an undeveloped region where one race is well-nigh all exploited while the other is almost wholly composed of exploiters and their aides. We should not blind ourselves to the way in which local conditions operate to disguise certain truths. On the other hand, I could not accept the character of

Colonel Dutton, his championship of the exploited Negroes, with no more reason than that he had fathered mulatto children. Negro-seducers are often enough the bitterest Negro-haters. If Dutton had been portrayed as suspect and ostracized for his views—but no, the white characters respect him as a 100 per cent white Southerner, likker, duels, and all.

Although crude by comparison with the others, *Turpentine* deserves welcome as one of a group of plays, including *Black Pit*, *Stevedore*, and *Let Freedom Ring*, which is familiarizing metropolitan audiences with American life. In preference to the phony arty approach that has characterized so many plays dealing with the Negro people, give me the honest crudities of a *Turpentine* any day.

Except for some unforgivable hamming by three actors who played their parts as villainous crackers to the hilt, the acting was excellent. Gus Smith, the same J. A. Smith referred to above as co-author, turned in a stirring performance as "44," the leader of the turpentine rebellion. Elizabeth Dixon, Viola Dean, Alberta Perkins, Richard Gregg and Lavina Turner were outstanding. Manuel Essman caught the rich folk flavor of the play in imaginative settings, the finest of which was the turpentine-still scene. The production, which was directed by Emjo Basshe, was of a quality that insures Harlem the type of "Negro Peoples Theatre" progressives have been calling for. Judging from the warm reception given *Turpentine*, plays of protest against exploitation and oppression anywhere are welcome to Harlem's exploited, oppressed and police-ridden people.

PHILIP STEVENSON.



ACCIDENT AT THE TURPENTINE-STILL.

Arthur Steiner
SETTING BY MANUEL ESSMAN.

Kids Against War

BY HELEN KAY

I spent a weekend seeing children's plays. America's boys and girls have stopped crying for Castoria—they raise their voices loud against war!

What do children know about war? They know what they see; what they hear; what is spoken around them. Being children they do not close their eyes, ears and mouths, but speak out. They may not say it well; but one understands them, because they say it straight from the shoulder.

Somehow, I always agreed with Natalia Satz who runs the Moscow Children's Theatre that adults should do the writing and acting of children's plays. Not only because the best isn't too good for them, but because the stage is one way of putting a real message across for adults, and certainly for children. After my weekend of theatre going I felt that it was also important for children to write and produce plays of their own, because they gained something from actual participation which watching a play as audience cannot give them. The two different types of theatre are equally valuable.

I saw three plays: one written, acted, staged, costumed, etc., by the Junior High School group at the Walden School; another in like manner done by a group of children ranging from ten to fourteen at the Federation Settlement; the third, the WPA Children's Theatre production, *The Emperor's New Clothes*. I couldn't get to a fourth, also an anti-war play, that same weekend at the Henry Street Settlement Playhouse.

My first opinion of the Walden School project was, "the kind of a play only the mothers and fathers of the actors and playwrights should see." On second thought, I changed my mind. The play was the children's protest against war. Forget that it was a conglomeration of all the plays of an anti-war character which they may have seen or heard about, that the best line was a slip of the tongue: "Why should we American women make sons (the word should have been *bullets*) for war?" The actors participated wholeheartedly, even though some resented all the "love stuff". Their home-made scenery was excellent, and they knew what they were talking about. One had the

feeling, though, after watching a plot composed of school incidents, mean principal, police, clubbing, college ousting, declaration of war, pimps and prostitutes, recruiting, the navy and love, broken hearts, ex-servicemen, gassing, soap boxes, the battle itself, and the after-effects of war, that they might have confined themselves to objects less theatrical and more familiar with greater success.

That is why I appreciated the Federation Settlement's production. It used familiar things. Here, too, the boys and girls wrote their own play. Here, too, they divided the play into parts, and each one worked on a scene, and then brought it back for discussion. It was a collective effort. But a thread of familiar East Side things ran through it, even though in one episode a soldier who refused to be buried came to the classroom to tell them why children should fight against war.

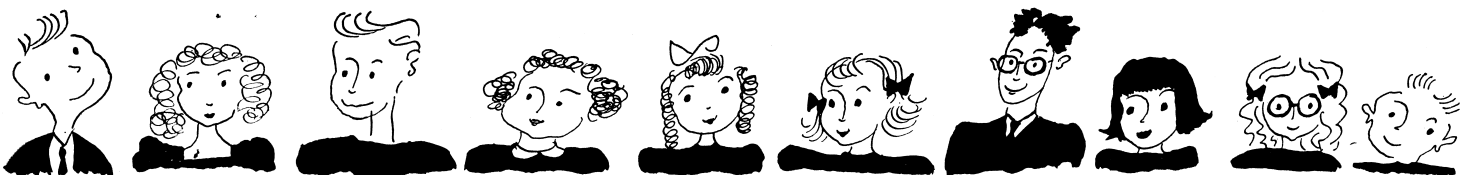
Each child did his own research. For weeks they clipped items from the papers, then wrote lines. They spoke to neighbors in their East Side streets who had been to war. In the play Bella was Bella, and Johnny was Johnny. They were in a classroom, among chalk dust, desks, etc., even though an audience watched him. The richness and humor of their everyday life permeated the play. "My uncle says he won't have to go to the next war, 'cause he's got flat feet, and he's not doing anything for it." "I wouldn't play with that girl, her father is a munitions manufacturer!" "You mean she won't play with you, you're not rich enough!" "Teacher's pet! You're on teacher's side. Wait until I get you outside!" "Sure it's time to think about suffering when you're dead." The arguments in the classroom go back and forth, and ring true. For a full three months, the children had deliberately started discussions with school friends and neighbors to get their reasons for or against war.

It was after this production that I felt there was much to be said for children writing their own plays and acting them, too! It was a long study course, good training, and when they finished with it, one felt that each child knew what he was

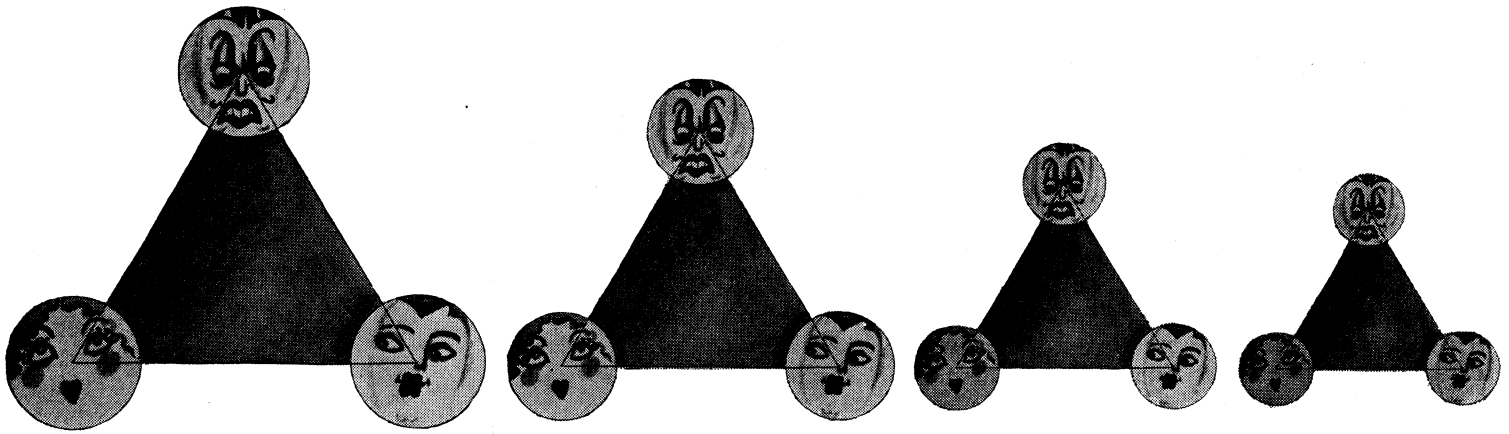
talking about and what he was doing.

