

NEW

# theatre & film

MARCH 1937 25c

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 NEXT WEEK



# B A C K S T A G E



**CLIFFORD ODETS**, whose *Waiting For Lefty* was written for a New Theatre Night, and first published in *NEW THEATRE*, is now working on a film based on Ilya Ehrenburg's novel, *The Loves of Jeanne Ney*. His collaborator is Lewis Milestone, who will direct the picture. Milestone has made some of

the greatest American films, including *All Quiet On the Western Front* and *The Front Page*.

Paul Sifton, co-author with Claire Sifton of *Give All Thy Terrors to the Wind*, is the author of *The Belt*, the first play about the speed-up in an auto factory. *Give All Thy Terrors to the Wind* will have its first performance at a New Theatre night shortly. The Brooklyn Progressive Players are rehearsing another new Sifton play, *Crime of the Century*. The model set on page 33 was designed and built for *Give All Thy Terrors to the Wind* by Edmund Christians, Able Seaman.

The cover for this issue of *NEW THEATRE AND FILM* shows Rex Ingram, who played "De Lawd" in the film version of *The Green Pastures*, and Blacksnake in *Stevedore*, as Lucky in John Howard Lawson's *Marching Song*. Photographs used in the montage were taken by William Entin and Martin Harris.

Herbert Kline's name has been on the mast-head of *NEW THEATRE* since April, 1934, first as managing editor and then as editor-in-chief. More than any other one person he was responsible for its survival against overwhelming odds and its emergence as a real force in the theatre and film world. Kline left the impress of his individuality and his tremendous devotion to the magazine on every issue which he edited. He resigned on January 1 (after collecting much of the material for this issue) to take up correspondent work with the Loyalist forces in Spain, and the good wishes of the staff and of all the readers of the magazine, go with him.

Ralph Bates, author of *Lean Men* and *The Olive Field*, is an Englishman who has lived in Spain for many years. Recently he visited this country to further the work of aiding Spain in her struggle against Fascism. The illustrations to his article on the Spanish theatre are by Felicia Browne, a young English artist who was killed on August 29, 1936, while fighting with the Government forces. A member of a volunteer party which set out to blow up a rebel munition train and was attacked by overwhelming Fascist forces, Felicia Browne escaped, but went back to help a wounded man who had been left behind; both were riddled by Rebel bullets.

Ivor Montagu is well-known in film circles as editor, scenarist, director and as the translator of the works of Pudovkin and Eisenstein into English. The filming of *The Siege of the Alcazar* by Darryl Zanuck of Twentieth-Century-Fox Films is by no means a closed incident. There have been several contradictory reports as to the destiny of Zanuck's film lauding the "heroism" of the Alcazar defenders. In light of the obvious fact that Mr. Zanuck's mind has not yet been definitely made up for him we feel Mr. Montagu's letter has the utmost pertinence in the campaign to keep pro-Fascist films from the screen.

*NEW THEATRE AND FILM* will be published monthly October to May inclusive, bi-monthly June to September. Hereafter the publication date will be the 20th of each month.

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VOL. IV, NO. 1, PUBLISHED MONTHLY OCTOBER TO MAY INCLUSIVE, BIMONTHLY JUNE TO SEPTEMBER, BY SOCIAL THEATRE PUBLICATIONS, INC. EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES: 156 WEST 44TH ST., NEW YORK CITY, BRYANT 9-8378 SINGLE COPY: 25C. YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION: \$2.00. FOREIGN: \$3.00. SUBSCRIBERS ARE NOTIFIED THAT NO CHANGE IN ADDRESS CAN BE EFFECTED IN LESS THAN TWO WEEKS. ILLUSTRATIONS AND TEXT CANNOT BE REPRINTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF NEW THEATRE MAGAZINE. ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER, OCTOBER 28, 1934, AT THE POST OFFICE AT NEW YORK, N. Y., UNDER ACT OF MARCH 3, 1879. COPYRIGHT 1936, SOCIAL THEATRE PUBLICATIONS, INC. ADDRESS ALL MAIL TO NEW THEATRE MAGAZINE, 156 WEST 44TH ST., N. Y. C.

NEW THEATRE & FILM



# A Statement

**T**HE past four years have witnessed an extraordinary development in the theatre arts. The theatre, the dance and the film have successively turned their attention from pure entertainment or aesthetics to the actualities of life as a majority of human beings know it. The expression of this awareness has passed from the first raw, struggling efforts at understanding and interpretation to maturity of form and realization. The social theatre—using the term in the sense of all the theatre arts—has come of age.

In the theatre proper a movement originally confined to a few scattered groups now includes a chain of community theatres in the truest sense of the word; a body of playwrights who are treating important themes with outspokenness and skill; a large number of professionals of all categories, who have come to realize that the play is, in very truth, the thing, that what it says and to whom it says it, are matters of supreme importance to themselves as artists and workers; and a large audience not only anxious for but intelligently critical of social plays. Of the very first importance is the Federal Theatre Project, which has uncovered a huge new audience eager for honest and living drama, and awakened and educated the workers who depend on it for a living, as well.

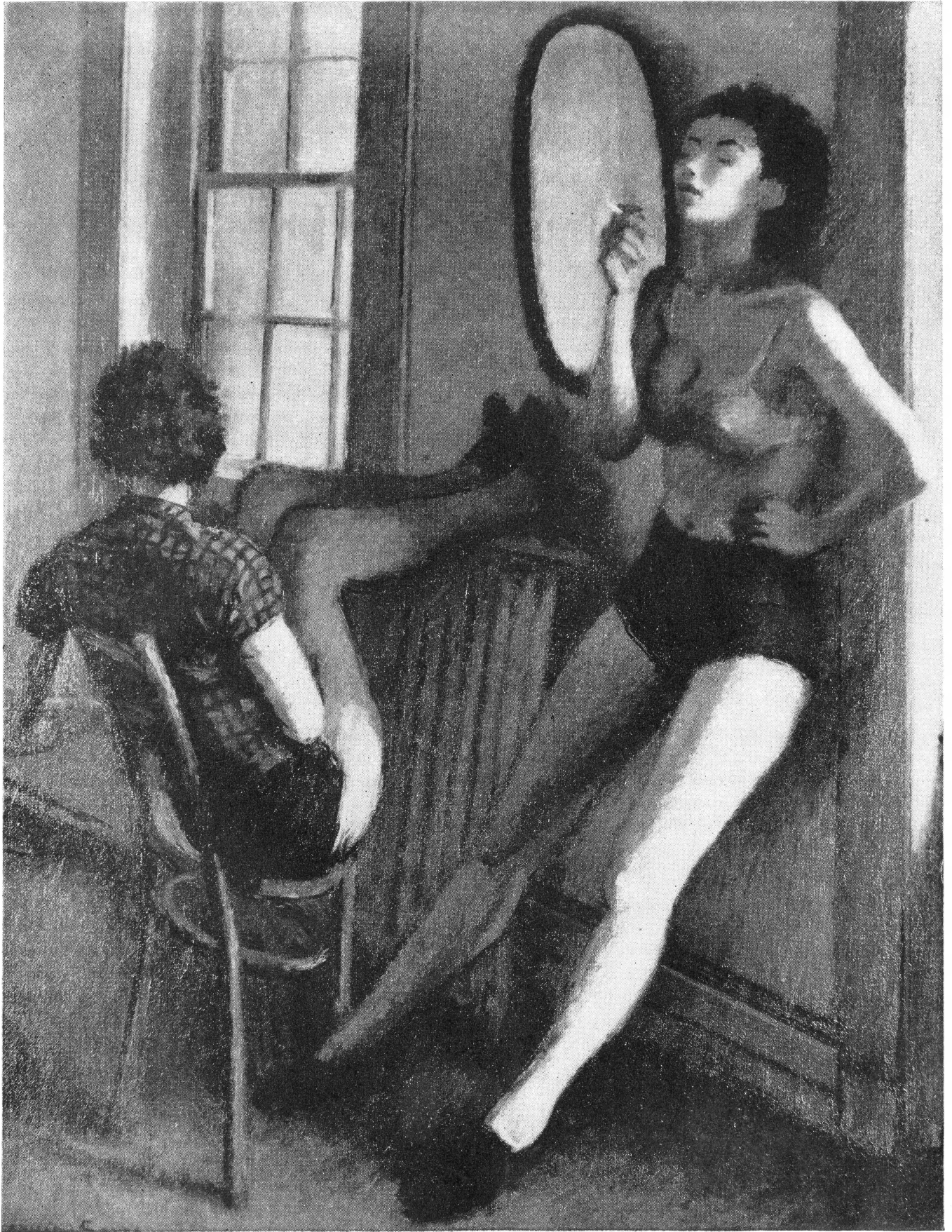
In Hollywood the most interesting developments have been, not the rise of Temple and Taylor, but the phenomenal growth of trade-unionism among stars and extras, screen-writers and technicians, and the increasing number of socially significant photoplays, whose success has effectively demonstrated that the public wants pictures like *The Informer* and *Fury* as well as *Gold Diggers* and *Big Broadcasts*. Lastly the independent film movement has signalled its advent with such achievements as *Millions of Us*, *The World Today* and *The Wave (Redes)*, which herald a new era in social and labor films.

The modern dance is no longer native to New York alone. Extensive group tours have familiarized new sections of the country with a dance which is no longer exclusively absorbed in mystic unrealities and agility for its own sake, but which takes its ideas and patterns of expression from the living world.

This adult movement, in all its varied complexity, is the province of **NEW THEATRE AND FILM**. To justify its existence, it must serve as critic, organizer and champion alike. It must confront economic as well as creative problems. It must work for the continuance of the Federal Arts Projects, not only as a relief measure but as the basis of a national art movement; it must forward complete unionization of the Hollywood studios, so that militant action may forestall pro-war or pro-Fascist films when the need arises; it must aid the dancer to break the shackles of an impossible economic impasse; it must call attention to the vital importance of the radio field, with its tremendous reservoir of unorganized strike-breaking talent, and its propaganda value; it must foster the young social and labor film as it did the new theatre movement in its early days.

This issue of **NEW THEATRE AND FILM** is only a step in such a tremendous task. Nevertheless we feel that it marks a significant advance. Three months ago **NEW THEATRE** temporarily suspended publication to effect a thoroughgoing re-organization. Not only was the title of the magazine changed to indicate its increased scope, but the format was altered and enlarged. A corollary to these changes was the attempt to define our reading public more clearly. We concluded that the magazine should be aimed primarily at the *workers* in the film, theatre and dance fields, whom it should furnish with vital information about their profession and their craft which they would not find elsewhere; such material, because of the authenticity and significance, would also reach the creative and intelligent theatre-going public.

Lastly, direct contact with our readers must be so strengthened as to become almost a new feature in policy. How else be sure of giving our audience the stimulus and the guidance which it demands? One way of achieving this relationship will be, we hope through an enlarged correspondence department; although space limitations may curtail publishing as many communications as we would like, they can at least provide a vital link between readers, editors and contributors.



*Courtesy Valentine Gallery*

**Resting**

**Raphael Soyer**

# *A Scene from*

# THE SILENT PARTNER<sup>1</sup>

BY CLIFFORD ODETS

## ACT TWO: SCENE TWO

*The scene is the small bakery shop of Corelli which is used as a relief station by the strikers. Across the back of the scene stretches the inside of the street front of the store. To one side is a small counter and a glass show case; on the other side are some empty flour barrels and a wooden bench. There are fifteen women here, strikers or wives of strikers, all of them milling around and in a tense mood. A few, however, sit silently to one side. All of them carry cans, pitchers or pots: they are waiting for a shipment of milk to arrive.*

*It seems that two of the most forceful women of the group are having a cross discussion. Carrie, a large wholesome woman, has most of the women with her. Corelli, standing behind the counter, is between the two women, seemingly in the position of a judge.*

CARRIE: You won't catch me taking any of the Company's charity. Not for all the tea in China!

MRS. FINCH: I don't care what you think, Carrie Williams! If those men don't vote to take the ten percent and get back to work they can all go to hell!

VOICE: Is that nice?

MRS. FINCH: I don't care about nice. I want the men back on the job where they belong! I want food for myself and my children. If they got any sense they'll vote one way—to go back to work!

CARRIE: There's lots you don't understand, Mrs. Finch!

MRS. FINCH: And there's lots more I don't want to understand!

CARRIE: Well, that's just too bad you don't wanna understand, just too bad. Of course, you would be the one to do something at the point of a gun!

MRS. FINCH: You can shoot off your mouth plenty, Carrie, but I'll take the cash. Maybe you like this waiting in line for milk. That's your privilege; but I don't; and my small daughters don't!

CARRIE: But none of us others has daughters!

A SMALL BOY: (*Running in.*) Mom says did the milk come yet?

CORELLI: Not yet. (*The boy runs out.*)

CARRIE: You might take a lesson from the lowly banana, Mrs. Finch—stick to your bunch or you'll get skinned! (*Turns to others.*) All of you listen . . . you've none of you died yet. A little hardship? Yes! But you've had that before. You been raised up to it and it comes easy and natural by now. Well, grit your teeth and hang on a little longer. Stop naggin' your husbands. They're

<sup>1</sup> COPYRIGHT, NOVEMBER, 1936, BY CLIFFORD ODETS

voting on the question right this minute up at the Labor Temple and they want you to be right with them and see this fight to a finish, no matter what they decide. Those of us really interested in our children will be with the men in that fateful hour when the showdown comes with the Company. First they said to us, "Accept or perish" and now they say, "Accept or be shot." Well, we won't bend the knee—

MRS. FINCH: Talk and more talk! (*Sits in disgust.*)

CORELLI: (*Gently.*) Talk some times is necessary—

CLARA: (*A small eager woman.*) We better get talkin' 'bout that milk—When's it comin'?

CARRIE: It was expected before noon. We had two phone calls on it. I was about to suggest, while we're waiting—as Mrs. Finch interrupted—we might open that other barrel of apples and have them distributed.

CORELLI: Better wait for Barney.

CARRIE: Sweat them outa the barrel, Mr. Corelli—we agreed on it this morning. (*Corelli shrugs his shoulders and begins to work under the counter.*)

CLARA: Are there enough to go 'round?

CARRIE: Three or four to a person. Keep the line please. (*The women scramble into position and file past the counter where Corelli gives each a handful of apples after which the women again drape themselves around the shop.*)

CARRIE: (*Shouting above the hubbub.*) And don't forget—everybody wait for the milk!

MRS. FINCH: (*Acidly, to Carrie, as she crosses the shop.*) Did you think we wouldn't?

ANOTHER: Maybe the milk driver got lost.

CARRIE: No, it's Peters who's been bringing the lettuce here for years.

STILL ANOTHER: They lost most of their early crops up there.

ANOTHER: The heat's terrific up there, they say.

VOICE: Tomatoes are cheap and plentiful.

CARRIE: But their green stuff is ruined by bugs and things.

STILL ANOTHER: I don't see how they make a go of it.

SUDDEN VOICE: Here's Barney! (*Barney enters.*)

BARNEY: (*With excessive cheerfulness*) Well, how are all the chicks today?

MRS. FINCH: What's been decided?

BARNEY: There's no decision yet.

MRS. FINCH: Why?

BARNEY: Some are for and some are against.

A FRIEND TO MRS. FINCH: They'd better make up their minds. Time don't wait.

MRS. FINCH: Do they realize what they're deciding?

BARNEY: How do you mean?

MRS. FINCH: Do they know they're deciding if they want skeletons instead of children? Do they know they're playing with human life? Does that rank husband of mine—and all yours, too!—do they know it's not Tuesday night at the bowling alley?

BARNEY: I think they do, Mrs. Finch.

ROXIE: (*A shy girl who until now has been sitting quietly to one side with a pitcher between her knees, now pushing forward.*) Will the milk be here, Mr. Diamond, soon?

BARNEY: (*Himself not knowing.*) Certainly it'll be here. Where is it written it won't?

MRS. FINCH: (*Bitterly, as she seats herself again.*) Where in the name of God is it written it will?

ROXIE: (*In a sad determined voice.*) I must get some milk, Mr. Diamond—please get it for me. (*Other women press forward voicing their demands too.*)

BARNEY: (*Getting up on bench.*) Look everybody, the milk's coming. There'll be enough for everyone. We expect a hundred and twenty quarts.

CARRIE: (*Backing up Barney with a powerful voice.*) And one quart makes a powerful lot of cocoa.

MRS. FINCH: If you have the cocoa!

CORELLI: (*Standing up on the bench beside Barney.*) Ladies, I must make a remark. You must remember the strike is the only weapon millions of men and women have! It is a collective way to say you are more than dogs.

MRS. FINCH: (*Who is now being echoed by four or five other women.*) Who cares about that?

CORELLI: (*Slowly, incisively.*) Then you must remember the conditions which made a strike to happen here. Remember yesterday. Don't forget too easy. The domestic animal, the dog and cat forget. . . . The human being remembers. (*He gets off the bench; the women are silent.*)

BARNEY: In the bargain we received a gift of thirty dollars for flour today. And here stands the best baker of bread in the two towns.

(*Corelli looks up and smiles.*)

BARNEY: Ladies, don't forget the strike may be over in a few minutes. But if it isn't you deserve congratulations on your solid stand. Nobody will win any medals, but the sun will shine on you forever for your patience.

CARRIE: I want a song outa you girls now. (*Clara immediately begins to sing the first line of a song.*) That's it, Clara, you know the words. Lead them on the east and I'll take it here on the west. (*Swinging her arms, Carrie begins to sing in a lusty voice; gradually the other women take up the song, Barney joining them. Now suddenly Jelke, three armed thugs—one with a sub-machine gun—and a policeman enter. The singing dies out. Corelli comes forward.*)

CORELLI: Excuse me, but have you got a search warrant?

JELKE: This constitutes a mob, so keep your mouth shut or I'll have you all arrested.

CARRIE: You'll arrest no one!

JELKE: (*After slowly looking around the room.*) All right, boys. (*Jelke and his henchmen leave as suddenly and quietly as they appeared.*)

BARNEY: Ladies, you have met the new government of Rising Sun and Apollo. (*An angry buzz breaks out among the women. Pearl hurriedly enters.*)

PEARL: They've mounted a machine gun on the Willow Street gate!

CARRIE: Over my dead body! I say it to them—over my dead body will this final injustice prevail! (*Eddie Paccalli enters.*)

EDDIE: (*To Barney.*) I think everybody better scatter. The streets are full of those new deputies. They picked up two men for crossing the street.

CLARA: No, we won't move.

OTHERS: No, we won't!

CARRIE: We're waiting for milk!

EDDIE: They got a patrol at each end of the street.

BARNEY: What for?

EDDIE: Search me. (*A general hubbub breaks out.*)

BARNEY: Just a minute ladies!

ROXIE: (*Vainly pleading for information.*) What's the matter, what's the matter?

BARNEY: Ladies . . . when the milk arrives take it and go home quietly. You won't be harmed.

A VOICE: Not with the brigade of pots and pans we've got! (*There is another angry outburst from the women.*)

BARNEY: Ladies—please! Please, ladies . . . commit no nuisance here or there. Please. (*In the general confusion and anger which follows Carrie joins Corelli, Barney and Eddie come down to one side.*)

CARRIE: You think they'll stop the milk?

CORELLI: Yes.

EDDIE: Why? They don't know it's coming. They can't confiscate property and so forth.

BARNEY: It's another piece of their dirty business. Maybe they're not rats, but they're in the same longitude and latitude.

A WOMAN AT THE DOOR: They're going away. (*Several women crowd the door.*) They walked down Mercer Street.

BARNEY: Some one better head off the milk.

PEARL: I can catch it at the bridge.

EDDIE: (*Now at the door, watching.*) They're all leaving, Barney.

BARNEY: Ladies! (*Gets their quiet attention.*) Please, I must ask you not to provoke those pretzel benders if they come here again. Believe me. I'm a big city person; I lived my first twenty years in New York—I know such types.

MRS. FINCH: We have a right to our opinions!

PEARL: (*To Barney.*) Will I catch the milk at the bridge?

CARRIE: No! Let it come right here. No one'll touch that milk, except over my dead body!

MRS. FINCH: They got no legal right to touch it.

ANOTHER: None what so ever!

BARNEY: I'm sorry to say legal rights is a state of mind.

MRS. FINCH: I'm no crazy cat, and I say they can't do these things in America!

CORELLI: America is also a state of mind.

CARRIE: On second thought, I'm for forming a welcoming committee to go out and meet the milk—a body-guard of women with brooms. It's about time we had a women's auxiliary here!

EDDIE: You don't wanna advertise it that way, the milk.

BARNEY: They know by now. They know everything we do, Eddie—

EDDIE: Meaning what?

CARRIE: (*To Barney.*) You veto my idea?

BARNEY: (*Looking intensely at Eddie.*) For the present my opinion's with Eddie—no advertising. (*Now that a decision has been made some of the people relax into watchful nervous waiting.*)

ROXIE: (*To Corelli.*) Will I be able to get two

quarts . . . ?

BARNEY: That's okay. She's from the sick Jefferson family.

CORELLI: Just say to me Jefferson when the milk comes.

PEARL: (*At the door, in an intense whisper.*) Here comes that reporter boy. (*A young man enters accompanied by two men, one of them with camera equipment.*)

REPORTER: What's new, my good people?

BARNEY: Big fight before.

REPORTER: (*Eagerly.*) Yeah?

BARNEY: Yeh, the conductor punched a ticket. (*Several women snicker.*)

REPORTER: I guess you don't like me, Barney.

BARNEY: I like you, but far away.

REPORTER: Any news yet from the holy temple of labor?

EDDIE: (*After no one answers.*) You're blockin' the door—what's the matter, your father a glazier? (*Going up to reporter.*) Come on, come on, get the hell out before you get some jiu-jitsu!

REPORTER: That's all you boys do, break arms.

CARRIE: That's a damn lie, Sam Eaton, and you know it!

REPORTER: Then why talk that way? Hoodlums! . . .

And by the way, I want you to meet a friend of mine. Be good to him because he comes all the way from New York—from the United Press—and he's got his own cameraman with him. You made the major league now. (*Stops as he is about to exit.*) It doesn't happen

to be true, does it, that you're expecting some milk from upstate farmers? My editor asked me to ask you that.

EDDIE: (*Coming up to him.*) You heard me! (*In answer the reporter lazily thumbs his nose at the assembled people and exits.*)

BARNEY: (*To the Reporter's "Friend"*) How 'bout you?

THE FRIEND: My name is Ross, and if I can get some information—

BARNEY: Why not try the Chamber of Commerce?

CARRIE: Like some others who come through here.

ROSS: That's not what I'm looking for. If it's possible, I'd like to write a fair account. I'm a union man myself. (*Several of the group laugh aloud at this statement; Ross himself smiles.*) That wasn't the right thing to say, was it?

BARNEY: (*Grimly.*) No.

ROSS: I have a lot to learn.

CORELLI: So has your friend Eaton.

ROSS: He's not my friend.

BARNEY: Don't be seen with him if you're looking for information.

CORELLI: What union are you a member of?

ROSS: Well, you wouldn't know—the Newspapermen's Guild.

CORELLI: I have heard of such a thing. It's a good idea for civilization.

ROSS: I'd like to find out—

BARNEY: Don't they tell you down at the Plant about us?

ROSS: I haven't been to see them.

THE CAMERAMAN: How about a few pictures of this place?

BARNEY: We don't want no pictures.

ROSS: It won't harm anyone.

EDDIE: He said no pictures!

CARRIE: We've been shamed and lied about enough without them!

BARNEY: If they got printed with our names we'd maybe get rich some day and get kidnapped.

ROSS: You're making a mistake if—

PEARL: (*Who has been looking out the door.*) That Eaton boy's waiting down at the corner.

ROSS: Yes. He asked you if milk was going to be delivered here.

BARNEY: So what?

ROSS: So is it?

CORELLI: (*Finally, after no one answers.*) No.

ROSS: If you tell me the truth perhaps I can help.

EDDIE: Help what?

ROSS: Is milk being delivered here?

BARNEY: (*Cautiously.*) And if it is?

ROSS: If it is it won't!

BARNEY: (*Still fencing.*) Suppose we say milk's definitely being delivered here?

ROSS: Well, the simple fact is that Eaton heard it wouldn't be permitted in and he's waiting out there for a story.

BARNEY: Who told—

CARRIE: I knew it! (*Barney looks slowly around him. The women are growing restless and excited with worry.*)

BARNEY: (*Crisply.*) Pearl, run down to the bridge. Head the driver off.

PEARL: (*Running out.*) All right.

BARNEY: Eddie, run down to Mercer Street. Get a dozen boys. We'll—

PEARL: (*Running in now.*) Barney, it's here!

BARNEY: The truck?

PEARL: It's here, yes. (*Everyone stands with uncertainty.*)

BARNEY: (*To Eddie.*) Get some of the boys anyway.

EDDIE: Right! (*He goes swiftly.*)

ROXIE: What is it? (*She goes from one to the other wanting to know.*)

CORELLI: (*Calm in the general excitement.*) One minute, Barney. Let them unload the milk and bring it in here. If the gunmen make trouble we will make here a barricade.

ROSS: Will they come in without a warrant?

BARNEY: (*Scornfully.*) Where do you think you are—in America?

CARRIE: (*At the door.*) Don't see none of the thugs around.

CORELLI: (*To Barney.*) I'll take the milk around the back. Open up there.

BARNEY: Good. (*Corelli goes out the front; Barney exits left to the back of the store, but first makes a general admonishment.*) Don't get excited everybody. We'll get the milk.

ROXIE: (*In the tense silence.*) What's the matter?

A WOMAN: I'm nervous as a cat!

ANOTHER: I knew something would happen.

MRS. FINCH: How aggravatin' if it does.

CARRIE: (*Waving her arm from the door where she is watching.*) Shush!!

ROXIE: What is it? Some one tell me.

MRS. FINCH: Don't worry, Roxie.

CARRIE: Some quiet, girls—quiet!

ROSS: (*To his preparing cameraman.*) No, no pictures now.

CAMERAMAN: Are we newspaper men or not?

ROXIE: I must have some milk. (*Now several women who are blocking the entrance down left begin to say, as they look off, "Here it is," "Here it comes," etc. Carrie remains on guard up at the front door. Now the women stand silently as two husky red-faced, determined farmers come in carrying a great can of milk between them. They set it down in the middle of the shop as Barney and Corelli enter with another can which they set down next to the other one. No one speaks until Peters, one of the farmers, steps forward and says:*)

PETERS: Friends, we bring you greetings from the farmers of Sparta.

(*Again there is silence; many women stand with tears in their eyes.*)

CORELLI: (*Finally.*) Close and lock the door, Carrie. (*She immediately does so.*)

BARNEY: Let's get the other milk.

PETERS: Let's get it. (*The four men exit left. All the women are standing motionless, focussed on the milk cans, their eyes and mouths making love to the milk. Slowly Roxie comes forward to one of the milk cans and looks down at it as she will in later life at her first baby. Suddenly she falls to her knees, throws her arm around the can and begins to sob. This is something which all the other women understand.*)

CARRIE: (*Finally coming to her.*) Don't feel that way, Roxie.

ROXIE: (*Sobbing.*) No, no.

CARRIE: Why we have everything well in hand here.

PEARL: Many of our boys are coming—

CLARA: In case there's trouble.

CARRIE: (*Tugging at the top of one can.*) There's plenty here. Just let me get this open and stir the top up. Who's got the dipper?

CLARA: (*Darting forward with the dipper.*) Here!

CARRIE: What did you bring, Roxie—this pitcher?

(*Roxie nods her head. The four men enter with the other two cans.*)

PETERS: That's the load.

BARNEY: That's right; give it out.

(*Now Carrie pours the first dipperful of milk into Roxie's pitcher. All watch as if observing a ritual.*)

ROXIE: It's so white.

PEARL: Oh, it's so beautiful I could cry—

CARRIE: (*Hushily, deeply moved.*) In the feeble days of our old age we'll remember this, Peters.

PETERS: (*Embarrassed.*) We're sorry it took that long to deliver.

(*Now appear at the store door Jelke, the reporter, a town official and six thugs. Jelke knocks at the door.*)

JELKE: Open up.

ROSS: He can't stop this.

BARNEY: Nobody move. Don't get excited.

CORELLI: The door will not be opened.

JELKE: (*Outside.*) Open the door! Open it up! (*He*



rattles the doorknob.)

PETERS: Who is it?

BARNEY: A man with guns. This might be bad. But don't fight them back—we'll all be in jail. Pearl, listen—slip out the back. Find Eddie Pecalli. Head off the boys.

CARRIE: No such thing. (*Outside Jelke is consulting with his men.*)

BARNEY: If the boys arrive there'll be a fight. Right now we must fight about only one thing—keeping scabs outa the plant, if the strike goes on! Go, Pearl darling.

PEARL: All right. (*She quietly exits left.*)

CAMERAMAN: (*Putting his newspaper card in his hat-band.*) Tough looking hombres!

PETERS: Who are they?

CORELLI: Men in the employ of the plant.

PETERS: What do they want?

MRS. FINCH: They wanna dump that milk!

JELKE: Open up in the name of the law. (*He waits.*)

Open up! (*No one moves inside or out.*) Go ahead, boys.

(*The glass door is broken through with a rifle butt. Jelke deftly reaches in and deftly opens the door from the inside. He and his henchmen enter.*)

JELKE: What's going on here?

BARNEY: (*Grimly.*) Mickey Mouse's birthday party.

CARRIE: (*Coming up to confront Jelke.*) You'll positively have to show a warrant to examine this store or get out!

JELKE: (*Paying no attention to her but going down to the cans.*) What's this stuff?

PETERS: Milk.

CARRIE: Get off these premises.

JELKE: (*To an aide, not turning from the cans.*) Take her. (*A thug pushes her to one side; she strikes back; a woman screams.*)

ROSS: (*Stepping in.*) Just a minute!

JELKE: Just a minute *you!* Everybody act like ladies and gentlemen.

CARRIE: (*Struggling and screaming.*) Dammit, touch that milk. . . . (*She is subdued.*)

JELKE: We're officers of the law. We don't want no interference from nobody! Understand? This is milk! (*Stabbing Corelli with a finger.*) You! Answer one question: has this milk been examined by the Board of Health? Has it?

CORELLI: You will not shout, please!

JELKE: Listen, you, foreigner, wop, what ever you are—I don't shout, I don't argue. I *tell!* How about this milk? Was it certified by the health officers? (*Turns to the town official who entered with him.*) Was it, Mr. Best?

BEST: (*Slightly abashed, but keeping a rude front.*) No, it wasn't.

JELKE: See, here's a health officer of the town who says it wasn't.

PETERS: All our cows are tuberculin-tested and examined.