Then I went to see the Federal Theatre play, *The Emperor's New Clothes*. Here was a play acted by adults, written by adults for children. They had all the technique of a Natalia Satz performance. By trickery, they made the children participate in the play. The actors lost their way on the stage street. They were looking for a sign, and clownishly, couldn't find their way. (The sign was directly behind them.) The children nearly jumped out of their seats, directing the lost actors to the "Street of the Royal Weavers." The actors came onto the stage from the orchestra playing ball and throwing the ball into the audience so that the boys and girls had a grand time playing along with the actors. Perhaps they did not get the significance of the symbolism of the story. Perhaps the tale of the silly emperor who cared for nothing but clothes and who had a garment of nothing made for him, and paraded through the streets in nothing, thinking he was clad in the loveliest of robes, was just a gay story. The poor downtrodden weavers were exiled from their homes, taxed beyond measure, gray and drab and sorrowful because they couldn't make beautiful enough clothes for the emperor. I doubt that the children felt a pang of sympathy for the poor weavers. The mechanized movements and dances, the grotesque and gay clothes, the silly clownings, were all there for them to feast their eyes upon, and they did. They loved it.

But it is the message of the children of the Walden Junior High School and the Henry Street and Federation Settlements which is to be respected. Young people dare attack war! And even though they ask, "What can I do about it, I'm only a school boy?", they also give the answer. These three groups had the courage to ask NEW THEATRE to send a reviewer to their productions. There must have been many more who spoke out against war in settlement or school auditorium. While Mussolini's babes with arms march through the streets of Rome, America's youth shouts out that they won't be cannon fodder, and they're saying that in the grammar school auditorium, too!



Norman Stevens



HOLLYWOOD TRIANGLE

Kiraly

ily differences. Intrigue in the love story, a sort of Romeo and Juliet situation . . ."

"It's in the bag, Jack. When do I see a first script?"

Thus the angle is developed. Romeo and Juliet enter the Black Legion accompanied by Jiggs and Maggie for comedy relief and Charlie Chan to cover the race prejudice aspects of the story. The first writer's angle may be followed or discarded, as many as twelve authors compete on the script, the victors emerging with screen credit. No matter whose name appears on the screen, no matter which of the twelve is responsible for the final angle, it is certain at the start that social implications will be elaborately disregarded or cunningly tortured to create sympathy for a robust, splendid industrialist; that a villainous individual will be responsible for the conflict necessary to plot and background; that love will avert tragedy in the end.

Originals born in the studios are usually more daring than the scripts offered by free-lance scribes. But writers know that a subject which would be considered too dangerous in a speculative script will be passed by the executives if a safe "angle" is developed within the studio. Originals turned out for the Hollywood market by knowing writers respect the tabus of a system as full of complexes as Freud's most advanced case. Not only must the prejudices of the producers, but the interests of the stockholders must be held sacred. Neither the tenets of the Legion of Decency, the attitudes of the women's clubs nor the ethics of the censors are as constricting as the theories of film executives who have become thoroughly infected with the spirit of Hollywood.

"This is a fine idea," they say, "but the public won't understand. It's above their heads. Too highbrow." Perhaps they're right. But I have sat in movie houses in Bridgeport, Connecticut, Marshalltown,

Iowa, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Encinitas, California, and I have never found any audience as dull as the big shots who attend story conferences solemnly believe.

In spite of these handicaps the step-child flourishes. Library shelves are not loaded with enough classics to make the yearly producing schedules vital and varied. Plays that have been filmed four and five times cannot be disguised with new names. The family trade prefers the contemporary sturdiness of *Fury* to the dead sentimentality of *Peter Ibbetson*. The industry is clogged with corpses looking backward for Belasco's secret, but the movie-going masses want more and more original melodramas like *Public Enemy* and *Little Caesar*, and more comedies like *The Richest Girl in the World* and *A Night at the Opera*. The Marx Brothers, I hear, have quite a taste for literature but good showmen that they are, they never try to give the public an adaptation of *The Rover Boys*. René Claire's best pictures were written for the screen, and Charlie Chaplin prefers originals, too.

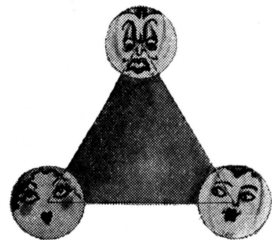
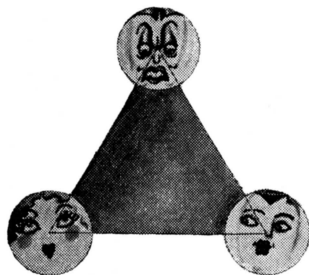
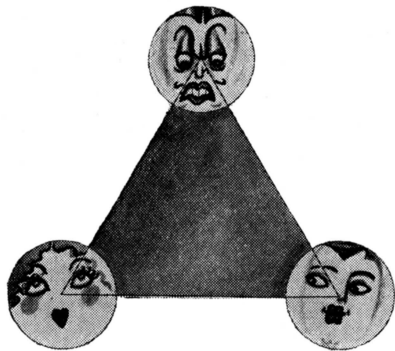
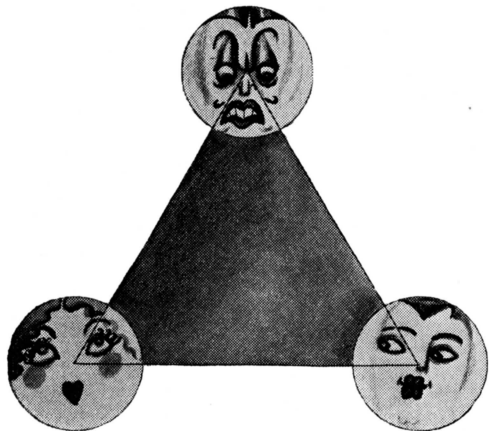
There does exist today the hope of pictures produced without Hollywood gold and free from the belief that the audience mass is half-witted. Small dramatic and workers' theatre groups are dreaming of unpretentious pictures that can be made for less than a million dollars and without benefit of Janet Gaynor. Independent producers are roving around, looking for unusual material. In New York the Nykino Group, which is just completing a film with a labor theme, needs scripts for both short and feature films. They want more than a new title for *The Easiest Way*. Writers who have been given inhibitions by Hollywood's prohibitions will have a chance to use the beautiful, elastic medium of the screen for telling honest stories.

Naturally these will not be super-colossals. The lushness, ease and elegance of Hollywood backgrounds cannot be pro-

duced for pennies, but how much of lushness, ease and elegance are necessary when conflict is real, when story, background and characters are authentic? The same is true of stage productions. *Stevedore* and *Waiting for Lefty* click in spite of amateur casts and makeshift sets. But try to produce *The Great Waltz* without spectacular effects or to interest an audience in *The Distaff Side* without silky actors, elegant furniture, flawless production. In some of the good amateur movies today you can see crowd effects, natural bits, incidental atmosphere snapped on street corners, that carry more conviction than all the elaborate pageantry in *The Crusades*.

Hollywood art is Wildean. It imitates nature. But when director, writer and producer are obliged to substitute reality for white drawing rooms, authentic incident for the inevitable yacht sequence, a newer and more rugged art will flourish. The makeshifts of cheap production are not so much of a handicap to the writer as the fear of a million tabus. When real situations can be used, when truth can be simple, conflict will be authentic, drama logical and there will be no need for the tortured devices of mechanical plot structure. A straight story of an American working girl would not depend on the twists and cuties of *Wife versus Secretary*.

It would sound affected and pretentious to speak of the original as an art form but it certainly should be as respectable a form of writing as any other. Think of *The Youth of Maxim* as a novel, of *A Nous la Liberté* as a satirical comedy written for the stage. For myself I would prefer the original to stay humble and not become an art form. That would bring in the snobs and the cultists, and we who write directly for the screen would have to consider not only the people who buy and produce, those who direct and act in our stories, the audiences who look at them, but the aesthetes, too.



HOLLYWOOD TRIANGLE

Kiraly

Film Checklist

BY ROBERT STEBBINS

THE GREEN PASTURES: Almost the sole exception to the rule that makes movie going during the summer months an unmitigated horror. It seems the 1935-36 films remaining undistributed are so bad that the producers were forced to throw their fall product into the gap. The Warner Brothers' film version of Marc Connelly's stage play, *The Green Pastures*, can cause few regrets. No film of recent memory has boasted such authoritative and beautiful performances, such perfection of ensemble and individual brilliance. True, *The Green Pastures* is not very stimulating as cinema. You often get a feeling of a stage within a stage, something like *Così Fan Tutti* at the Met. Take away your actors and you've got something well photographed and directed with sensitiveness but much too placid and repetitious. It can't be that "that tautological and otiose masterpiece, *The Old Testament*," as a character in Brackett's *Week End* once called it, is to blame. The weakness of the film lies in its structure. It is divided into four distinct and separate episodes each of which records an instance of man's sinfulness and God's vengeance, in the last sequence—his forgiveness. It seems elementary that if a film is to be denied continuity it should at least possess variety of emotional content. This variety *The Green Pastures* lacks. It is, however, a definitely superior item worth seeing. The academic dialogue between the Lord and Noah on the proper number of wine kegs to take aboard the ark, the fine singing of the Hall Johnson Choir and the moving performances of Rex Ingram, Ernest Whitman, Oscar Polk and others make *The Green Pastures* outstanding film entertainment, if not a cinema masterpiece.

SAN FRANCISCO: Far removed from the simple and often affecting religiosity of *The Green Pastures* is this bromidic Legion of Decency conception of the San Francisco earthquake as an Act of God that brought the gospel to Clark Gable and rendered him fit mate for Jeanette MacDonald, the parson's daughter. The synthetic wonders of the earthquake scene are hardly compensation enough for the nausea Miss MacDonald's slyly erotic exaltations induce. Spencer Tracy, as a hard-fisted clergyman, Gable's companion from boyhood, alternates between an unbelievable up-and-at-'em combativeness and an unctuous resignation that are both equally difficult to bear.

POPPY: W. C. Fields, they say, dragged himself from a sick-bed to make this one. Undoubtedly Fields is the kind of person who can't be kept down, but it does seem that Paramount was blame-worthy in taking advantage of his inclination. That the life of one of the great comic artists of our time should be endangered, so that Paramount can fulfill its contractual obligations, calls for outspoken condemnation. Fields is, as usual, magnificent in *Poppy*, but, all concerned, exhibitors, producers, audience, might well have waited for his complete recovery.

DANCING PIRATE: Features the picayune dance style of Charles Collins and the chromatic excesses of Technicolor. Frank Morgan is amusing and Steffi Duna projects with some vitality but the pall of Natalie Kalmus's bad batik hangs oppressively over the entire production.

THE WHITE ANGEL (Kay Francis, Ian Hunter): A far too reverential treatment of the life of Florence Nightingale that chokes on its own sanctity. Good photography by Tony Gaudio. Falls far below *The Life of Louis Pasteur*.

MEET NERO WOLFE: The first, and we trust the last, in a projected series of Nero Wolfe detective stories, with Edward Arnold in the feature rôle and Lionel Stander as chief support. We

hope that Mr. Arnold, Stander and Herbert Biberman, the latter directed the film, will be spared connection with the next in the series.

THE CRIME OF DOCTOR FORBES: The first half of this film is unanticipatedly adult and ably played. With the suicide of Dr. Forbes (mistakenly believed a mercy killing), however, the film bogs down in the platitudes of a Hollywood murder trial and never comes up again. Edward J. Bromberg's authoritative investment of the title rôle is the first opportunity he has had to show his talent and Group Theatre training.

PUBLIC ENEMY'S WIFE: Warner Brothers evidently couldn't quite decide whether to make *Public Enemy's Wife* a farce or a straight G-Man thriller and fell in between the two stools, emerging with something that's neither fish nor fowl nor valid entertainment.

SINS OF MAN (Jean Hersholt) and **POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL** (Shirley Temple): Between the two, Hollywood runs the gamut of human emotions. Tears and chuckles, old age and childhood, wormwood and lollipops, sulphur and molasses.

I STAND CONDEMNED (English): Originally called *Moscow Nights*. The producer, probably in an unguarded moment of self-accusation changed the title to its present form. It is certainly one of the poorest imports of several years. Harry Baur's inflated performance as the love-deranged capitalist who plots the death of his rival, coming after his remarkable Porphyry in *Crime et Chatiment* is an illuminating comment on the importance of direction in the movies.



STILL FROM FILM VERSION OF "THE GREEN PASTURES"



STILL FROM FILM VERSION OF "THE GREEN PASTURES"

Wanger, Love and Mussolini

BY MARCIA REED

"Wanger has a terrific story! Colossal, this Italian deal! Magnificent producer!"

Walter Wanger's suite in the Waldorf Towers was filled with newspapermen, smoke, cocktails, huge vases of gladiolas and Mr. Wanger himself. A good-looking young fellow. He can handle millions of dollars with the same ease that he does a press conference.

The gist of the story was out in a few minutes. Wanger had rated a twenty-minute confab with Mussolini and some long talks with Italian film heads and had arranged to produce from one to three English talkies a year in Italy's new Cinema City which is being built outside of Rome. He will import his own stars and technicians and the pictures will be released in Italy through something called the Societe Anonyme Compagnie Cinematographique Italiano Walter Wanger, and in America through United Artists.

"Imagine," he said, "the riotous colors of Venice, Rome, Lake Como and the many other historical, picturesque spots of Italy. What with color coming in so strongly in moving pictures today, Italy is a paradise!"

That "Italy is a paradise" was a bit of a jolt after months of headlines about a rapacious war, a ruined currency and methodically imposed nation-wide wage cuts, but it was to be hoped that Wanger was speaking only of the scenic beauties. He soon made it clear, however, that he was using the phrase in a larger sense.

"Mussolini? He's marvelous! Marvelous! Plain! Simple! Sympathetic! Marvelous man! Knows everything."

And Italy? Wanger had cracked up five planes there during the World War and cut quite a figure as a member of the Italian Air Corps. That was eighteen years ago and since then a new Italy had arisen.

"No poverty, no beggars. No kids on the street. All in uniform. New buildings. New roads. Terrific! The people—clean, healthy, polite."

But it appeared that Wanger had spent most of his time with Il Duce and Signor Mario Luprino, who is to be the general manager of the Italian project, and it is not hard to believe that they were in uniform, clean, healthy and polite, not exactly begging, and probably not running around on the streets. Besides, this was a press interview and from words dropped around it became clear that all the clippings would be sent to Italy—Signor Luprino had cabled to make sure

about that. The interviews will come in handy in Italy. The Hearst press snapped up the Wanger story and played it big. And just think what the Italian press can do with this quotation from Variety:

"Italy has been hurt that we have an unfair attitude towards Fascism, that we don't understand that Italy wants to help the Ethiopians, that the Ethiopians welcomed the Italian armies and went over gladly to their side. We only hear the other side of the picture over here, Mr. Wanger said, and so Italy seeks to correct the wrong impressions other nations have formed about it by means of Italian-made pictures, pictures that shall express Italy's point of view."

What kind of pictures will Wanger do in Italy? Several years ago he produced *Gabriel Over the White House* and *The President Vanishes*. While some people contended that these films lent themselves to fascist interpretation, Wanger's statements at the time showed he had no such meaning in mind. In any case these films touched on controversial subjects that the Coast glamour machine is only too ready to ignore. Could it be that Wanger would still have the courage to produce such films? Nothing of the sort.

"Love. That's the big thing. The Italians want romantic pictures. They're a very romantic people"—which might be more candidly paraphrased as meaning, "How can I recognize any social problems when I'm working for Mussolini?"

It would be a mistake to think that



Walter Wanger is selling his soul for petty cash. He's too smart a business man for that. The Italian proposition is calculated to net millions for Wanger and for United Artists, too. The financial stakes are made clear by a dispatch from Rome which appeared in the London Reporter of July 3rd. American renters operating in Italy had called a frantic meeting to discuss preventing the passage of a decree which Mussolini was considering. The decree would make it impossible to bring foreign films into Italy. This hit hard at Hollywood; it would mean a loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Walter Wanger's deal staves off this decree. By making pictures in Italy and ballyhooing them in America he will do a service to the Italian regime which is great enough to make it worthwhile for Mussolini to be lenient about American pictures in Italy.