JELKE: Who are you?

PETERS: Who are *you?*

JELKE: (*Jabbing a direction with his finger.*) Take him!

PETERS: You don't take me. (*He knocks down a thug who approaches him, but a second thug hits him once with a gun butt and he falls like a log and is out for the rest of the scene.*)

ROSS: (*Burning with indignation.*) Listen, listen—

JELKE: Don't "listen" me! You're an outa town newspaper man—we know that. But we don't want outsiders in our town—

MRS. FINCH: *Your* town!

JELKE: If they come here they must stay quiet. Why these fools could give the whole two towns typhoid with this raw unexamined milk, but the outsider don't think of it. (*Turns to his henchmen.*) Go on boys, dump it.

A HESITANT THUG: Outside?

WOMEN: No! No! NO!

JELKE: In the gutter. (*Two thugs lift a can and start out.*)

ROXIE: (*Screaming.*) No, no, I tell you no! (*A slow bitter moan comes up from the women. One throws a can at Jelke.*)

JELKE: Who threw that? I'm warning you, sisters, no rumpus.

CORELLI: (*To Jelke.*) You are more evil than the toadstool. You are superb you are so bad!

JELKE: (*Seeing the hesitant thug.*) Come on, come on, get that can going!

THE HESITANT THUG: You want this dumped too?

JELKE: All of it—the whole batch. (*The Hesitant Thug looks around furtively and then helps his companion take the can out. Jelke now sees Ross writing down something.*) Here, none of that writing down business.

ROSS: You won't stop me. I'm the press of the United States to you!

JELKE: (*Tearing paper from his hand.*) Never heard of it. (*As the balance of the milk is removed Jelke asks the Cameraman.*) And what's that pretty object you got there?

CAMERAMAN: Camera.

JELKE: Let's have a look. (*It is meekly handed over.*) Take any shots?

CAMERAMAN: (*Hastily, with fear.*) Not a one.

JELKE: (*Throwing the camera to the floor.*) Just to make sure. (*To his thugs.*) Get rid of that poison?

A THUG: All dumped.

JELKE: Let's go.

CARRIE: (*Now released.*) We will be revenged!

JELKE: What sort of talk is that, revenged? 'Cause we don't let typhoid ravage the towns? Shame on you, Sister Jones.

(*Mrs. Finch suddenly comes to the front and spits fully in the face of the Reluctant Thug, who blushes and stammers and then exits with the others.*)

JELKE: Bull's eye, Sister Smith. (*He exits. There is complete silence but for Roxie who is softly crying in her hands.*)

BARNEY: (*To Ross.*) Print this in your paper.

CORELLI: It is not permitted . . . *it is propaganda!*

MRS. FINCH: May any man who votes to end our strike burn in hell forever! Forever . . . !

SLOW FADEOUT

# Gorki on the Films, 1896

*In 1896 Maxim Gorki was in Paris. There he happened to be present at an exhibition of the first moving pictures produced by the great pioneer Lumiere. He wrote two reviews of the occasion, which are among the first moving picture reviews on record. Reprinted by the Soviet film magazine, Kino Art, they are not to be found in any of the editions of Gorki's collected works. The English translation is by Leonard Mins.*

—THE EDITORS

I am afraid I am an undependable correspondent — without finishing the description of the factory department, I am writing about the cinematograph. But possibly I will be excused for wanting to give you my fresh impressions.

The cinematograph is a moving photograph. A beam of electric light is projected on a large screen, mounted in a dark room. And a photograph appears on the cloth screen, about two and a half yards high and a yard and a half high. We see a street in Paris. The picture shows carriages, children, pedestrians, frozen into immobility, trees covered with leaves. All of these are still. The general background is the gray tone of an engraving; all objects and figures seem to be 1/10th of their natural size.

And suddenly there is a sound somewhere, the picture shivers, you don't believe your own eyes.

The carriages are moving straight at you, the pedestrians are walking, children are playing with a dog, the leaves are fluttering on the trees, and bicyclists roll along . . . and all this, coming from somewhere in the perspective of the picture, moves swiftly along, approaching the edge of the screen, and vanishes beyond it. It appears from outside the screen, moves to the background, grows smaller, and vanishes around the corner of the building, behind the line of carriages. . . . In front of you a strange life is stirring, the real, living, feverish life of a main

street of France, life which speeds past between two lines of many-storied buildings, like the Terek at Daryal, and nevertheless it is tiny, gray, monotonous, inexpressibly strange.

And suddenly it disappears. Your eyes see a plain piece of white cloth in a wide black frame, and it seems as if nothing had been there. You feel that you have imagined something that you had just seen with your own eyes—and that's all. You feel indefinitely awestruck.

And again another picture. A gardener is watering flowers. The stream of water issuing from the hose falls upon the leaves of the trees, on flowerbeds, on the grass, the flower-pots, and the leaves quiver under the spray.

A little boy, poorly dressed, his face in a mischievous smile, enters the garden and steps on the hose behind the gardener's back. The stream of water becomes thinner and thinner. The gardener is perplexed; the boy can hardly keep from breaking into laughter—his cheeks are puffed out with the effort. And at the very moment that the gardener brings the nozzle close to his nose to see what's the matter, the boy takes his

foot off the hose! The stream of water hits the gardener in the face—you think the spray is going to hit you, too, and instinctively shrink back. . . . But on the screen the wet gardener chases the mischievous boy; they run far away, growing smaller, and finally at the very edge of the picture, almost ready to fall to the floor, they grapple with each other. Having caught the boy, the gardener pulls him by the ear and spansks him. . . . They disappear. You are impressed by this lively scene, full of motion, taking place in deepest silence.

Another new picture on the screen. Three respectable men are playing whist. One of them is a clean-shaven gentleman, with the visage of a high government official, laughing with what must be a deep, bass laugh. Opposite him a nervous, wiry partner restlessly picks the cards from the table, cupidity in his gray face. The third person is pouring beer that the waiter had brought to the table; the waiter, stopping behind the nervous player, looks at his cards with tense curiosity. The players deal the cards and . . . the shadows break into soundless laughter. All of them laugh, even the waiter with



his hands on hips, quite disrespectful in the presence of these respectable bourgeois. And this soundless laughter, the laughter of gray muscles in gray faces, quivering with excitement, is so fantastic. From it there blows upon you something that is cold, something too unlike a living thing.

Laughing like shadows, they disappear like shadows. . . .

From far off an express train is rushing at you—look out! It speeds along just as if shot out of a giant gun. It speeds straight at you, threatening to run you over. The station-master hurriedly runs alongside it. The silent, soundless locomotive is at the very edge of the picture. . . . The public nervously shifts in its chairs—this huge machine of iron and steel will rush into the dark room and crush everybody in it. . . . But, appearing on the gray wall, the locomotive disappears beyond the frame of the screen, and the string of cars comes to a stop. The usual scene of crowding throngs when a train reaches a station. The gray people soundlessly cry out, soundlessly laugh, silently walk, kiss each other without a sound.

Your nerves are strained; imagination carries you to some unnaturally monotonous life, a life without color and without sound, but full of movement, the life of ghosts, or of people, *damned* to the damnation of eternal silence, people who have been deprived of all the colors of life, all its



The first motion picture poster. It advertised showings at the Grand Cafe, 1896.

sounds, and they are almost all the better for it. . . .

It is terrifying to see this gray movement of gray shadows, noiseless and silent. Mayn't this already be an intimation of life in the future? Say what you will—but this is a strain on the nerves. A wide use can be predicted, without fear of making a mistake, for this invention, in view of its tremendous originality. How great is its productivity, compared with the expenditure of nervous energy? Is it possible for it to attain such useful application as to compensate for the nervous strain it produces in the spectator? This is

an important question, a still more important question in that our nerves are getting weaker and weaker, are growing more and more unstrung, are reacting less and less forcefully to the simple "impressions of daily life" and thirst more and more eagerly for new, strong, unusual, burning, and strange impressions. The cinematograph gives you them—and the nerves will grow cultivated on the one hand, and dulled on the other! The thirst for such strange, fantastic impressions as it gives will grow ever greater, and we will be increasingly less able and less desirous of grasping the everyday impressions of ordinary life. This thirst for the strange and the new can lead us far, very far, and "The Saloon of Death" may be shifted from the Paris of the end of the nineteenth century to the Moscow of the beginning of the twentieth.

I forgot to say that the cinematograph is shown at Aumond's, the well-known Charles Aumond's, the former stableman for General Boisdefre, they say.

Up to now our charming Charles Aumond has brought with him only 120 French women "stars" and ten men; his cinematograph exhibits so far very nice pictures, as you see. But, of course, this is not for long, and it is to be expected that the cinematograph will show "piquant" scenes of the life of the Paris demi-

(Continued on page 56)

Left: "Pastime in the Family Circle"; Mmes. Auguste and Louis Lumiere with some friends. A Lumiere film made in 1896 at La Ciotat.

Below: Dinner hour at the gate of the Lumiere factory, Lyons, 1895.

Photos Courtesy Modern Museum Film Library



# So You Want to Go Into the Theatre?

"The boss says  
you ain't the type."

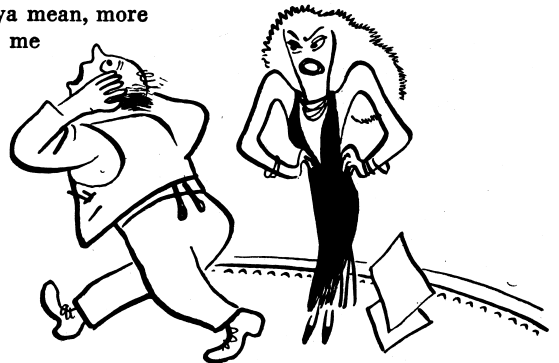


"The producer just left  
for China. Want to leave  
a message?"



"Oh, why didn't I stay  
in the clothing business?"

"Wadda ya mean, more  
finesse? MGM likes me  
as I am, see?"



Portrait of a press-agent  
denying he started  
a scandal.



Drama critics ready  
to welcome new talent.



# Marching Song

*Flint, Michigan, and Brimmerton, U. S. A.*

BY ALBERT MALTZ

Flint, Michigan, is a town of a hundred and sixty-five thousand people. A few weeks ago, I stood on a street corner in a shabby part of the city where the houses are old and the side streets are of dirt, not pavement. It is one of the districts in which employees of General Motors live—the machine men, the tool men, the men on the assembly lines who have coined a name for their work—they call it the “chain gang.”

It was nine thirty at night. A siren suddenly sounded in the distance. I had heard it before. I had been hearing it since early morning. It was a police squad car but its siren was different from the ones we have become accustomed to in the movies. It was less dramatic, more like a deep, steady locomotive whistle. It was coming closer and it was coming at a terrific speed. My companion had been talking but he stopped as the car swung around a bend in the street. It burned past us about seventy miles an hour down a half-mile straightaway. Then it flashed under an underpass alongside of the immense Buick plant and disappeared finally into the darkness.

What was that car doing?—Nothing! Where was it going?—No place! It was chasing its own radiator cap! The police cars had been doing that all day—burning the road five miles in one direction, then turning around and chasing right back again. The purpose was panic—they were trying to create the impression that the town was convulsed by rioting, that there was trouble here and trouble there—that in general everybody better pray for the State militia to come in as quickly as possible;—the State Militia came in the following day.

And in that police car, in the shabby houses on one side where the auto workers lived, and in the immense, concrete, walled fortress of the Buick

plant on the other side with its green mercury lights and the steady pound-pound of presses working the night shift, storing up parts against the threatened spread of the strike—in those things you have the picture of Flint, Michigan. From those things could be traced every thing I had seen and been told in the previous two days. I had been told that General Motors owned the Flint Journal, the only newspaper in town. On Monday night I saw a policeman in shell vest and gas mask take careful aim and fire a gas shell through a restaurant window where wounded strikers were waiting for ambulances; and the next day I read in the Flint Journal that an unidentified civilian threw an unexploded gas bomb into a restaurant. I had been told that the courts were owned by General Motors and forty-eight hours after I had arrived in Flint a General Motors Judge issued twelve hundred John Doe warrants entitling a General Motors District Attorney to arrest any one he chose, on charges from criminal syndicalism to kidnapping to inciting to riot, and to hold him as thirteen union men with bullets in their flesh were already being held—incommunicado—unable to see wife, lawyer, friend or, as one striker put it, “Jesus Christ himself.” I had been told about George Boysen, ex-G.M. employee, leader of a vigilante group which was masquerading under the name of the “Flint Citizens Alliance,” (“for the protection of our homes, our property, our jobs.”) I had been told about Caesar Scavarda, former strike-breaker in Calumet, Michigan, former Chief of Police in Flint removed from office for too intimate connection with the vice and liquor racket, at present rewarded for his long record of citizenship by a captaincy in the State Police which was being called in to keep order in Flint. . . .

A dozen bits of information like this crowded into my head and suddenly I thought: “My God, can this be the first time I’ve been in Flint? Haven’t I seen this town before or a town just like it?” Yes, I had. I remembered then. Flint was Brimmerton. Brimmerton? Brimmerton was in rehearsal! Brimmerton was an idea, it was blue prints on a scene designer’s desk, it was actors in a cold theatre; Brimmerton was theatre benefits being sold in advance, it was a man called Lawson, it was a play called *Marching Song*, which the Theatre Union had been working to produce since last summer.

No, art wasn’t following life here. Life seemed almost to be lagging behind. Six months before my arrival in Flint I had read a highly dramatic and highly poetic typewritten manuscript. Now, in the middle of January, in a real town, in Upper Michigan, I found myself watching a series of events that seemed half familiar; I was unconsciously interpreting a struggle in the light of something previously known; I was witnessing a complex clash of social forces, a bitter foment of naked brutality and of almost unbelievable courage—and all of it I seemed to have known before in a play called *Marching Song*.

Yes, but with what difference and with what tribute to the author! A town of a hundred and sixty-five thousand in which a strike is being fought is not a flowing stream with a middle, beginning and end, with a forty-five-minute first act and a dramatic curtain to the second. It is a boiling sea with a thousand eddies and a thousand streaks of color, with a thrust and swirl of current and cross current. It is people and social forces churning each other at a frenzied, confusing pace. To bring real clarity to that is an artist’s task. To give it meaning, order and beauty,

(Continued on page 56)

# Teatro Espanol

BY RALPH BATES

The critical period of my own imaginative life, the period of its liberation and of its impregnation with an imagery that I cannot relinquish, was spent in wandering around the vast cordilleras of Spain. Those hills, in the days when I was still a factory worker in a cramped and spectrumless town, were already in my mind. They were legendary to me, though I had not heard their tale. Thus it is when I think of the Spanish theater, it is not of the classical theater of Lope de Vega or Calderon that I think, nor even the sophisticated theater of Madrid, Seville or Barcelona. I remember, with a sudden hush in the stream of thought, the village at the foot of the Sierra de Dredos, the village now beneath the tyranny of fascism.

It is easy to remember the inn in which I was staying, because behind the wooden screen that divided the kitchen into two halves, there was the most extraordinary collection of polished copper pans I have ever seen. The night of my arrival there, while we were eating out of the landlord's bowl, a man came to our table and asked leave to put before us a play bill. That play bill announced a band of strolling players; they were to perform *The Ignoble Crime of the Adulteress Wife*.

It was easy to smile at that title and I believe we did, yet before seeing the play, the face of the master of the troupe was himself sufficient check to mockery. I am impressed by faces, moved by them, and particularly by those that show at once defiant escape and fear of defeat. The facts of the strolling actor's life present a ready explanation of the sadness and fatigue in that old, steadily-gazing yet flinching face. Before the end of the evening's performance, I knew that those facts would not wholly explain it.

It was during an interval that I learned from the troupe leader that he himself longed to present something finer than that crude drama of lust, false honor, and stereotyped re-

venge. He longed to do this, though whenever he talked of the play the light would filter rapidly into his face and his words would take pride into themselves. Nor was it only professional pride that fired him. It was something I could feel among the audience of muleteers, illiterate peasants, half-starving in body and wholly starving in spirit beneath the night of reaction that then lay over Spain. They thirsted for the strong drink of passionate drama, and they were right. They would have welcomed a purified melodrama. (What was Shakespeare's work but the humanization of melodrama?)

And after the coming of the Republic, it was a great poet, one who was of the people themselves, who became the means of giving the people a better yet popular drama. The Republic, in choosing Garcia Lorca to organize and produce for one of the traveling theaters which it gave to the people, could not have made plainer its own character and the popular sources from which it

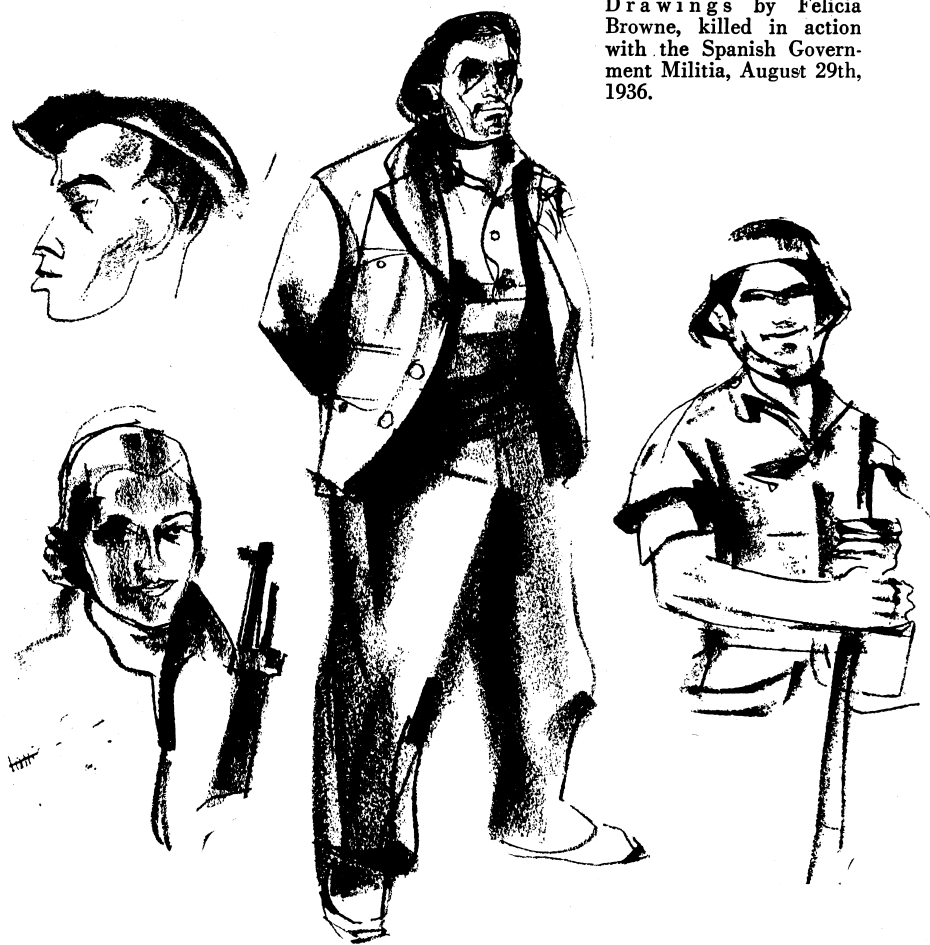
has sprung. And in assassinating Garcia Lorca, the Granada fascists could not have made plainer their character and sources also.

We mourn Lorca, I say it who never met him, and who had first found his work difficult, we mourn him. I mean, I feel that something fine and invaluable has gone from the world, because later I perceived the fantastic loveliness of his strange poetry, amalgam of the rarest personal imagination, and of popular form and inspiration. What would Lorca have made of our present traveling theaters?

It is not the Barcelona theater where Rolland's *Danton* is now playing, nor the Teatra Nuevo where an immature experiment, *Machines*, is being presented, that come to my mind now. I think of the traveling vaudeville on the Aragon front which I saw just before the Moorish attack on Tardienta.

We were clustered on the side of a red-brown hog's back of hill with  
(Continued on page 59)

Drawings by Felicia Browne, killed in action with the Spanish Government Militia, August 29th, 1936.





Lillian Hellman

According to present critical custom, the quick failure of a production is regarded as the true index of the play's merit. The closing means the death and burial of the play: it is no longer a living part of the season's activity; its possible value as a contribution to the sum of that activity is cancelled. Thus the critic serves both as judge and executioner. Having damned the play at its opening, he can point to its closing as proof of the correctness of his judgment.

In the case of Lillian Hellman's *Days to Come*, we are not concerned solely with conflicting judgments as to the play's merit. *Days to Come* requires extended consideration because of its relationship to the author's development as a craftsman. It illustrates (perhaps better than any drama of recent seasons) the difficulties encountered by the playwright who is intent on deepening the social and aesthetic scope of his work.

The newspaper reviews of *Days to Come* were unsatisfactory because they failed to find any continuity in Miss Hellman's efforts. Two years ago, she had been hailed as a genius. This year the same critics described her work as "inept," "amateurish," "a bad tangle of playwriting," "preposterous and brutal lines." One would suppose that any critic who respected himself or his readers would seek some explanation of this

## A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF "THE CHILDREN'S HOUR" AND "DAYS TO COME" BY JOHN HOWARD LAWSON

surprising breakdown of a promising talent. But no explanation is attempted: the change is simply "an accident of the theatre."

A comparative study of Miss Hellman's two plays reveals that the course of her work is by no means accidental. The problems inherent in *The Children's Hour* are developed in a more complex form in *Days to Come*. Indeed, the faults in the later play are due to the intensity of the author's growth. Her search for dramatic truth leads her beyond her present ability to organize and unify her material.

The two plays are almost identical in their structural pattern. It has frequently been pointed out that *The Children's Hour* follows two separate lines of action: one plot concerns the two women and Dr. Cardin. The other plot centers on the neurotic child. The emotional relationship of the three adults is not developed in terms of story and conflict; it is disrupted and betrayed by the malicious lying of the child. The only point of direct conflict involving both plots comes at the end of the second act when the little girl is brought face to face with her victims. The third act fizzles out in futile despair.

The lack of unity in *The Children's Hour* derives from the author's inability to dramatize the social roots of the action. We are not shown the conditions in the environment which explain the little girl's demonic hatred and the suffering of the two school teachers. We see no other aspect of the child's character: she is less a *whole* human being than a sort of blind fury motivated by a pure desire for evil. For this reason the tragedy of her victims becomes abstract and undynamic, because it is the result of forces which can be neither understood nor opposed.

It is obvious that *Days to Come*

also contains a dual pattern. On the one hand we have the story of Julie Rodman and the emotional relationships which involve her husband, her lover and the strike leader. On the other hand, we have the story of the gangsters who are imported as strike breakers. It is significant that at only one point (the end of the second scene of the second act) is there a definite crisis involving both stories. In this scene, Julie comes to the office of Whalen, the strike leader (with whom she is only slightly acquainted) to tell him that she loves him. The situation is not developed; it is broken sharply by the planting of the body of the murdered gangster in the alley outside Whalen's office. Thus the power of pure evil destroys the emotional development and brings us (as in *The Children's Hour*) to a final act which is desultory and retrospective.

The similarity of pattern is remarkable. But there is a difference which is also remarkable: in *Days to Come*, the social framework is admittedly the imperative condition of the action. In the earlier play, the trouble stems from malicious gossip and the result is an inadequately motivated personal tragedy. In the later play, the evil is asked for, and paid for, by the well-to-do people of the town (represented by the lawyer, Ellicott), and the tragedy which results is both personal and social (the death of Firth's child).

In order to understand the structural weakness of both plays, we must analyse the social point of view which underlies the author's method. *Days to Come* offers an excellent opportunity for such a study, because the author has introduced a character who serves as commentator, as a connecting link between the two lines of development. In spite of the fact that he is strongly and sym-

# Lillian Hellman

pathetically drawn, Leo Whalen plays no dynamic role in the development of the plot. One would suppose that his position as leader of the workers would force him into conflict with the strike-breakers and with the employers. But Whalen is *more passive, more opposed to action*, than any of the other characters. In advising the workers to avoid violence, he also advises them to avoid activity. When civil rights are violated by armed gangsters in a peaceful town, he tells the strikers that "the longer you're quiet, the sooner you'll win." In the face of a rotten frame-up, he says: "Let him do what he wants and don't fight with him. . . . Just get ready to do nothing."

One need hardly remark that this is bad tactics. One cannot make a successful strike (or a successful play) by inactivity. The workers do not follow Whalen's advice. In the final scenes, we hear of a clash between the strikers and the gangsters, and the killing of the child. One would suppose that these events must lead to further decisions and crises, to an increased militancy on the part of the workers, a correspondingly increased tension in the emotional relationships within the Rodman family. But the outbreak of violence causes the immediate and disastrous end of the strike. The child's death brings the comment that it "wouldn't make any sense to hold out now. There wouldn't be any spirit to hold out with."

Whalen blames this situation on the workers: "Didn't I tell you to give them what they wanted? Didn't I tell you not to fight?" He also blames the workers for being unable to carry on the struggle: "If they killed my kid, I wouldn't come crawling back to any lousy job" . . . and again: "You haven't seen anything, they didn't scratch the surface."

It is curious that Joseph Wood Krutch, who is sensitive to the similarity of Miss Hellman's two plays in "the mood, the atmosphere, the peculiar nature of the tension produced," is blind to the deficiencies in her social viewpoint: "The most doctrinaire exponent of the class conflict could hardly object to her picture of events or to the interpretation which she puts on them." Mr.

Krutch evidently assumes (in common with many other critics) that a left point of view is a matter of "doctrine" which has little or nothing to do with the essence of the playwright's task. In Miss Hellman's case, we observe a dramatist struggling with psychological and technical problems which go beyond the present scope of her social thinking. This is not due to the fact that a strike serves as the background of her latest play. Indeed the use of the strike is symptomatic rather than functional. It indicates the direction of the author's thought, the problems which perplex her and which must be solved if her work is to go forward to greater maturity.

The class struggle dominates the action of *Days to Come*. It is the determining factor in the environment. Yet Whalen, who is the spokesman for a class point of view, plays a passive role and speaks fatalistically. One may conclude that Miss Hellman believes the class struggle is inevitable. But she does not see it as a dynamic process. Thus its inevitability is abstract, and has only a negative effect on the lives of her characters. Julie and her husband are well-meaning people, but they are unable to escape from their own futility. Their class interests place them *mechanically* on one side of the conflict; the workers are placed (also *mechanically*) on the other side. This dooms the workers as well as the employers to a passive role. The strike and all its implications are accepted as a Nemesis from which there is no escape. The workers learn from what occurs, they are gradually forced to a sharper realization of social reality. But their creative role in the shaping of the conflict is minimized. The third act is retrospective and futile (not only for Julie, but for the strikers); the positive and creative aspect of what has happened (both as it affects Julie and the strikers) is put off to some indefinite future.

Miss Hellman's work has been compared to that of Ibsen and Chekhov. The technical methods which she has inherited from these authors are the outer signs of a deep-rooted intellectual inheritance. The essence of Ibsen's social thought lies in his

emphasis on integrity. He fought for recognition of the moral decay which paralyzed the middle class life of his time. He believed that this recognition was itself *an ethical act*, which would cleanse and remould the social individual.

In *The Children's Hour*, the dominant factor in the environment is the evil gossip which infects the community. But the lives of the two women are ruined by this gossip because they themselves are also dishonest: in the final act they are forced to recognition of the realities of their own relationship.

In *Days to Come*, Miss Hellman combines a passionate hatred of personal dishonesty with a plea for recognition of the class struggle. But she regards the class struggle as an external necessity, and she cannot go beyond the idea of recognition as an ethical act. (In Odets' *Paradise Lost*, we find the use of a Chekhov technique with a similar use of recognition as a substitute for action).

This explains the crude but moving scene in which Julie visits the strike leader. Why does she go to Whalen? What are the unrealized dramatic possibilities of the scene? Surely her offer of love could not lead to a valid emotional relationship. Nor could her visit lead to any serious decision on her part to take the side of the strikers. Julie wants to talk: "Haven't you ever wanted to talk to somebody you thought knew more about things than you did, and you just hoped the talk would start, and—"

Julie is seeking an answer to her own frustration. She wants either to do nothing (to talk) or to do something wildly romantic and desperate (to go away with Whalen). All that Whalen can offer her is his own crude honesty. He helps her recognize herself, and this is considered sufficient justification for the scene. Whalen breaks the bubble of romanticism: he even denies any emotion about his fellow workers: "I hate the poor, Mrs. Rodman, but I love what they could be." When the child is killed, his reaction is brutal: "All right. She's dead. What are you trying to do, make Joan of Arc  
(Continued on page 60)



# WPA Plowed Under?

## A "Living Newspaper" History of the Federal Theatre Project

(In WPA Plowed Under? NEW THEATRE AND FILM recognizes that it has pre-empted a form which the Living Newspaper unit of the Federal Theatre has originated and made its own. It gladly acknowledges this indebtedness. WPA Plowed Under? is the collective work of writers on the staff of NEW THEATRE AND FILM.)

LOUDSPEAKER: Spring, 1935, 5,492,921 on relief.

(Overhead spot picks up counter at Macfadden's Penny Restaurant. The counterman behind is methodically wiping oatmeal bowls, and placing them one beside the other on the counter. Overhead spot picks up musician seated at table upon which are his bow and fiddle. An empty easel stands beside the table. The musician sits, despondent. The concluding strains of a Beethoven Concerto are heard.)

RADIO ANNOUNCER: With the broadcast of this recording of Beethoven's Violin Concerto in D Major, played by Fritz Kreisler and the London Philharmonic under the direction of John Barbirolli, we bring to a close the hour of Quality Music. Be with us tomorrow at the same time for another Master Recording. . . . The following program is brought to you by electrical transcription. . . .

MUSICIAN: (Switches off the radio with a gesture of disgust.) Electrical transcription!

(He takes violin and bow from table, places them in case, and puts it away. Then he crosses down the level to lunch-room counter. Without a word he takes two pennies from his pocket and places them on counter. Counterman fills the bowl. The musician begins to eat, as

Overhead spot picks up two dancers, young girls. One is pulling up her stocking, the other putting on lip stick.)

FIRST GIRL: . . . after the time step we go into a rollin' off the log for a panic exit!

SECOND GIRL: That's swell. While you're waiting for the contract you don't mind if I sidle over to Macfadden's

Penny Restaurant and roll off a couple of beans, do you?

FIRST GIRL: Nope. And to show you how I feel about it, I'll go with you.

(They cross down to counter as overhead spot picks up two actors, standing on Broadway.)

FIRST ACTOR: How you doin', Bert?