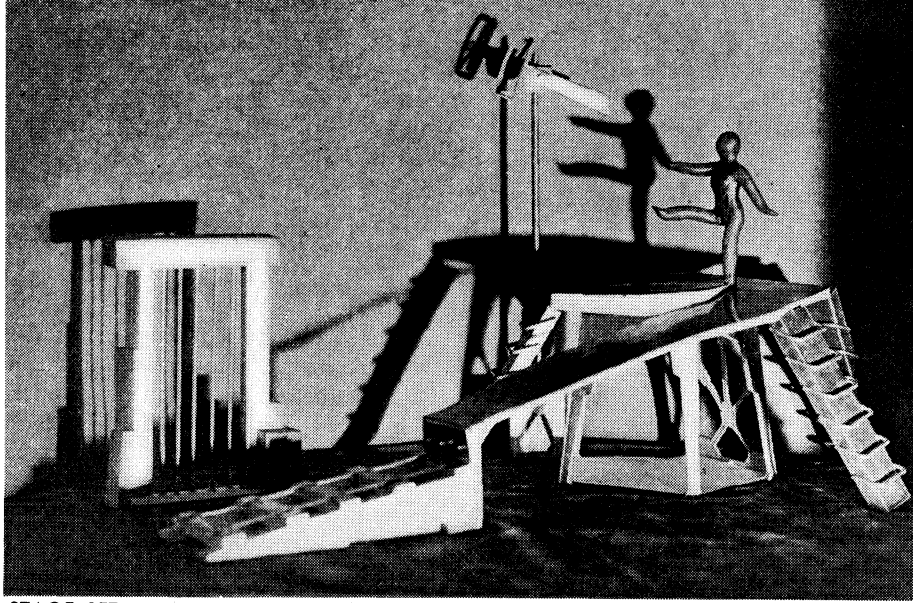
There are other financial advantages. Mussolini is working out a plan whereby all foreign film talent will be exempt from income tax on money earned in Italy. More savings for Wanger productions.

United Artists, whose Board of Directors includes Charles Chaplin, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., has fallen into line with Wanger's plans without a murmur of protest. Possibly the fact that Dr. A. H. Giannini, the newly elected president of the corporation, is a good friend of Mussolini's may have something to do with this, although Giannini recently struck a blow at the reactionary forces in this country by coming out against the Hearst-Landon-Liberty League combination. So far, however, United Artists has shown no indication of any desire to back out of the usual arrangement that it has with Wanger: United Artists supplies 50% of the capital and Wanger the other 50%. It is hard to believe that the Italian tie-up can pass unopposed. At least from Chaplin we should expect a denunciation of this scheme which will make United Artists a kind of fascist press agency.

Walter Wanger, himself, had best consider the implications of his Italian venture. Perhaps Mr. Wanger contents himself with the small solace that Italian fascism, unlike the German variety, is not characterized by anti-semitism. But Wanger's support of Mussolini is, in effect, an approval of fascism in all its manifestations that is certain to land him on the side of world reaction, from the blighting consequences of which America would not escape.



CIVILISATION



STAGE SET FOR "YOUNG TRAMPS" BY W. W. WALDEN

The Dance Project—

W. P. A. Stepchild

BY MARION SELLERS

On July 13th, the New York World-Telegram carried an interview with Miss Gertrude Hoffman, famous stage dancer. Although she had never actually observed the W. P. A. Dance Project, she expressed the following opinion of its work: "It makes the girls lazy. They can get these Government jobs where they have to rehearse only a few hours a day. They stick to these jobs because they are sure and they don't learn anything about dancing. They won't take regular jobs even at higher salaries because they are afraid that the jobs won't last."

It is necessary to contradict Miss Hoffman's opinions. This Project, far from making the dancers "lazy," has them rehearsing six full days a week, even during the hottest weather. Contrary to her inferences, hundreds of dancers do not "get these Government jobs" so easily, despite eligibility as unemployed and needy professionals. Those fortunate few who are employed are subject to constant fears that the Project may be disbanded at a moment's notice. All of them would "take regular jobs, even at higher salaries." Miss Hoffman's statement, if taken seriously, would make it increasingly difficult for the young unemployed dancer to urge expansion of a sorely needed enterprise.

During the month of August, New York, as well as several New England states, will witness the initial efforts of this tiny, inadequate venture, subsidized by Government funds. Eighty-five dancers, employed on a Project originally scheduled for 185, are divided into three units, each one of which will be responsible for a complete production. Mr. Don Oscar Becque who, besides being supervisor, directs one group, will present *Young*

Tramps. Dealing with the disinherited youth on the roads of America, it sketches their encounters with the law, with mission flophouses, with relief and welfare agencies. *Salut au Monde*, based on the poem by Walt Whitman, is being directed by Tamiris. *Prodigal Son*, Mr. Gluck Sandor's production, is a totally revised version of the dance drama originally performed at the Dance Centre several years ago.

The dancers are laboring under the most difficult circumstances. They have no theatre for their productions; the supervisor divides his time between the full-time job of directing, and the full-time job of organizing; directors are working with dancers of all types. Units contain ballet dancers, modern dancers, as well as ballroom and tap dancers. Out of this material a unified and finished product must be obtained. In each case, the director has had to solve for himself how best to utilize this varied material without sacrificing his professional standards of production. It is remarkable that results to date are so encouraging.

All three productions are worthy of high praise if for no other reason than that their directors have conceived their themes in theatrical, contemporary language, legible to a general public. They have taken their medium out of its arty seclusion and attempted to speak in terms of general, human experience. What exists, therefore, is the promise of highly satisfactory productions, but withal an inadequate answer to the demands of the many dancers for whom the Project was originally created.

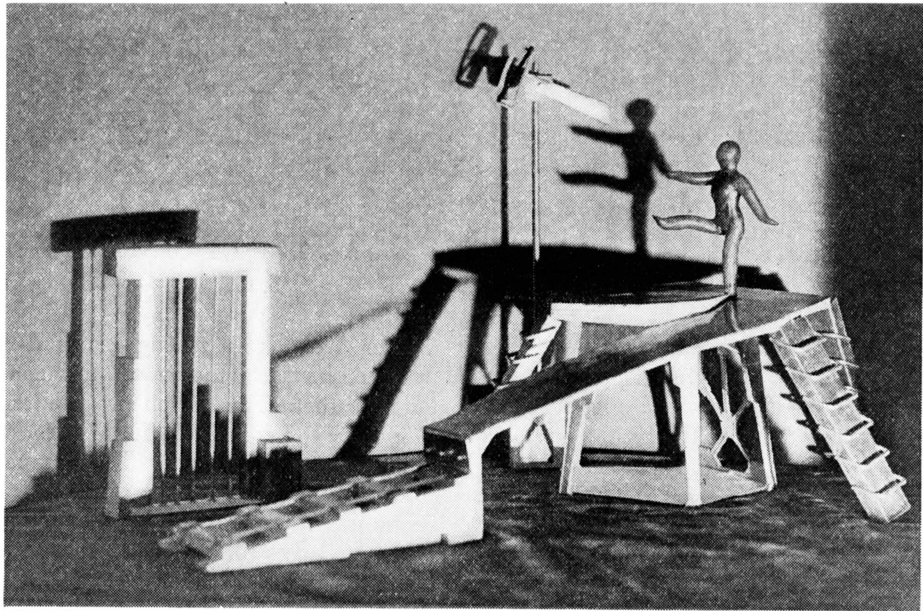
There is a great deal lacking organizationally to insure any lasting success for the Project. Directors and dancers alike unanimously clamor for a dance

theatre where repertory can be presented under the best possible circumstances. Instead, they have had to accept rehearsals on improvised stages, shifting opening dates for lack of a theatre, and spot bookings. Furthermore, it is ridiculous to assume that a project containing eighty-five dancers represents any reasonable percentage of the unemployed or insures any extensive production possibilities. Yet for months delegations requesting expansion have been visting both Mr. Barber and Mr. Becque, telegrams have been sent to Mr. Hopkins and Mrs. Flanagan, to no avail.

What the Project requires most is a planned and correlated organization, based on a penetrating analysis of the actual and real problems confronting the present set-up. There seems to be no coordinating body prepared to do this, no central office where the needs of the Project are defined and classified. One cannot happily assume that the present supervisor, engrossed as he necessarily is in his own production work, can pay adequate attention to the innumerable problems that arise from day to day, let alone solidify an enterprise that sprang into existence almost overnight.

Only a supervisor who can and will devote all his time to the job of establishing an organized and adequate Dance Project can do this. Unemployed professional dancers must be added to the staff. A militant supervisor can persuade his superiors of the extreme necessity for this expansion. The Project must be so constructed that it can absorb and utilize the talents of all types of dancers.

It is most important that the Dance Project be supported by the sympathies of the public as well as the monies of the Government. This sympathy and encouragement cannot be maintained unless the dancers are given a fighting chance to prove themselves. At present the odds are against them. The Project must be expanded; it must be organized properly. We have been told that delegations from the Dancers Association have been given an elaborate run-around since the opening of the Project. We have been told that a committee has outlined a complete plan for an enlarged Project. At no time has sufficient recognition been granted these activities. The Association represents some of the most advanced interests in the profession. Perhaps an immediate step the administration could take would be to grant them an audience and seriously consider their offered suggestions. After all, the primary purpose of the Works Progress Administration was to grant work relief to the unemployed of the nation. Hundreds of dancers in New York alone need that relief. Ways must be found to put them back to work.



STAGE SET FOR "YOUNG TRAMPS" BY W. W. WALDEN

Ernst Toller

(Continued from page 15)

his own soul in which the other characters are incidental. He is above all a lyric poet and often we hear Shelleyan accents in his verse. His dual interest in poetry and politics is reminiscent of the early romanticism. Toller's development has progressed in later years away from youthful lyricism toward a more realistic approach to life. His latest plays, *The Blind Goddess*, and the collaboration with Hermann Kestner which produced *Mary Baker Eddy*, are dramas in more conventional form with real character and a developed plot. But technical innovation and a greater solidity do not compensate for the earlier note of ardor and passion.

In his very first play, Toller attacks the problem which is closest to him. In his later plays he moves away from it.

Transfiguration deals with the problem so acute for the adolescent of trying to find a place in the world. This struggle is always enhanced in the case of the intellectual. Toller, who is a Jew, conceives it in racial terms but actually it is the problem of every intellectual who feels he does not belong until he has won for himself a spiritual dwelling and earned his spiritual bread by the sweat of his brow in the labor for ideas. Friedrich is willing to suffer, even to die, to win his right to his fatherland. His most tragic moment is not physical wounds or sights of death around him, but the moment when his comrade reminds him that he is a stranger and that even a hero's deed in no man's land has not won him citizenship in his fatherland. Friedrich, in the end, smashes the statue of the fatherland and finds a new one in the revolution. But again the same conflict reappears in the later plays, *Massemensch* and *Der Deutsch Hinkemann*. They register the effort to cross over from one class to another.

Despite his participation in the Bavarian Revolution, Toller has not yet won a place in the fatherland of the working class toward which his heart and mind has drawn him. Between him and the working class, barriers still remain. Despite his experience in revolutionary action and in prison, he has not gained sufficient insight. Inadvertently he continues to misunderstand the worker and to reiterate certain old prejudices imbibed in childhood from the ruling class. He has not crossed the divide between classes; he remains the poet of no man's land in the class battle. In his early plays, there oscillates the conflicting rhythms of pacifist humanitarianism and the call to revolution; a delicate repulsion for the crude realities of existence alternating with wanton cruelty in which

sex and sadism mingle. Here the revolution is conceived either as a miracle which will bring a golden age or as a blind and destructive force.

Something of the old Peasant War of the sixteenth century lingers in the lines of *The Machine Wreckers*. There is more of the apocalyptic vision of the Anabaptists than of the Luddite Rebellion in the play, its religious fervor in *Transfiguration*, *Massemensch* and *Hinkemann*. The Bavarian Revolution itself with its anarchist, intellectual-Bohemian leadership has something of the Peasant Revolt of Thomas Münzer—something that looked backward as well as forward. This, perhaps, explains its early defeat. Too much of agrarian tradition, too little of industrial discipline in the rank and file in Bavaria, a country of rich peasants, too much of Bohemianism and anarchism in the leadership without the shrewd grasp of reality or controlled responsibility. Pushed to cooperate, the Communists saw the inevitable defeat, but struggled to make it an honorable and courageous one; they knew the pessimism and passivism would lead the masses to death and defeat, foresaw that the balance of forces was not ripe for victory. When the Bavarian Revolution went down to defeat, it opened the way to Hitler and his beer hall putsch.

History, an American poet has said, is not literature; acts cannot be erased like words. Each act carries its inevitable consequences far into the unseen future. Hence it is that the intellectual oversensitized to the task of creating cultural values—a heroic program of another pattern—is often unsuited to the rôle of politician or statesman. Not that the man of thought is necessarily more passive, but his activity fulfills itself in a different sphere. The activity of the revolutionary intellectual sculpturing the new morality is as intense and vital and difficult as the activity of the revolutionary leader shaping the destiny of a people on a political and economic basis. Both are necessary tasks and both demand heroism of a different calibre and quality. But when the intellectual, his emotions and experience undisciplined by reality, undertakes a revolutionary task in the external world, he must become *another* man.

For the petit bourgeois intellectual of the period, it was no easy thing to espouse the revolution. Toller underwent a deep spiritual struggle before he could accept and join the revolutionary movement. He was never afraid in his art to depict that struggle and his uncompromising sincerity makes him a pioneer in the revolutionary theatre, a true poet who broke

old moulds in order to seek a new form and to make a passionate confession of faith in the new world.

German Protestant as much as Jew, Toller's problem lies rooted in the idea of faith and the freedom of the individual to make his own judgment. Sometimes faith fails Toller and he reverts to the idea of a vengeful, blind fate as in *The Blind Goddess*. He is smitten by anxiety about the future and the unknown and overwhelmed by the odds against the new order. He is not sufficiently integrated in the new to know the strength of the proletariat and its historic mission, which cannot fail despite the defeat of the German revolution, and which will find its way to power elsewhere and move to victory for all mankind.

Toller's last play, *Mary Baker Eddy*, written in collaboration with Hermann Kestner and performed at the Gate One Theatre in London in 1934, is a well-made historical play which poises the question of faith as its central motif. In choosing Christian Science as a theme, he is dealing with the power of faith to heal and to work miracles. But he does not succeed in solving it, rather he seems to deny that faith is more than charlatanry and a strong will to power. We observe the unscrupulous and sensual Mary Baker Eddy born to victory by an indomitable will and a desire for worldly success, cloaking her real motives in a mantle of pious prophecy the better to gain her own ends. But this religious charlatanry masked as religious faith is one kind of faith only. It belongs to the decadence of Christianity.

But there is a kind of faith possible today which moves in line with the actual progression of events. It is no longer Christianity but the socialist revolution which scientifically attempts to change the old order in line with the discoveries and knowledge of the laws of history. Such a faith is constructive, progressive, and the acquisition of this knowledge is the task of every intellectual in the world today, for only by absorbing and digesting its laws, by integrating its theories with practical daily life and in the work of every individual in each field of activity will that change take place which lies uppermost in the mind of every progressive individual today.

Since his early impetuous and romantic espousal of the revolutionary cause, Toller has moved steadily toward a more realistic attitude both in his work and his revolutionary activities. With America standing on the threshold of the struggle which has wracked Germany for a decade, his example as a writer and as an intellectual leader, should have a stimulating effect on the leftward moving intelligentsia in the United States today.



Margaret DeM. Brown

A SCENE FROM THE THIRD ACT OF "FUENTE OVEJUNA," LOPE DE VEGA'S DRAMATIZATION OF THE REBELLION OF THE FUENTE OVEJUNA PEASANTS AGAINST THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP OF A FEUDAL LORD IN 1476, VASSAR EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE, 1936.

Shifting Scenes

In addition to dozens of requests for production rights to Irwin Shaw's *Bury the Dead* from new theatres and leading little theatres throughout the country, letters commending the play continue to come into the NEW THEATRE offices. Gus Goldstein, former Sergeant, Re-burial Unit, Graves Registration, Army Service Corps, writes:

"This letter is being written the morning after reading NEW THEATRE'S *Bury the Dead*, by Irwin Shaw.

During the year 1919 after eighteen months of warfare, I was assigned to the cemeteries at Romagne sous Montafaucou and Thiaucourt, France, where I handled 10,500 bodies of American soldiers. I am the Sergeant of *Bury the Dead*.

I am told that Irwin Shaw is only 23 years of age. He could not have been in the World War. There have been no wars of that nature since 1918.

I am truly astounded at the perfect understanding that Shaw shows of the lack of reaction with which we operated our automatic bodies. His portrayal of the living corpses (the Soldiers, the Sergeant, the Captain and the Generals) could not be better if he had taken notes during the war.

We, who went through the ordeal, would have shown no more excitement if the bodies we handled would have stood up and refused to be buried.

Kindly convey my heartiest congratulations to Mr. Shaw."