SECOND ACTOR: Swell. Just got an offer from Golden, three fifty a week. But I turned it down. Didn't like the part.

FIRST ACTOR: Me, too. Al Woods just called me. It's a nice part, but I turned him down.

SECOND ACTOR: (As they cross to lunch counter.) Yeah?

FIRST ACTOR: Yeah, a lousy four hundred a week.

COUNTERMAN: No more on the cuff, boys. I been gettin' hell from the boss.

(Sheepishly, they fish the coins from their pockets, and place them on counter. Overhead spot on two writers.)

FIRST WRITER: (Holding manuscript aloft.) There it is.

SECOND WRITER: What are you going to do with it?

FIRST WRITER: Take it around, the same as I did with the last one.

SECOND WRITER: Did you sell it?

FIRST WRITER: Nope. But the Shuberts are still interested, and if they do it, boy, it's the Waldorf for lunch, the Ritz for dinner, the Stork Club for supper and—

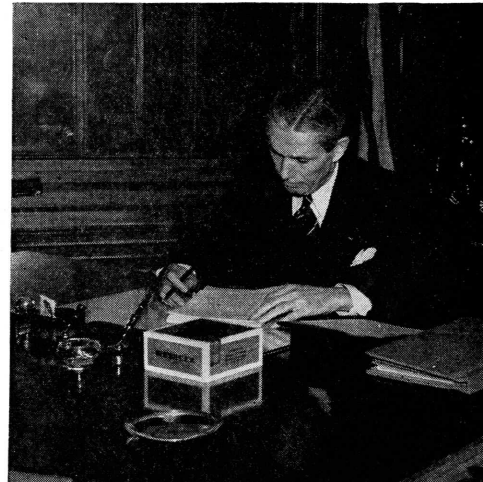
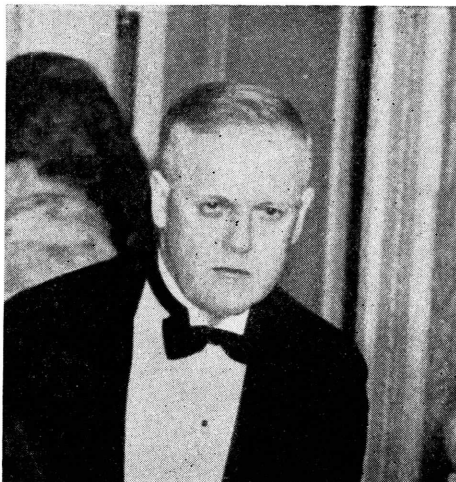
SECOND WRITER: —And that reminds me, where're we going to eat.

FIRST WRITER: Macfadden's.

(They cross to counter. Everybody stands around eating his food. There is general recognition. They greet each other. More people enter left and right until a great line has formed before the counter. The babble of ad libbing builds. Into this the loudspeaker is heard.)

LOUDSPEAKER: Harry Hopkins, Administrator of the

1) Vincent Sherman, Hallie Flanagan and Sinclair Lewis. 2) Former New York Administrator Victor Ridder. 3) Present Administrator Col.



Works Progress Administration announces Federal Work Relief for Actors and workers of the theatre—the Federal Theatre under the direction of Professor Hallie Flanagan of Vassar College.

*(There is a dead silence as they all freeze. Suddenly the word, "Jobs" is heard, and is taken up all over the stage. It mounts higher and higher as the men and women, shouting, run off in all directions. Spot picks up Mrs. Flanagan.)*

MRS. HALLIE FLANAGAN: The Federal Theatre is beyond boondoggling. "Relief" is the thought to begin with. The Federal Theatre, as it gathers momentum will be nonetheless potent because it has the remembrance of hunger in the pit of the stomach.

*(Blackout. Light up on a small furnished room; a bed, a chest of drawers, a table. On the table is a small Sterno stove. Seated on the edge of the bed are an old man and woman. Facing them a bit flushed, is their daughter, about twenty-five.)*

DAUGHTER: *(Breathlessly.)* . . . It's going to be part of the WPA, and they're going to take on musicians, writers, stagehands, dancers and actors—that means us.

OLD MAN: All of us?

DAUGHTER: No—only one of us. Only one from a family. And the salary is twenty-three-eighty-six a week.

OLD LADY: *(With a faraway look in her eyes.)* Twenty-three-eighty-six.

OLD MAN: Think of it, mother, twenty-three-eighty-six.

OLD LADY: You made four hundred with Irving.

OLD MAN: Eh?

OLD LADY: And three-fifty with Forbes-Robertson—four-fifty with Beerbohn Tree.

OLD MAN: Twenty-three-eighty-six. Mother! It's ham and eggs. It's oysters on the half shell, caviar . . . well, maybe not caviar, but it's twenty-three-eighty-six—and—*(He starts putting on his coat. With one sleeve on and the coat draped about his shoulder, he begins to declaim, gesturing)* "Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounce it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it as so many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines!"

OLD LADY: *(Helping him, as he becomes snarled in his coat sleeve)* I know, Father, I know.

DAUGHTER: And now, where are you going?

OLD MAN: *(Simply.)* I'm going down to get the job.

DAUGHTER: No, Dad, I am.

OLD MAN: What do you mean, you are?

DAUGHTER: You're tired, Dad. Sixty years on the stage is long enough.

OLD MAN: But I am—!

OLD LADY: It's alright, Dad. You'll take the job.

DAUGHTER: But, mother—

OLD LADY: *(To daughter.)* And you'll keep on making the rounds for a private job. Your father is too tired for that.

OLD MAN: Where's my cane? *(He finds it, claps his hat on his head, giving it a final pat, and crosses to the door, swinging his stick jauntily. At the door he stops. There is a pause.)* You know, mother *(slowly)* it will be nice when the three of us won't have to sleep in our drawing room.

*Blackout.*

LOUDSPEAKER: August 27, 1935—by executive order, the President of the United States creates Federal Project Number One, and allocates twenty-five million dollars for the work, of which eleven million-two hundred eleven thousand-and eighty-four dollars is for the theatre.

*(Lights come up on the office of Elmer Rice, Regional Director for the Federal Theatre of New York City. Rice is busy on the telephone but what he is saying is not audible. The door, center, separating his office from a loft floor is open, and through it persons can be seen hurrying, almost running, back and forth. He cannot be heard on the telephone because the pandemonium outside of his office amounts to a din. An office boy enters.)*

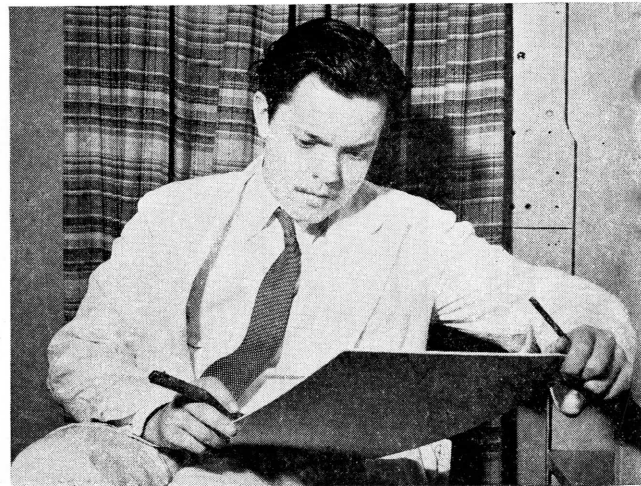
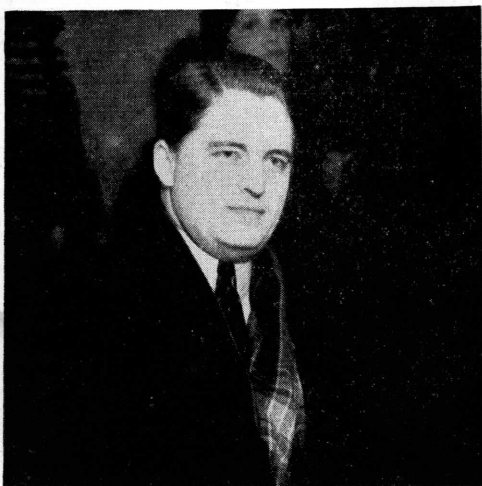
RICE: Ask Mr. Asklings to come in. *(The office boy goes out.)*

RICE: We need to get people on the pay roll . . . on the pay roll.

*(Asklings enters.)*

RICE: John, how many actors do we have registered for employment?

Brehon Somervell. 1) New York Project Director Philip Barber. 2) Nat Karson, designer, of Macbeth. 3) Orson Welles, actor-director of "891 Presents"



ASKLING: About three thousand.

RICE: Requisition them all.

ASKLING: What?

RICE: I said, requisition all of them.

(*Asking appears to be amazed.*)

ASKLING: But, Elmer, what we need is—

RICE: Don't tell me what we need—what we need is to put people to work! *What we need is a pay roll!*

*Blackout.*

LOUDSPEAKER: January 2, 1936. The Federal Theatre in New York has more than four thousand on the pay roll. The Popular Price Theatre rehearses *American Holiday*. . . . Experimental Theatre rehearses *Chalk Dust* . . . The Negro Theatre rehearses *Walk Together Chillun* . . . The Living Newspaper rehearses *Ethiopia*.

(*A pin spot picks up a man at the telephone.*)

LOUDSPEAKER: This is Stephen Early of the White House Secretariat.

EARLY: (*Into telephone.*) Hello, Baker? . . . Jake, what's this about the President being impersonated in one of the Federal Theatre plays? Look into that!

LOUDSPEAKER: Jacob Baker, Administrator of Professional and Technical Projects of the WPA catches the first plane for New York.

(*Light up on Baker and Rice in earnest conversation.*)

BAKER: Well, Elmer, I like the rehearsal. It looks like a good show, but—

RICE: . . . and there are lots more coming up, Jake. The Living Newspaper is preparing scripts on Germany, Russia and the South. They've got something to say, these boys. That Southern show is a honey: sharecroppers, lynching, racial discrimination—it tells the whole story!

BAKER: Now wait a minute, Elmer. One thing at a time. Now, on this Ethiopia business—it's a good show, but you can't do it.

RICE: What do you mean, "we can't do it?"

BAKER: I mean you can't impersonate Mussolini, Laval, Anthony Eden, Haille Selassie, or any foreign potentate or minister.

RICE: Is that your ruling?

BAKER: That's my ruling.

RICE: When I took this job Harry Hopkins promised me there would be no censorship. This is censorship of the most vicious kind.

BAKER: Do the show without the foreign ministers!

RICE: That would be like doing *Hamlet* without Hamlet, Ophelia and the King and Queen. You've got to take it the way it is, or you've got to take the Federal Theatre without me!

(*There is a pause. Baker steps to the door and calls off.*)

BAKER: Mr. Miller! (*Enter Miller who stands beside Baker. Continuing to Rice.*) Mr. Rice, here is a letter! (*As Rice regards it.*) Read it!

RICE: (*Reading aloud.*) "Dear Mr. Rice: When difficulties have arisen in the past in connection with the operation of the Federal Theatre Project within the framework of the Governmental structure, you have proposed either to resign, or to take the difficulties to the press. Now that a problem has arisen in connection with a dramatization that may effect our international relations, you renew your proposal of resignation. This time I accept it, effective upon receipt of this letter.

I do so with regret, and I wish to express my very great appreciation of the energy, enthusiasm, imagination and the hard work that you have put into this Project—"

(*Breaking off.*) Why, this is political subterfuge, this is—

BAKER: (*To Miller.*) Give these copies to the press.

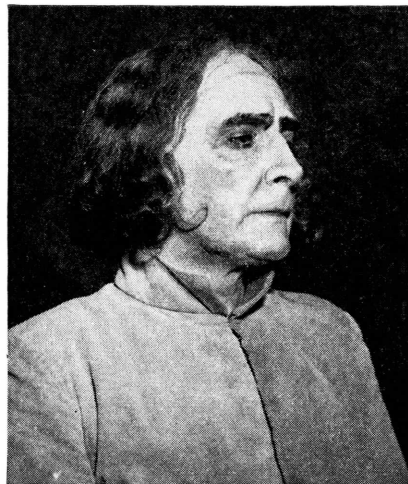
*Blackout.*

LOUDSPEAKER: Rice's resignation excites theatre world. Federal Theatre Project workers protest in mass meeting. Ethiopia is shown to press in special performance . . . wins plaudits.

(*During the above there are projected scenes out of Ethiopia from the Paramount News Reel. The film montage is completed as the loudspeaker goes on.*)

LOUDSPEAKER: Rice quits. The Federal Theatre goes on. Philip W. Barber, Rice's assistant, takes his place. . . . February 4th, the Negro Theatre opens with *Walk Together, Chillun*. February 21st, The Popular Price Theatre opens with *American Holiday*. March 4th, the Experimental Theatre opens with *Chalk Dust*. March

1) John Housman of "891 Presents." 2) Henry Irvine in Murder in the Cathedral. 3) Virgil Geddes at a rehearsal of his play Native Ground. 4) Elmer



14th, the Living Newspaper, considered dead, comes to life with *Triple A Plowed Under*.

(*There follows a series of still projections: Murder in the Cathedral; The Negro Theatre presents Macbeth; The Popular Price Theatre presents Class of '29; Conjureman Dies; 1935 . . . As these flashes appear, spots come on all over the stage, lighting up characters in short sequences from these productions.*)

LOUDSPEAKER: The Federal Theatre astounds, amazes, confuses, excites, surprises, arouses, dumbfounds, tantalizes, titillates, and even baffles the critics.

(*Light up on a line of dramatic critics in judicial robes. Each sits at a small table on which a typewriter is seen.*)

LOUDSPEAKER: The critics, February.

(*The scene is played full-stage. The critics are seated in a semi-circle in club-room chairs. They are dressed exactly alike.*)

FIRST CRITIC: Not bad, considering . . .

SECOND CRITIC: Not badly acted, considering . . .

THIRD CRITIC: Not badly staged, considering . . .

FOURTH CRITIC: Not badly written, considering . . .

FIFTH CRITIC: Not badly designed, considering . . .

SIXTH CRITIC: Not badly produced, considering . . .

LOUDSPEAKER: The critics, August.

FIRST CRITIC: Exciting.

SECOND CRITIC: Stimulating.

THIRD CRITIC: Original.

FOURTH CRITIC: Vigorous.

FIFTH CRITIC: Provocative.

SIXTH CRITIC: Sensational!

LOUDSPEAKER: Columnist Heywood Broun says:

(*Broun walks onto stage.*)

BROUN: I must compliment the Federal government in its activities as a theatrical producer. It is generally held that only private capital can do good work in highly competitive fields and yet it seems to me that Uncle Sam in his first year on Broadway has moved off to a better start than any of the famous large scale producers, past or present, such as Klaw and Erlanger or the Shuberts. . . . I have seen few more moving things in the theater

than the presentation of the Angelo Herndon episode in the play *1935*. Indeed, the whole performance seems to me so brilliant that I am quite sure it must be unconstitutional.

*Blackout.*

LOUDSPEAKER: Dark days. Despite its success, the Federal Theatre is faced with a cut in appropriations. Congress sets aside a mere one billion five hundred million dollars to run the entire WPA for a period of twelve months—this as against an appropriation of four billion for the previous seven months!

Word quickly passes around—"There isn't going to be enough money to keep the Federal Arts Projects going."

(*Out of the darkness is heard the voice of Morris Watson who is chairman of a delegation to Washington.*)

WATSON: The forty-five thousand workers of twenty organizations which this committee represents—

(*The lights come up revealing Aubrey Williams flanked on either side by Thad Holt, Bruce McClure, William L. Nunn, Henry G. Alsberg, Holger Cahill, and William P. Farnsworth, all WPA officials, facing across a desk—a delegation of twenty persons. All are seated. Watson is directly in front of Williams, and is reading a statement.*)

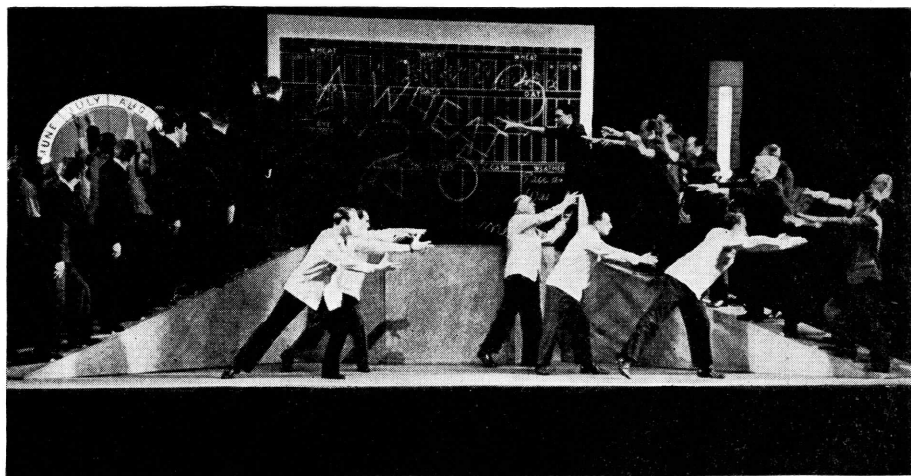
WATSON: (*Continuing.*) . . . insist upon larger allocation of funds for the continuance and expansion of the Four Federal Arts Projects. I wish to introduce Miss Katherine Clugston, of the Federal Theatre Supervisors' Council.

CLUGSTON: We have had six hits in a waning season. Between March 1st and May 30th, we gave 1726 performances before 900,000 people. We have a large audience which believes in us, and wants our plays. We have an audience who have lived on nothing but movies. These people are being built into a potential audience for the professional theatre, and the theatre is beginning to realize this. Most other countries at such a crisis have developed a national theatre. I think this government would be doing a very smart and cagey thing to keep it and make it into a national theatre. My plea is for security so that we can go on and show what we can do.

*Blackout.*

LOUDSPEAKER: Aubrey Williams, Deputy WPA Admin-

Rice, former New York director. 1) Morris Watson of the Living Newspaper. 2) A scene from the Living Newspaper's *Triple A Plowed Under*.



istrator says: An adequate re-employment program would cost nine billion dollars annually.

(*Light up on man seated on a park bench, right. He is reading a newspaper. Two men enter, left, and cross, right.*)

FIRST MAN: (*As they cross*). Nine billion dollars! Where's it all gonna come from?

SECOND MAN: You and me, I guess, in taxes.

FIRST MAN: Seems to me we're paying enough now.

(*By this time they have reached the bench. They look about for a place to sit, and find it on either side of the man.*)

SECOND MAN: (*Talking across man with newspaper.*) You said it. I am sure glad Congress has got enough sense to draw the line somewhere. Nine billion dollars!

(*There is a pause.*)

MAN WITH PAPER: (*Putting it down.*) It could be worse.

FIRST MAN: (*Scornfully.*) Sure, it could be *ten* billion!

MAN WITH PAPER: No, I don't mean that. . . . I was looking at it another way. (*Pause; he turns to first man.*) How much is your salary?

FIRST MAN: Twenty-five a week—and don't tell me I can afford to pay taxes on that.

MAN WITH PAPER: Why don't you ask for more money?

FIRST MAN: Because I am a bookkeeper, and there are a thousand more like me ready to jump into my job the minute I let out a squawk.

SECOND MAN: Yeah, and I'm in the same boat.

MAN WITH PAPER: (*Turning to second man.*) What do you do?

SECOND MAN: I'm a draughtsman.

MAN WITH PAPER: (*After a pause, slowly.*) Well, the way I figured it is this; both you guys aren't getting enough money—

FIRST AND SECOND MAN: (*Breaking in.*) You're darn tootin', that's right, etc.

MAN WITH PAPER: —and the reason you're not getting it is because there's a thousand more like you, ready to take your job the minute you let out a squawk—you said that yourself.

FIRST AND SECOND MAN: That's right, etc., etc.

MAN WITH PAPER: Now, if the government put all these other guys to work, you wouldn't have to worry so much about losing your job, isn't that right?

FIRST AND SECOND MAN: Yeah, that's right, etc., etc.

MAN WITH PAPER: And when you wanted a raise you'd get it. Right?

FIRST AND SECOND MAN: That's right.

MAN WITH PAPER: And even if a small part of this raise were spent in taxes, you'd still be ahead of the game, wouldn't you?

FIRST AND SECOND MAN: (*Hesitatingly.*) Well, yeah: I guess so, etc.

MAN WITH PAPER: And everybody'd have a job, wouldn't they?

FIRST AND SECOND MAN: That's right, it looks that way, etc.

MAN WITH PAPER: (*After a pause, slowly and deliberately.*) Then who is paying that nine billion dollars the government *isn't* spending?

(*Hold, as he regards them significantly.*)

*Blackout.*

LOUDSPEAKER: The delegation returns to New York. Pressure wheels begin to turn.

(*Spotted on various level the following staccato scenes take place.*)

WOMAN SHOPPER: (*To Butcher.*) Here's your money. Sign this petition.

BUTCHER: What's it for?

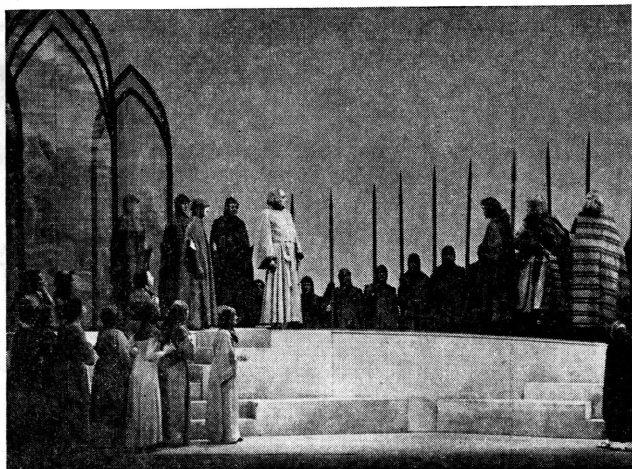
WOMAN SHOPPER: What's it for? It's for keeping me on the WPA. And that means I keep on drawing a salary, and you keep on having a customer.

(*He signs, the scene is held, as light up on small furnished room, the same old actor, his wife and landlord. There is a noticeable improvement in the surroundings. The sterno stove has been replaced by an electric stove. There is a new cover on the bed, etc. It is to be noticed that the actor and his wife have shaken off the despair that characterizes them in the earlier scenes.*)

ACTOR: (*Handing over bills.*) Here's the rent, Mr. Connolly, right on time.

MR. CONNOLLY: (*Counting the bills.*) You've been pretty

Scenes from 1) *Murder in the Cathedral*, *Popular Price Theatre*; 2) *the same unit's Class of '29*; and 3) *The Experimental Theatre's John Brown*.



prompt these last few months. Since you moved into these two rooms, I ain't had to wait a day.

ACTOR: You can thank the WPA for that.

MR. CONNOLLY: Oh, I saw one of their shows—*Macbeth*, up in Harlem—first time I've been to the theatre in fifteen years—of course, we go to the movies but I sure got a thrill out of that *Macbeth*.

ACTOR: (*Proudly.*) Wait until you see our show, *Battle Hymn*.

OLD LADY: (*Regarding him curiously.*) You know, father, you have changed a lot since you first got on that project. When you first went down there, you were ashamed, you hid your face when they took pictures, you didn't even want to use your real name!

ACTOR: Ashamed? Why should I be ashamed? (*Turns to Mr. Connolly.*) Why, we're bringing the theatre back! Back to people like you!

MR. CONNOLLY: Well, if I can see some more shows like this *Macbeth*—

OLD LADY:—and get your rent money at the same time—

MR. CONNOLLY:—all I can say is, it's a pretty good thing.

ACTOR:—and it ought to go on. Here, sign this petition! *Blackout.*

(*During the following Loudspeaker announcement, men and women are seen crossing in all directions, and the hum of voices is heard repeating the lines, "Sign this petition, sign this petition, sign this petition."*)

LOUDSPEAKER: As a result of delegations to Washington, telegrams and petitions flooding in on the Administration and Congress, the allocation of funds for the Federal Arts Program of the WPA is increased thirteen percent in the face of a general WPA reduction of twenty-six percent. . . . June 20, 1936. Republicans attack Arts Projects as Hopkins folly. Sixty-one NBC radio stations carry to every corner of the land a symposium of WPA Administrators, workers and prominent friends. Mr. Harry Hopkins presides.

(*The lights come up on a long table, on either side of which are seated some sixteen persons. The table is strung with microphones. Hopkins and Miss Fannie Hurst are seated in the foreground. As the lights come up Hopkins*

*is speaking.*)

HOPKINS: . . . do say that people who work on our Program should be people who in normal times would be supporting themselves on a job—

MISS HURST: Mr. Hopkins, may I interrupt?

HOPKINS: You most certainly can. Ladies and gentlemen, this is Miss Fannie Hurst, the noted author.

MISS HURST: Time is flying. I want to know what you intend to do for the professional.

HOPKINS: Professional. You phrase that beautifully. Most people say "boondogger".

MISS HURST: Ah, that particular cumbersome word which seems to have been coined with a yowl of delight by the American public. According to its definition, Mr. Shakespeare, Mr. Longfellow, and Mr. Gorki were boondoggers. I hereby start a boon for doggling.

HOPKINS: About the theatre—

MISS HURST: In the theatre, I would like to say in no uncertain terms to those who indulgently regard all these cultural projects of the Administration as pleasant, innocuous, and boondoggling overtones to our economic crisis, that new oxygen is being pumped into the entire institution of the American theatre by WPA.

Plays are being written by Americans, produced by Americans, acted by Americans, and seen by Americans in a manner without precedent.

In years to come, this era of ours may be chiefly remembered because of the fact that it assisted at the cultural birth of a nation.

*Blackout.*

LOUDSPEAKER: Despite its success and the demand of people the country over for its continuance, the Federal Theatre, along with the other arts projects of the WPA, is threatened by a new order from Washington. . . . September 17, 1936—Twenty-four unions and organizations rush a joint delegation to Washington.

(*Lights come up on a delegation in the conference room of the WPA in Washington. Seated behind the table facing the delegates are Thad Holt, Assistant Administrator in charge of Labor Relations and Mrs. Ellen Woodward, Assistant Administrator in charge of the Women's*

1) Erik Burroughs as Hecate in the Negro Theatre *Macbeth*. 2) Scene from *The Emperor's New Clothes* (*Children's Theatre*). 3) Scene from *Horse Eats*



*Division of WPA. The first words are spoken in the dark, the lights coming up slowly as they are spoken. Morris Watson again is Chairman.)*

WATSON: What we have to protest, Mr. Holt, is the order which we were told by Colonel Somervell was issued by Mr. Williams—that is that within five days the percentage of workers on the Federal Arts Project who did not come from the home relief rolls must be cut from twenty-five percent down to ten percent . . . and only today did there come an announcement that no one need be fired as yet because a temporary relief status had been given to all those signing certificates of need.

HOLT: The purpose of the work program was to give aid to those in need.

WATSON: Further than that, we hold that work relief should be more than giving a man money with which to buy food. The unemployed man is starved for work as well as for something to eat.

HOLT: In other words, we have shown our policy by embarking on a work program rather than a relief program.

WATSON: We want you to go the whole way on it. Furthermore, we are still protesting the double control under which the arts projects have been placed in New York.

MRS. WOODWARD: Just what change do you think has come about since Col. Somervell has been put in? What do you feel has happened to keep the projects from operating successfully. Has anything happened?

WATSON: The procedure of requisitioning supplies and materials has been a mess. The business office isn't functioning at all. The workers are continually in a jittery position, everyone of them afraid to open the New York Times for fear that there is going to be an announcement that his project is no longer operating . . .

HOLT: I have talked with Col. Somervell. In the first place he advised me that he had not contemplated dropping anybody any sooner than thirty days from now and it will probably be sixty. Second, that before making any decision on dropping, that he was going to get all the information and evaluate it before setting up any definite eligibility. Now before the definite decision is made in thirty days from now on the basis of dropping, I will

meet with you and a committee and we will get a chance to discuss this whole problem before the decision is made.

WATSON: I want to leave one word. The workers in the organization represented by this delegation will not tolerate any layoffs—not one.

*Blackout.*

LOUDSPEAKER: The delegation returns to New York. . . . Elmer Englehorn, Business Manager of Federal Arts Projects says, "We are opposed to a straight Home Relief investigation. This investigation will be a modified one." Colonel Brehon Somervell says, "We will not tolerate complete Home Relief investigations. We are conferring with the Emergency Relief Bureau to determine the questions to be asked."

*(Light up on an investigator seated at his desk. There is a line of people a short distance away waiting to be called. Before the desk stands a worker being interviewed.)*

INTERVIEWER: Where do you live?

WORKER: 232 West Twelfth Street.

INTERVIEWER: Who lives with you?

WORKER: My wife, my mother, and two kids.

INTERVIEWER: Any of them working?

WORKER: No.

INTERVIEWER: Any boarders?

WORKER: No.

INTERVIEWER: Any automobiles?

WORKER: No.

INTERVIEWER: Any property?

WORKER: No.

INTERVIEWER: Any apartment houses, real estate and so forth?

WORKER: No.

INTERVIEWER: Any life insurance?

WORKER: No.

INTERVIEWER: Any bank accounts?

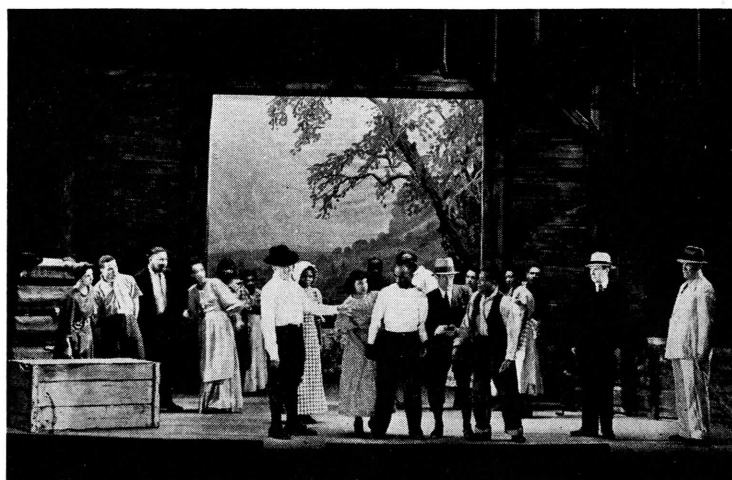
WORKER: No.

INTERVIEWER: Any money saved up?

WORKER: No.

INTERVIEWER: Any pensions—from lodges, organizations,

Hat ("891") Scenes from three current productions: 1) Dr. Faustus ("891"). 2) Bassa-Moona (African Dance Unit). 3) Sweet Land (Negro Theatre).



unions . . .