A reader writes from Canada:

"With great interest I read the last issues of NEW THEATRE. With joy I

welcomed the existence of such a big left theatre movement in America which was for me a big surprise.

I am myself a man of the theatre, and I came to America from Poland where we try in very poor conditions to create a theatre of the struggling people. We have to contend with persecution of the fascist dictatorship which combats fiercely any effort of development of the consciousness of the working class. But the response which every one of our performances called forth among the people made us go on with the fight.

In the April issue of your magazine I read Irwin Shaw's *Bury the Dead*, and I felt that it is a play of special significance and value in the struggle which we are waging against war. I want to translate it into Polish in order to introduce it to members of our Experimental Theatre of Warsaw which perhaps will try to put it on the stage. Therefore, I apply to you for permission to make this translation. I cannot assure you of any compensation for it because our theatre is working under well-known illegal conditions supported by workers from their starvation wages. I will try also to put it in one of the workers' papers but they wouldn't be able to pay for it either. But I think, and I am sure that the same is the opinion of the New Theatre League and the author, that such a play should be a property of the whole working class, and the best and the only real reward for their work is the echo which this play will arouse in the minds of the Polish workers."

From San Francisco Paul McNealy, Secretary-Treasurer of the American Federation of Government Employees, writes in part:

"I don't know what to hell to write or how to write but I want to tell you that I am one of your readers. At present, I am employed in the WPA Statistical Office in San Francisco. After reading *Bury the Dead* I couldn't wait to write a review for our union paper. And it takes a hell of a lot to drive me to write. Well, the review was read by three hundred employees and their friends which resulted in a mad scramble about the city for copies. But no copies were to be found! They were all sold out. My copy is still in circulation in the office, in fact I have a waiting list for it. . . . Most of the people think we ran a good review so I am sending you a copy of our Bulletin."

With the New Theatres

The Chicago Repertory Group plans an early fall production of Albert Maltz's *Black Pit*, as well as a production of Philip Stevenson's *Back Where You Came From*. . . . A new theatre, the Long Island Contemporary Theatre, has been formed in Jamaica, Long Island. On August 15th the group will begin rehearsals of a new script by Ernst Toller. . . . The Buffalo New Theatre Players recently produced *Private Hicks and Lefty*, winning acclaim from the newspaper drama critics in that city. . . . A semi-professional theatre, the Boston Repertory Players, has just been formed in Boston. . . . Edmund Fuller, formerly with the Hedgerow Theatre, is working on a pamphlet on the community theatre movement for the New Theatre League. Other pamphlets soon to be



Margaret DeM. Brown

A SCENE FROM THE THIRD ACT OF "FUENTE OVEJUNA," LOPE DE VEGA'S DRAMATIZATION OF THE REBELLION OF THE FUENTE OVEJUNA PEASANTS AGAINST THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP OF A FEUDAL LORD IN 1476, VASSAR EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE, 1936.

published by the League will deal with the theatrical trade unions and the non-professional theatre, and film sources and film showings for the new theatres. Harry Elion, pioneer New Theatre League worker and former National Secretary, has been appointed director of the New Theatre School. He will take up his duties on a full time basis beginning with the fall term of the School.

Theatre Workshop

The New Theatre League announces the early appearance of an important supplementary publication, Theatre Workshop. The new publication (which will appear before September 1st) will be a 96-page quarterly featuring the longer and more technical material on the practise, theory, and history of the theatre arts. It will be edited from the viewpoint of the practising theatre worker.

Each issue will be planned as a book around one major topic. The first issue is devoted entirely to "the art of acting". Featured are two long and extremely valuable essays. The first, *The Work of the Actor* by I. Rappaport of the Vakh-tangov Theatre, is one of the finest articles expounding the basic principles of acting. The second, *Primary Elements in the Actors' Art* by I. Y. Sudakov, is equally useful and supplements the Rappaport article in that it deals less with practical work and more with a scientific approach to the actors' art. (The Sudakov article has long been used by the Group Theatre, and its publication is only possible through the Group's courtesy and interest in Theatre Workshop.) Other features will be an article on Stanislavsky's *My Life in Art* by Harry Elion, recently appointed director of the New Theatre School; a feature editorial by Lee Strasberg, director of the Group Theatre; a chapter from the important out-of-print book *Actors and the Art of Acting* by George Henry Lewes; and an interesting article on acting by the famous 19th century Italian actor, Salvini.

Later issues of Theatre Workshop are being planned on Directing, Scenic Design, various aspects of theatre history, etc. Theatre Workshop will be edited by Mark Marvin, national secretary of the New Theatre League; Barrett Clark, John Howard Lawson, Harry Elion and Lee Strasberg will act as associate editors. The yearly subscription rate will be \$1.50 for four quarterly issues, single copies will sell for fifty cents. Mail subscriptions, check or money order preferred, to Theatre Workshop, c/o New Theatre League, 55 West 45th St., New York City.

The Animated Cartoon

(Continued from page 18)

This simultaneous creation of music and action, this conjunction of sound and pantomime, is one of Disney's most valuable contributions to the development of the sound film. With the completion of all the details of the time-sheet, the director distributes sections of the action to about thirty animators.

Now begins the process of animation. Inasmuch as an animator cannot make more than several drawings a day—equal to about six feet of film—it therefore requires about a month to complete the animation alone. The animation is divided in several ways. The backgrounds, for instance, are made by regular scenic artists, and only the moving figures are animated. Each animator is assigned to that phase of the animation for which he is best fitted.

Now, what essentially distinguishes an animator from an artist? There are, of course, many subtle and indivisible differences, but the one most prominent is that the animator, besides being something of an imaginative artist himself, must be able to inject a spirit of life in the characters and their movements which he draws. These characters must be able not only to lend themselves to movement, but their movement must have the semblance of real life. It is not enough to animate them; their animation must reflect the viability of men or animals. So, in order to portray this verity of movement, the animators frequently resort to

various devices for their portrayals. They may watch their own mirrored reflections as they imitate the movements of their subjects, they may study similar motions simulated by other persons, and, when the subjects are animal, in order to endow them with real zoological characteristics as well as human traits, they frequently observe animals go through their antics in the zoo or on the screen. With all this experience garnered at first hand, they thus are able to reflect in their cartoons many elements of real life.

After a section is sketchily animated, it is photographed and studied by Disney and his aides as to its verity or authenticity. If it is satisfactory, then girls copy the drawings (of which there may be thousands) on celluloid with black paint, or if it is a colored cartoon then it is done in color.

The shooting takes about four or five days, and it is done by a mechanically complex stop-motion camera. The final endorsement of approval, as in the larger studios, is made at a preview at some local movie house. If a particular sequence fails to evoke a favorable response from the audience, the film is taken back to the studio and that sequence changed; although this happens very rarely. Because of the carefully planned and synchronized scenario, there is little that requires changing after the consequent filming of the cartoon.

And so, after about four months of labor, involving the efforts of hundreds of persons, the animated cartoon is ready for its few minutes of life on the screen.

Jewish Play Contest

Under the joint auspices of the 92nd Street Y.M.H.A. and the New Theatre League and NEW THEATRE, a new play contest has been launched offering a \$100 prize for the best one-act social play dealing with Jewish life. The contest is initiated in the hope of encouraging plays dealing with the Jew in truthful fashion, with his ambitions, accomplishments, and failures as a human being. In contrast to the distorted or sentimental characterization that the Jew has always received in the American theatre, the contest looks for scripts that reflect the problems of the Jew in relation to contemporary American life. The contest offers, in addition to the \$100 first prize, production of the prize-winning script and any other scripts found worthy by the theatre group in the 92nd Street "Y".

RULES: Contest begins immediately and closes November 15th. Winners will be announced in the January issue of NEW THEATRE. The New Theatre League and NEW THEATRE reserve the right to publish the prize-winning play and to act as agents for all rights, including movie, radio, publication, and amateur and professional stage production rights.

Plays are to be thirty minutes to one hour in length. Manuscripts must be clearly typed on one side of the paper, must bear their title plainly, and must be accompanied by return postage and by a registration fee of twenty-five cents for handling. No scripts will be accepted without registration fee. Author's name and address are *not to be on the manuscript*, but must be enclosed in a sealed envelope with return postage with the name of the play on the outside of the envelope.

A playwright may submit any number of scripts, but each individual script must be separately entered, with registration fee, return postage and identification envelope. Plays must be submitted to "The \$100 Play Contest," P. O. Box 300, Grand Central Annex, New York City, or to the offices of the New Theatre League, 55 West 45th Street, New York City.