WORKER: No! No! No!—say, I thought this wasn't going to be a Home Relief investigation—we were told that this examination was to determine whether or not we needed our jobs, not whether we were eligible for relief. We're not interested in Home Relief, we want our jobs!

(He turns his back upon the Interviewer and crosses to the line of workers waiting to be interviewed. In an undertone he explains what has just happened to him as)

LOUDSPEAKER: Once again the Administration breaks its promise. The workers answer with the only means at their disposal.

(The workers who have been waiting for their interviews cross in a straight line to Interviewer. One after another the statement is made, "We refuse to be interviewed by the Emergency Relief Bureau because the ERB is set up to determine pauperism—not need for a job!" At the conclusion of his statement each worker crosses out of the spot.)

Blackout.

LOUDSPEAKER: October 31, 1936—three days before election . . . the voice of President Franklin D. Roosevelt from Madison Square Garden.

VOICE OF ROOSEVELT: Of course we will provide useful work for needy unemployed, because we prefer useful work without the pauperism of the dole. Here and now I want to make myself clear about those who disparage their fellow-citizens on the relief rolls. They say that those on relief are not merely jobless—they say they are worthless. Their solution for the relief problem is to end relief—to purge the rolls by starvation. To use the language of the stock broker, our needy unemployed would be cared for when, as, and if, some fairy godmother should happen to come on the scene.

You and I will continue to refuse to accept that estimate of our unemployed fellow-Americans. Your government is still on the same side of the street with the good Samaritan, and not with those who pass by on the other side. . . We have just begun to fight.

LOUDSPEAKER: November 3, 1936—A nationwide landslide—The people of forty-six of forty-eight states reject

Landon and put the final stamp of approval on the New Deal policy of re-employment and work relief. . . Franklin D. Roosevelt and his Administration are returned to power for a second four-year term.

(Off-stage pandemonium ensues, indicating an election night victory celebration. The word heard most often over the din is, "Hurrah." Topping all of this the orchestra plays, "Happy Days are Here Again." At the height of the celebration . . .)

LOUDSPEAKER: Stop it! Stop it! Listen . . .

(There is a dead silence.)

LOUDSPEAKER: (Continuing, slowly, deliberately.) In the face of these promises by Roosevelt, Hopkins, Somervell, and Woodward, the WPA orders a nineteen percent cut of its personnel.

(Chorus of groans is heard.)

LOUDSPEAKER: What are you going to do about it?

(In answer to this query, a picket line appears downstage, right. The celebrants have become picketers. The picket line crosses, left.)

The usual banners are to be seen: "We can't eat pink slips;" "Merry Christmas, wish you well, here's your pink slip, Somervell;" "It Can't Happen Here, Hell, it has happened;" "Who Was Elected—Roosevelt or Landon?"

As they march, the familiar strains of a well-known chant are heard: "Give the Bankers Home Relief, we want jobs!" As they start circling around, lines of pickets appear at the rear of the orchestra and march down the aisles, chanting, and up on to the stage. They line up at the foots. Facing directly out to the audience their voices rise. The chant changes to (with gestures) "If we lose our jobs, business goes DOWN! If we keep our jobs, business goes UP! WPA must go ON!"

(There is a pause. Into this . . .)

LOUDSPEAKER: Your government is still on the same side of the street with the good Samaritan—not with those who pass by on the other side!

(Another pause, and then, louder than the previous chants, the following line booms out once: "BEFORE ELECTION, YES—AFTER ELECTION, NO!"

The lights dim. The voices modulate to a whisper as the

1) March of Time cameramen ready to shoot the opening of *It Can't Happen Here*. 2) Eleanor Scherr in *Native Ground*. 3) *The Federal Dance Theater*





chant is still heard under the following scene.

Out of the blackness a spot picks out an enormous bed perched on a level, center, up. Everything about this bed is pink—the posts, the pillows, the spread, etc. In it is a worker, asleep. He turns and twists fitfully in the throes of a nightmare. The chant becomes more staccato, though no louder. The sleeping man squirms. . . .

Slowly and ominously, a ghost, in the appearance of a pink slip, climbs up the level. It is truckin' to the rhythm of the chant. It trucks toward the bed as the sleeper stirs. . . . gradually the tempo changes, increasing. The worker begins to fight his pillow. The chant dies away to be replaced by a new one being intoned by the ghost. He beats it out with his feet, muttering:

BARBER, FLANAGAN, HOPKINS, SOMERVELL:

BARBER, FLANAGAN, HOPKINS, SOMERVELL:

The ghost, which has been truckin' and weaving before the bed, jumps on it, hovering over the sleeping man. The tempo increases: Hop, Hop—Som, Som—Flaa, Flaa—Baa, Baa! The worker is now not only fighting the pillow, but the bedspread and sheets and covers as well. The ghost jumps up and down in rhythm on the bed. The worker, still dreaming, attempts to rise. The ghost pushes a foot in his face, throwing him back. . . . Worker and ghost are now at it furiously, the one struggling to get up, the other kicking him back, shouting: BARBER, FLANAGAN, HOPKINS, SOMERVELL! etc. The action mounts to a crescendo, topped by a sudden ear-splitting scream from the worker. The orchestra, which has been under all this, sounds a terrific discord.)

Blackout.

LOUDSPEAKER: The dream becomes a reality. So do the pink slips. Projects are decimated ruthlessly. Workers are demoralized. But the will to keep off the breadline survives. . . . A delegation led by Morris Watson calls on Colonel Somervell.

SOMERVELL: Wait a minute, Watson, let's not get into the position of discussing the sincerity of Mr. Holt or Mrs. Woodward's sincerity. If the conditions are changed then we'll have to face those changed conditions. I might go downtown here and dine with some alien and be per-

fectly friendly with him and two weeks later if there is a war I won't do it.

WATSON: I would like to get to the responsibility. I think we are entitled to know who has ordered the cuts, and for what reason new quotas have been set—and there is no reason for quarreling over that—the new quotas mean cuts.

SOMERVELL: That's right. The new quotas mean cuts.

WATSON: To us they mean suicides and distress. . . . As I see it regardless of relief or non-relief status, there is going to be some two thousand people laid off from the arts projects, and I gather that if we sat here and argued with you all night you are still going to cut two thousand people off the arts projects by December 15th.

SOMERVELL: That's correct. Unless I get instructions to the contrary.

WATSON: Well the only alternative, and the only thing for two thousand workers to do, is to take their own kind of drastic action, do you agree?

(Somervell shrugs his shoulders.)

Blackout.

LOUDSPEAKER: Drastic Action! A sit-down strike is declared!

(Light up on curbstone at 701 Eighth Avenue. It is night. A line of workers is discovered, filling the stage from left to right. They are all sitting on their hands, their feet dangling over the apron into the pit. Behind them pickets march up and down with banners. Above and behind the pickets, a huge cutout representing the facade of the building. The protesting sit-downers appear at windows. Up right and left, small groups are attaching packages of food to improvised lines made of neckties, stockings, etc. These the strikers haul up and pull inside. . . .)

The scene can only be described as bedlam. Chants, individual appeals and cheers, greetings from those above to their friends below, and vice versa are heard above the babble. Policemen stand idly by. Passersby become new recruits. . . .)

LOUDSPEAKER: The sit-down strikers are photographed and identified by officials. . . .

tre's Candide. 1) The Theatre Project workers picket. 2) The opening night of the Negro Theatre's Macbeth. 3) A WPA audience at the Mills Hotel.



*(The lights dim down, but not out as they come up in a window on the first floor immediately under that occupied by the strikers within. At a desk is seated a man, beside him two other men.)*

LOUDSPEAKER: Philip W. Barber, regional director of the Federal theater for New York City, follows to the letter the instructions of the local WPA administrator and fires every sit-down striker who can be identified by George W. Hexter and Ed Rowland, his assistants.

*(Rowland hands pink slip to Hexter. Hexter hands it to Barber and calls the name. Barber immediately signs it. The process is repeated again and again; Rowland handing slips to Hexter, who says, in turn; "Irving Curtis, William Bentley, Hilda Lunic, Ben Lewis, Grace Hooper, Louis German, Milton Litwin, etc.")*

*Methodically, without any hesitation, Barber signs.)*

LOUDSPEAKER: Rowland to Hexter to Barber—OUT!

*(The lights in the window dim out and come up again on the picketers on the curb.)*

LOUDSPEAKER: Thursday . . . All work stops as workers parade and picket at WPA headquarters, under C. P. C. banner.

*(The lights on the upstairs strikers have dimmed out. These sitting on their hands at the apron rise and join the picket lines. The spirit becomes more militant. The marchers begin to chant.)*

LOUDSPEAKER: Friday. . . Supervisors threaten strike.

*(The marching accelerates, as it does through the following announcements.)*

LOUDSPEAKER: Saturday . . . Five thousand parade around WPA headquarters. . . A. F. of L. theatrical unions in mass meeting at Manhattan opera house demand reinstatement of sitdown strikers.

Tuesday . . . Sit-down strikers reinstated.

*(The picketeers cheer the tempo increases. A carnival atmosphere prevails.)*

LOUDSPEAKER: Just a moment . . . Elmer H. Englehorn has something to say.

*(A pin-spot picks up Englehorn in a box.)*

ENGLEHORN: I did not say the strikers ought to be met by machine guns.

LOUDSPEAKER: Is Jimmy Durante in the house?

*(A pin-spot picks up Durante in the opposite box.)*

DURANTE: Them layoffs is mutiny.

*(The pin-spot spreads to take in the whole box.)*

LOUDSPEAKER: Miss Helen Hayes:

MISS HAYES: I join the protest.

LOUDSPEAKER: Alfred Lunt:

LUNT: So do I.

LOUDSPEAKER: Others who feel the same way about the curtailment program are . . . Burgess Meredith . . . Phil Loeb . . .

*(Those named stand up in the box behind Durante and remain standing.)*

. . . George Abbott . . . Lynn Fontanne . . . Bobby Clark . . . Fanny Brice . . . Margaret Sullavan . . . and Gypsy Rose Lee.

*(The pickets cheer again.)*

LOUDSPEAKER: The drive to reduce the personnel of the Federal Theater still goes on . . . What are you going to do about it?

A WOMAN PICKET: *(Stepping out of line.)* In the words of the President of the United States . . .

ALL PICKETS: *(as one voice.)* WE'VE JUST BEGUN TO FIGHT!

*(With renewed vigor they reform their lines. The music underneath booms out. Their voices raise in the chant "We've just begun to fight!" Over this furious din the loudspeaker blares.)*

LOUDSPEAKER: Mrs. Hallie Flanagan says:

VOICE OF MRS. FLANAGAN: IT COSTS THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT LESS TO KEEP A WPA WORKER AT WORK FOR ONE YEAR THAN IT COSTS TO BLOW HIM TO PIECES ON THE BATTLEFIELD!

*(As the curtain falls newsboys rush up the aisles and onto the stage crying: "Extra—FDR TO CUT WPA A THIRD." Their cries are in unison.)*

*There appears on the falling curtain a projection showing the appropriations for 1936 and 1937 for WPA and munitions and armament. In the case of WPA the allocation has gone down, in the case of munitions, up.)*

- 1) WPA circus tent men. 2) An audience at a WPA performance in a park. 3) Children of all races watching a Federal Theatre Project show.



Photos by Arthur Steiner, Ed Waterbury, Jacob Wernli, Harold Monoson and Martin Harris.

*an open letter  
to Darryl Zanuck*

London

Dear Mr. Zanuck:

You are one of the most enterprising of the producers in the United States today, and so I am not at all surprised to read that you are preparing for immediate production a film on the siege of the Alcazar. Its heroism has thrilled the world, you are reported as saying.

I also read that you are asking newspapermen and others who have been on the spot to collect you facts and photographs. You want it to be as authentic as possible.

Very conscientious. Just what I would expect of a man of your enterprise, and it is because I think this desire for authenticity so laudable, that I am hastening to help you.

You see, I happen to have seen and spoken with quite a number of persons who were there, and I feel sure that there are a whole number of things about the siege that a man of your conscience would like to know about. It would be a pity if they got missed out.

First of all, you are quite right about the siege itself being unprecedented. I don't think there's ever been anything quite like it in history before. And it was very heroic. But I wonder if you've heard who the heroes were.

A hero, I believe, is a man who fights against odds. It would be right to use the word hero for the people, the ordinary men-in-the-street, who, with empty hands and in the first flush of their surprise and indignation, overcame the generals and their machine guns in Madrid and Barcelona. Bare handed they overcame them, the oath-breakers, in their barracks.

But in Toledo, the generals and their cadets had no ordinary barracks. They had a fortification that had withstood the armies of centuries, and held stores and arms for all the province. Few men they had, but for every man more than one machine gun.

If they were so armed, why did they run into their fortress? Liberators, national patriots, surely with such an abundance of stores they could have armed the populace that welcomed them and marched victoriously forward.

Curiously enough, the population didn't welcome them, however, and for all their arms, for all their military training, they feared beyond their walls to meet the fate that met their forsworn colleagues in Barcelona and Madrid. Not one echo of sympathy did they meet among the good folk of Toledo, who, as one man, set about the investment of their citadel.

The cadets were few, their besiegers many, fit material for an heroic tale. You guessed it! The tale of traitors, armed to the

teeth and with ample stores, cowering behind walls fourteen feet thick, while the man-in-the-street, a peaceable bloke like you and me, took off his coat and, in shirt sleeves and armed with a fowling piece, set about their punishment.

Just think of it! Walls fourteen feet thick with machine guns through every loophole and on the other side, shot-guns and blunderbusses taken from old trophies off the walls. I can find you plenty of eye-witnesses. One old artilleryman, an English veteran of the Great War, when the besiegers after the first months or so managed to get hold of an old few-pounder, wept to see it fire. A bang, a puff of smoke high on the castle wall, and as the puff clears away a brown smudge on the unruffled brick-work. That would be a nice shot for your picture, Mr. Zanuck, only I'm afraid the critics might think it just a fake, they wouldn't think it was really war. I can find you plenty of people who saw it, however. Why it was, and how it was, that an unarmed people was denied the possibility of arming to defend itself against a rebel army, I don't suppose anybody can tell you, and anyway it won't come in your picture probably.

But now there's another thing it would be a pity to leave out. It happened before the siege started, but we who make films know that before the big scene starts you have to get a personal story built up, to make the audience interested in what might otherwise leave it indifferent. Well, I think this is just the personal bit you need. It gives us the motive, too. It explains why the good burghers of Toledo, the clerks and the shopkeepers and the handicraftmen took off their coats and picked up their shotguns with such a will. It wasn't just abstract indignation at treachery. No, it was a motive much more like the traditional one that has sent many an American father or brother or sweetheart reaching for his shotgun since long before films began. Let me explain.

All this bloodshed and what not in Spain, the revolt of the army began. I know a lot of people say the government wasn't governing very strongly, people were being shot from time to time, which, according to the people who say it, was a reason for the generals, instead of helping the government to govern, to set about shooting a lot more. Well, they may have been right, we won't discuss that here. What we do know, and they and their friends have said it a hundred times themselves, is that they began. This means (mind you put it in your film) that that afternoon when it started the good people of Toledo didn't suddenly get excited and drive the cadets into their fortress. The cadets, knowing that what they were about to do would meet the unanimous indignation of the people, withdrew into their barracks. And they withdrew into it, knowing they would be cut off for a long time.