JUDGES: Rabbi Jonah B. Wise of the Central Synagogue; Dr. Henry Enfield, dramatic critic at the 92nd Street Y.M.H.A., member of the New Theatre School faculty; Mordecai Soltes, director of education of the Jewish Welfare Board. Further judges will be announced later.

Maxim Gorki

(Continued from page 12)

October 21st, 1905. The Revolution of 1905 was still going on. It was during those tumultuous October days when the first general strike in history was taking place, when the Black Hundreds were carrying on the most terrible repressions and when there were horrible pogroms at Kiev and Tomsk. In Moscow the rumor spread that the Black Hundreds, looking on Gorki as a dangerous revolutionist, were going to attack the theatre during the first performance. Stanislavski gives a lively description of how, in the last act, when the mob climbed over the fence and attacked the intellectuals and a pistol shot was heard and Kachalov, who was acting the part of the scientist, was seen to fall, the audience thought the mob of supernumeraries was the Black Hundreds attacking the actors, and cried out: "They have killed Kachalov!" "Revolvers suddenly appeared in the hands of most of the spectators. Many women fainted, others had hysterical fits, the couches in the foyers were covered with their bodies." So says Stanislavski with pardonable exaggeration.

During this same year, 1905, Gorki wrote another play called *The Barbarians*, representing a group of engineers coming into a district town on the shore of a river, finding the primitive life of the common people there, and bringing into those simple surroundings the degeneracy of the big city from which they have come. The play was planned for the Moscow Art Theatre, but was never produced.

A far more important play was written in the following year, 1906, called *Enemies*. Here Gorki clearly envisaged for the first time the class conflict and represents the two classes, the workers and the owners, as inevitably "enemies." Gorki does not deny that the owner may be a good man. Indeed, he represents Bardin and his family in a very sympathetic way. But as they sit there in their charming garden, we hear the hum of the factory over the fence and we know that the conflict is latent in the system itself. As one of the workers says: "The owner may be a good man, but his goodness does not help us any." In a conflict in the factory, Bardin's partner, a harsh and unjust man, is killed and the class war is on. The capitalists call in the police to help them, to which the workers say: "You depend upon the police; but we depend upon ourselves." When, finally, soldiers as well as police have been called in to protect the factory owners, Bardin's niece turns on the owners and says: "Soldiers can't protect you from your own stupidity." When the stern prosecutor, the brother of the

murdered factory owner, wishing to put the girl in her place, tells her; "Laws are defied only by children and revolutionists," she replies boldly, "Then I'm a revolutionist!" At another point Gorki inserts the dangerously pregnant remark: "If you begin to ask yourself questions you will become a revolutionist." When the workers are led off to prison and execution, Tatyana, seeing their fine spirit of solidarity, cries: "These people will conquer in the end."

The censor, in this case, realized that it would not be enough to strike out certain passages as he had in *Smug Citizens* or *The Lower Depths*. He prohibited the entire play. Unlike Anglo-Saxon censors, he was perfectly frank in giving his reasons. They are worth quoting in full: "Because the play stresses sharply the terrific enmity between workers and employers, because it represents the workers as stoical fighters going consciously toward their goal—the abolition of capital, because it represents the employers as narrow egoists and, regardless of their personal characters, enemies of the workers, because Tatyana predicts the ultimate victory of the working class, and because the whole play preaches against the possessing class, therefore Gorki's *Enemies* cannot be permitted to be performed."

Accordingly, *Enemies*, so far as I know, was never acted before the Revolution. Since the Revolution, however, I have seen it done at the great Alexanderinski Theatre in Leningrad, at the Maly Theatre in Moscow, and within the last year, the marvelous new production at the Moscow Art Theatre.

In his experiences during the Revolution of 1905, Gorki had plenty of opportunities to see the brutality of the Russian policemen. In most of his plays he had taken random shots at the police. Now he devoted a whole play to them in his next drama, *The Last Ones*, written in 1908. The censors came down on it like a ton of bricks. The prohibition of June 10th, 1908, is again quoting in full: "Why it is called *The Last Ones*, we have no idea. The author represents the police as rogues. He touches the burning question of the relations of the police to civilians. Because of this, the performance of this play in a theatre might provoke the sympathy of a part of the audience. Accordingly, we think it necessary to prohibit the above-mentioned play."

In 1906 Gorki left Russia and came to the United States with the actress Andreyeva, hoping to get help for the Russian revolutionists. At first he was dined and wined, sitting at a banquet between Mark

Twain and Arthur Brisbane. But when it was discovered that Gorki had sent sympathetic telegrams to miners on strike and to Bill Hayward in prison and when the Tsar's Embassy sent statements to the American newspapers that Gorki was a dangerous radical, the Arthur Brisbanes dropped Gorki like a red hot poker and moral America found a moral pretext for inhospitality towards the Russian revolutionist, driving him out from hotel to hotel.

Disgusted with New York, "The City of the Yellow Demon" as he called it, Gorki returned to Russia and started writing several new plays attacking bourgeois society. It was the period of disillusion, hopelessness and terror following the failure of the Revolution of 1905, and the plays of Gorki published in 1910 are full of bitterness against the corruption of that period.

In *Odd People* Gorki unmasks a group of hypocrites. In *Vassa Zheleznova* Gorki gives a terrible picture of a ruthless mother, dominating her family by the power of money, making her dying husband sign a false will, causing her daughter unnecessary anguish, and forcing her crippled son to go against his will to a monastery. *Children*, a one-act play, *The Zykovs*, and *The False Coin*, written in this intermediary period, between the two revolutions have little value today except for Gorki's scorching satire on the conditions in Tsarist Russia at that time.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 was hailed by Gorki as "the sunniest and greatest of all revolutions." His differences with Lenin were quickly reconciled and under Lenin's strong influence, Gorki became enthusiastic about this new social order which was placing science ahead of superstition and liberating the working masses, whose cause Gorki had so long pleaded. Except for *The Judge*, a play written in 1918 about an old man who hunts down a former prison companion who has become successful and powerful, and whom he accordingly hates, it was a dozen years or more before Gorki turned dramatist. The great drama of the early years of the Revolution and of the war against invasion, Gorki's breakdown in health from the tuberculosis which he had first contracted in Tsarist prisons, his years of recuperation in a sanatorium near Berlin and at Sorrento in Italy at Lenin's advice, his triumphal return to Moscow in 1928, and his absorption in the wonderful new socialist upbuilding which he found there—all this had left Gorki little opportunity for producing plays. With the coming of 1932, however, and the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the beginning of Gorki's literary career, he announced a trilogy of

plays—unfortunately left unfinished.

The first part, *Egor Bulychev and Others* was first performed on September 25th, 1932, on the occasion of this anniversary, at the Vakhtangov Theatre in Moscow, in the presence of Gorki himself, Henry Barbusse, and other writers who had come there to do him honor. I shall never forget the excitement of that opening night. Later it was produced at the big dramatic theatre in Leningrad and still later at the Moscow Art Theatre itself.

In this play Gorki represents a bourgeois capitalist, Egor Bulychev, on the eve of the Russian Revolution. Egor is slowly dying of cancer. During the four acts of the play he declines more and more till we come to his death at the end. At the same time during these four acts the revolution is rising more and more until it breaks out triumphantly at the end. Such is the general pattern of the play. Egor distrusts the coming revolution. He feels it will destroy the two most precious things in the world: religion and the family. Yet Gorki shows up mercifully how little sacred either of these was in this case. The priest, who has been sponging off Egor all these years, is waiting for him to die, in hopes of a big bequest in his will; while the nun, the sister of Egor's wife, quarrels with the priest, hoping to get the bequest for herself. Such is the sacredness of the religion which Egor felt was threatened by the Revolution. As for the family, the quarreling of the daughters, the intrigues of the son-in-law, Egor's illegitimate daughter, and his affairs with the maid servant show up the sham of what he calls the sacredness of the family. All sorts of devices are used to try and save Egor. A woman mind-healer is brought in, a crazy peasant-healer like Rasputin, and finally a trombone-player, who tries to persuade him that by playing on the trombone loud enough, he can get all the bad air out of his system. The name of the trombone-player proves to be Gabriel and the neighbors rushing in think it must be the Angel of the Last Judgment blowing on his trumpet. The laughter that inevitably greets this scene shows that the mature Gorki, now that the Revolution was well established, could make hearty fun of the old order and was capable of great comedy as well as of great tragedy.

The second part of the trilogy, *Dostigaev and Others* represents Egor's foxy business partner, who was able to survive the Revolution and flourish as a Nepman—for a time. It was first produced at the Vakhtangov Theatre in Moscow, on November 25, 1933, and like the first part of the trilogy has been acted in New York in

Yiddish at the Artef. But not yet in English.

In addition to the works which Gorki himself wrote in the form of plays, there is an almost endless number of his novels and stories which have been dramatized by others. I have myself seen dramatizations of *Chelkash*, *The Orlof Couple*, *Malva*, *Kain and Artem*, *Foma Gordieyev*, *Three Men*, *Mother*, and *In the World*. *Mother*, in addition to other dramatic versions, has been astoundingly presented by Okhlopkov at the Realistic Theatre, where he presents the play on a circular stage in the very midst of the audience. *In the World*, representing scenes from Gorki's own life, has been most beautifully done by the Moscow Art Theatre itself.

These same stories and others have been turned into moving pictures for the screen. These film versions especially Pudovkin's remarkable film of *Mother* as well as the stage versions show how dramatic Gorki's work really was, even when he was not consciously writing drama.

In the last analysis, however, the greatest of all the dramas of this dramatist of the lower depths is neither his plays nor his dramatized and filmed stories, but the drama of his own life. This is the great drama of a writer emerging from the lowest depths and rising through the class struggle to heights where millions of men look up to him with a devotion that they feel to no other author.

As part of the great celebration in Gorki's honor in 1932, it was announced that two of the greatest theatres in the Soviet Union—the Moscow Art Theatre and the Big Dramatic Theatre in Leningrad—were to be called "in the name of Gorki." I shall never forget Gorki's embarrassment and his gesture of spreading his hands apart as though depreciating an honor which he felt he had not deserved.

Gorki modestly muttered: "I wrote plays because I had to. That is why they are so bad. But if I had studied the theory of drama they would have been much worse!" Yet Gorki's characteristic bit of Russian self-criticism should not blind us to the fact that his *Lower Depths* has been more popular and stirred people more deeply than any play by a contemporary writer, that if Gorki's other plays were not quite so successful it was largely because the Tsar's censors had cut out the most vital passages, and that his series of fourteen plays, as they are now being revived in their full form, prove, by their rugged and realistic dramatization of life, that they rank among the most powerful plays of social protest in world drama.

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Backstage

Cecil B. deMille has written us taking issue with a reference, in the article *Ain't Hollywood Romantic?* by Clara Weatherwax, to an accident which occurred in his picture *The Crusades*. He states that a property boy suffered injury during movement of the (infernal) machine between takes, that the machine was stopped instantly, and that he neither saw the accident nor knew, until five minutes afterwards, that it had happened. He asks that we correct the impression that he was angry because the machine was stopped.

The deMille letter was referred to Miss Weatherwax who writes:

"Since learning of Mr. deMille's statement I have been in touch with a number of people who worked on *The Crusades*. I have heard several different versions of the affair, all conflicting more or less with Mr. deMille's version. However, since the scene was apparently on a very large scale and made use of several hundred people, there was so much going on that it is difficult to determine the details of what occurred.

I received the information on this matter which was used in my article from a reliable source. If the information was incorrect, I regret it. Needless to say, it was not my intention to attack Mr. deMille, but simply to demonstrate the conditions and hazards under which extras work."

Due to an error, several sentences in the concluding paragraph of John W. Gassner's review of *Class of '29* in our last issue were omitted. The paragraph should read as follows: "If *Class of '29* did not, despite its faults, succeed in exposing an appalling situation it would be extremely weak drama indeed. But in a sense the play cannot be weak drama. No realization of the tragic impasse of an entire generation can fail to be distinctly affecting. *Class of '29* compensates its audiences—which should comprise the entire college-going youth of the nation—by its unvarnished truth telling, by its understanding of young men and women and their elemental deprivations, by some very vivid portraiture. In lieu of a stronger treatment this tale deserves a place on the contemporary stage."

The caricature of Mussolini used with Marcia Reed's *Wanger, Love, and Mussolini* is from *Regards*, publications of the French People's Front. The photo of Meyerhold's *Massemensch* which appears with Charmion von Wiegand's essay on Ernst Toller is reproduced through the courtesy of Harcourt, Brace & Co., 383 Madison Avenue, New York City, publishers of Norris Houghton's book on the production methods of the leading Soviet theatres, *Moscow Rehearsals*.

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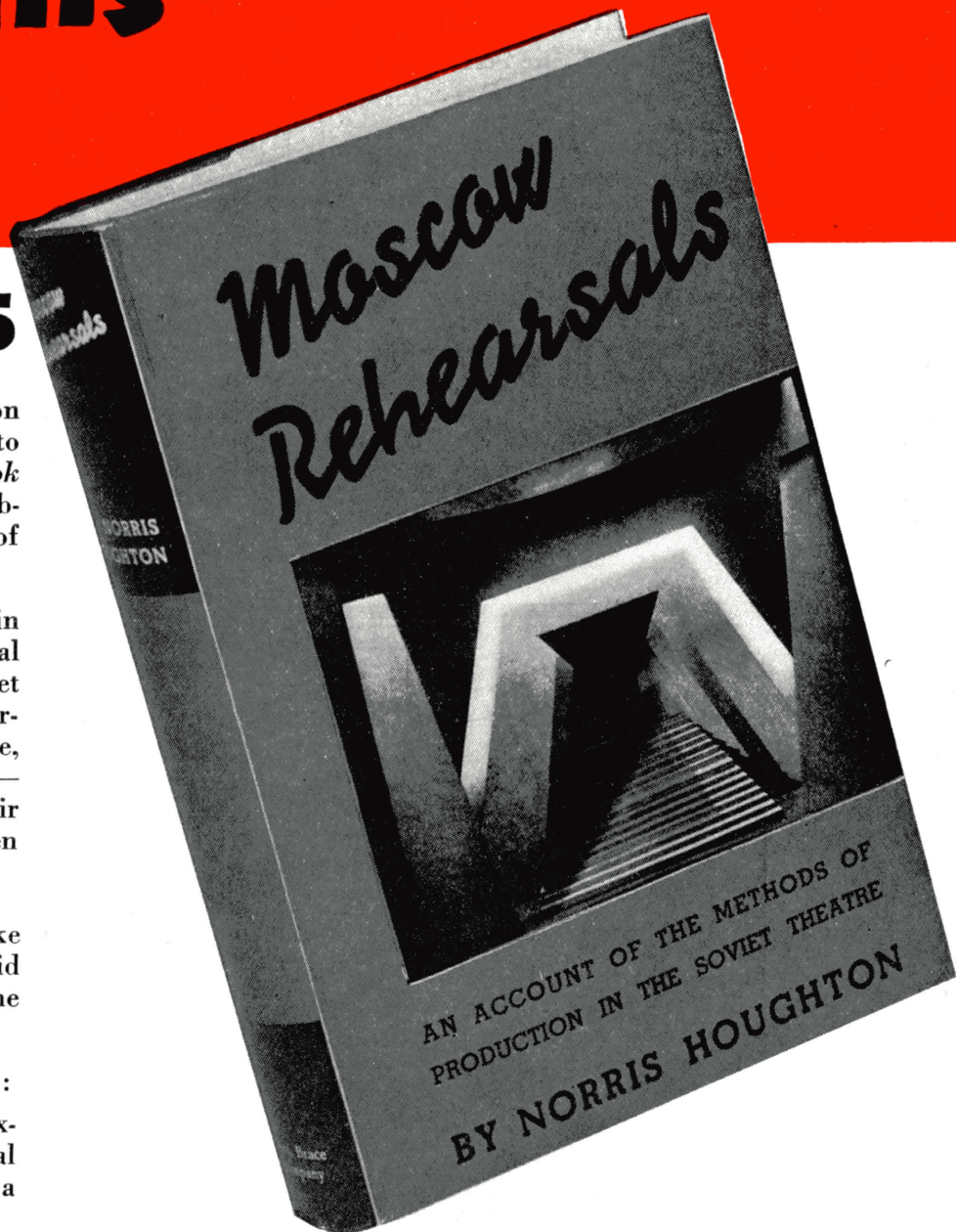
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