Now what do soldiers want who are going to be cut off for a long time? Think, Mr. Zanuck. Not ammunition, they had plenty. Not food; when they prepared they had also seen to that. Something else, Mr. Zanuck. They took their womenfolk, some of them--we have heard a great deal of the women and children of the Alcazar--but it was not only their own womenfolk they took.

If by any chance when you are getting your film ready, Mr. Zanuck, you should meet one of the rescued women of the Alcazar, and as you are very conscientious it's quite likely you may arrange to see one during your preparations, ask her what happened to those other women. Ask her. Please, Mr. Zanuck. Because to this day no one has heard.

On that afternoon of rebellion, the cadets, hurrying to the shelter of the citadel of the Cid, paused in their flight to snatch these women. Shall we call them "hostages"? It was a holiday afternoon, and in the sunshine couples sat spooning. Others strolled along the lanes that ran by the hill on which the fortress stands. Sometimes the boy was knocked senseless. Sometimes, perhaps because he did

something idly (shall we call it heroic, Mr. Zanuck?) he would be shot or stabbed with the bayonet.

A car, in which a boy and girl had been driving near the fatal place that day, lay in the street for weeks throughout the siege. The boy's body for days slumped over the wheel. Then the besiegers went out and got it, under a hail of machine gun fire.

That might make another good shot. And as a scenarist myself, I don't think it makes a bad set-up in general. There they are, the fathers and the brothers, who till now have spent their lives behind their desks and counters. Some have guns, perhaps, and others—yes, I can find you people who have seen it—have only sticks, but all of them, hatred in their hearts, crouch peering between chairs and tables piled in the street, at those walls of fourteen feet of stone and brick that hide from them those whom perhaps they fear ever to see again. Will you come into their headquarters, a chemist's shop round the corner, and see the militia officer (terrible name, isn't it, almost Red, but he was the chemist himself before the patriot heroes took him from his filling of prescriptions)? There on the wall behind his head, you will see the portraits of girls, last available family photographs on outings and the like, with beneath them a description and the circumstance of their capture. "Try to look out for these and save them when the citadel falls," is the legend on the wall.

Eye witnesses? Well, you won't learn all that happened behind those walls and I don't think you need worry. Mr. Quigley wouldn't let you show it if you did find out. But you've always got your happy ending. Not perhaps the conventional happy ending, which is no doubt what makes the subject appeal to so daring and innovating a mind as yours. I suppose the usual film ending would show merit rewarded, and injured virtue recovered, but as all the world knows, it hasn't worked out like that. Not yet at least. When those cowering heroes saw their bastions falling, when even those giant walls crumbled beneath simple miners' dynamite and the bare hands of the wronged populace, when these heroes at last felt vengeance at their throats, then these who in all Spain could find no Spaniard to lift a hand for them were rescued by mercenaries, by Moors, by the riffraff of the Foreign Legion, by Nazis fresh from the massacres of June 30th and Italians fresh from their mustard gas victory over the Red Cross. But this isn't a happy ending at all, you may protest. Oh, yes, it is. The thoughtless girls of that holiday afternoon may, it is true, be missing when you're seeking for the facts. But their families do not mourn them now. Why? Ask your own newspaper. Ask Jay Allen. Ask those who stepped gingerly in the streets of Toledo lest their nice American shoes be soiled with blood. Ask those who saw the Moors celebrate the release of their Alcazar "heroes" by tossing hand grenades up and down the hospital wards before they set the hospital afire.

You must have that in. No one will be sad in the audience, when they know there's no one left now to worry about the sad things in the picture, will they?

So you see what a fine picture you can make. I congratulate you once again on deciding to make it authentic. Not many film producers would have the courage.

By the way, if by any chance report should be mistaken, and you are thinking of telling, not a true story, but a fairy version of this tale—then Mr. Zanuck, let me whisper just this little warning in your ear: there are men and women and children in every corner of the world, Mr. Zanuck, who will remember it, Mr. Zanuck, as long as they remember the real heroes of the Alcazar.

And one day, Mr. Zanuck, you might come to regret it yourself.

But then you wouldn't do such a thing, would you?

Ivor Montagu



# the diluted theatre

BY JOHN W. GASSNER

If there is no news of startling developments on the current stage, this report is not necessarily a chronicle of wasted time. For a while it might have been. Drama of import seemed to be in abeyance this season, whether by conspiracy of producers or playwrights it was hard to tell. The season's most successful items belonged to the champagne variety. Then the hard drinks began to pour, and playgoers could be properly grateful. As usual, it was a cask of social content that had been broached. Still, the latest tendency in the theatre has been in favor of dilution. This has been evident not merely in the preponderance of light drama, but in the nature of our social treatments. Playwrights, reflecting perhaps a temporary easement of economic and political tension, have been in a relaxed mood. The results have been variously interesting, but they have not been particularly heady.

## *Johnny Johnson—Legend & Reality*

One notes this dilution of effect in the Group Theatre's musical legend, *Johnny Johnson*, by Paul Green, which has been the most stimulating of the season's serious offerings so far. As a play to end wars it is as watered down as the presidential messages that sent Johnny Johnson to the front. War-making appears in it stripped of important economic motivation; as if war were merely a folly rather than a carefully organized crime in which the profits for some are as high as the losses are for the myriad others. As social analysis the play is glib rather than incisive. For protest it is too general and too genial; even a popular success like *Idiot's Delight* is more specific and impassioned. All told the playgoer is left in the limbo of

ineffectual pacifism. It is even a trifle curious that the Group, which appears to have had an active part in the composition of the play, should have been oblivious of these deficiencies of analysis and impact.

Despite these limitations, which the mood and style of the play perhaps extenuate to a degree, Paul Green's *Johnny Johnson* is a distinguished drama. For the technician its amalgamation of dialogue, music, mass chant, dumb show, fantasy and reality represents another step toward fusion of dramatic expression. For the playgoer it is a unique departure from both routine entertainment and ordinary preaching, and a poignant fantasy.

Its subject, the irrationality of war, though no longer a novelty on our stage, is never so vividly zany as when projected by *Johnny Johnson's* expressionistic technique, itself the summation of the irrational and the fantastic. But the play is not merely satire. Recounting with engaging obliquity the saga of one simple man's encounter with the monsters of mass psychosis, it achieves a moving sense of tragedy. Like other idealists, Johnny Johnson, local tombstone carver, took the principles of democracy and Christianity literally, set the world at loggerheads by acting in accordance with ideals normally used only for window dressing, seemed stark mad to those who could not comprehend his luminous sanity, and ended up an outcast but an indomitable one, with a song of peace on his lips, while the real madmen of the world were spoiling for another fight.

That the Group's production maintains a respectable unity of mood, that it preserves both the poetry and humor of so mercurial a theatre piece is largely the work of Lee Strasberg's direction and Russell Collins' performance in the title rôle, persuasive

in its humanity. The directorial hand generally succeeds in avoiding unkind comparisons with the cinema, achieves brisk stylization, and slips conspicuously only in the broad characterization of the mayor in the first scene and the longeurs of the insane asylum League of Nations scene. Particularly masterly is the treatment of Johnny Johnson's nightmare, the mass-chant projected through the approaching and receding cannon. The scene of the German boy sniping in a cemetery behind a statue of Jesus Christ is a powerful commentary on war, and the cartoon in which the psychiatrist examines Johnny, for which credit goes to Morris Carnovsky and to Donald Oenslager's set, constitutes superlative satire. Ruth Nelson's army lassie is another brilliantly etched performance, and several other characteristics also remind us again that the Group is indispensable to the theatre and deserving of both encouragement and helpful criticism. It is therefore regrettable that its production was marred by inadequate singing of Kurt Weill's firm and generally appropriate music.

## *Two Hundred Were Chosen*

Perhaps the closest approximation of a play of high endeavor, if not accomplishment, is significantly again the offering of one of the younger producing units, the Actors' Repertory Company, which gave last season's *Let Freedom Ring* and *Bury the Dead*. E. P. Conkle's *Two Hundred Were Chosen*, presented in association with the enterprising Mr. Harmon, may not be a masterpiece. But it touches upon a vital problem and is quickened by credible all-too-human characters drawn from the soil. The "two hundred who were chosen" were transplanted from the Middle-West to Alaska, in the hope

that they might hew out a new place for themselves. Their old homesteads were lost to them beyond recovery when the wayward economic system turned one of its somersaults. They came trustfully, with the pathetic eagerness in their hearts that told the story of their defeat more eloquently than a thousand editorials. The disappointments that ensued when governmental red-tape hampered their adjustment to a new country, when the callousness of the militarist in charge irritated them beyond endurance, found the settlers with their inner resources depleted by the buffets they had already endured. Venting their resentment pettily and vainly, they refused to cooperate with the government and lapsed into moody idleness, were forced to fend for themselves, and persisted in hurting themselves until an epidemic among their children galvanized them into action. Then they built a hospital for their sick with almost superhuman effort, patched up their quarrel with the authorities, and settled down to the task of building themselves a home in the wilderness like their pioneer forefathers.

The past tense is applicable not merely because the events actually occurred and were part of an effort to colonize Alaska with some of the victims of the depression, but because the play reads like an epic. It is a chronicle of the American peo-

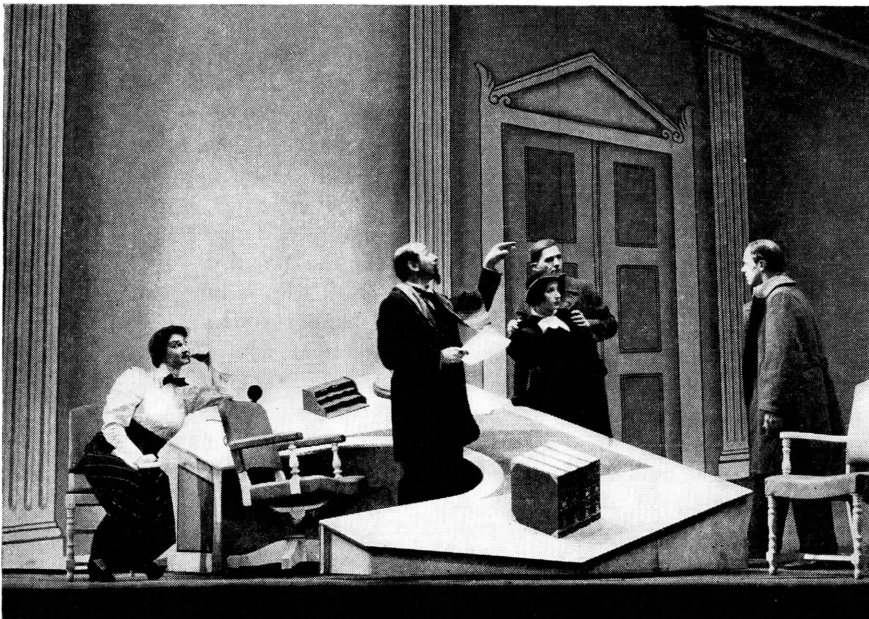
ple, worth telling and worth underscoring even more than the author has seen fit to do. It says in effect that the resources of the people are still great, that it is a pity to see them dissipated by a world in which a man may not enjoy the fruits of his labor. *Two Hundred Were Chosen* is in essence exalted drama. More immediately, it is also a relief drama from which the authorities could take a leaf for guidance in dealing with the unemployed. For these reasons one could wish that this play, supplied with many recognizable types and supported by uniformly genuine performances by Dorothy Brackett, Norma Chambers and other members of the company, were a more forcefully assembled stage piece. That Conkle's story languishes somewhat can be forgiven, since thus far this playwright's forte has been the one-act play limited to local description. But it is otherwise with the play's orientation, for which the Actors' Repertory Company and its directorship must be at least partly responsible. In long stretches the playwright seemed to be almost writing *against* his theme, lampooning the unemployed rather than vindicating them and placing the blame where he apparently believed it belongs—namely, a chaotic social order and, secondarily, red tape. Moreover, one major question that rightly agitated the colonists is only sketchily indica-

ted and never resolved. What purpose would there be in giving their all to land to which they had no title, which could be taken away from them even more easily than their farms back home had been foreclosed? This evasion of the fundamental question of property versus man makes for basic inconclusiveness.

Perhaps the cardinal problem raised by the play will agitate the serious theatre for a long time to come. A play must have credible material, must possess the flux of life, in which contradictions are often ineradicable. But a play must also have point or direction. The early pieces of the social theatre of the 'thirties had point, as well as passion, but were often deficient in the actual substance of life. The pendulum is swinging in the opposite direction, and now point is being increasingly blunted by a creditable desire to capture many-dimensional character and multiple motivation. A balance must be struck. The earlier type may have suffered from inanition, but the newer type risks both confusion and congestion. In both instances the dilution of effect is considerable.

### *Ten Million Ghosts*

Sidney Kingsley's *Ten Million Ghosts*, which closed after an undeservedly short run, was an example of the older type. A blast against the war-makers, the play was appropriately indignant. Its charts and screen pictures of the nefarious practices of munitions-makers in the last war constituted a telling indictment. But the dramatic involvement or core of the play, that part which is told in terms of living character, was sketchy and languid. The fault lay partly in the characterization, which seemed too set or geometrical, a deficiency stressed by mediocre performances. The story was, moreover, too often told by the lecture method, with expository values displacing dramatic ones. Yet the playwright confronted one of the major dramatic problems of our time when he set out to show how business continued to be international throughout the war of the nations; how the same cartel sold munitions to the



The psychiatrist (Morris Carnovsky) examines Johnny Johnson (Russell Collins)

different contenders it had first egged on to national hatred with insidious propaganda; how the warring governments spared each other's mines.

Judged in the light of its immediacy, *Ten Million Ghosts* should have run months throughout the country. Unfortunately, the play itself is not blameless. Its slender dramatic story could not carry the abundant and vital exposition. Perhaps Kingsley, whose ability to create situation is one of his major endowments, was lulled into security by the drama inherent in the mere statement of his facts. It is also quite possible, if the charts and portions of the stage play are any indication, that he was moving toward pure drama of exposition much as we find in the living newspaper technique. Much of his material would have made an exceptionally forceful "living newspaper." Either the play would have had to be frankly expository, or its dramatic involvement would have had to take precedence over the exposition.

### *Hedda Gabler & Hamlet*

Mme. Nazimova's projection of *Hedda Gabler* served to remind us how fine a delineator of character Ibsen could be when he chose; and how inextricably he could weave characterization into the social fabric. For Hedda is the type of upper-class woman who has no function in society if she is not bearing children and taking care of a home. There are probably millions of her type, though they are apt to be less sinister. Lacking usefulness, Hedda can only cast longing eyes on the painted heaven of the aristocracy, very much like her sisters today who find similar sustenance, as well as cause for restlessness, in the gilded illusions of Hollywood; and she can only resent usefulness in others. Nazimova's portrait of Hedda froze the blood with its serpentine horror, but a more temperate projection of the role would have been more affecting and genuine. Her Hedda is too singular to be the type for a proper social analysis or a subject for sympathy rather than revulsion. It was also unfortunate that the supporting cast, with the exception of McKay Morris, was inadequate.

Leslie Howard's *Hamlet* did not deserve the withering contempt with which it was greeted in the press. It was an altogether conscientious production, though some of the casting was inferior. Howard's performance, while now and then deficient in passion, gave full realization to one aspect of *Hamlet* without which the great play misses fire and importance. Whereas Gielgud's *Hamlet* is a passionate, bedevilled son with a neurotic fixation, Howard's *Hamlet* is a poet and dreamer. A combination of both portraits comes closest to the complex heart of the tragedy. If we must have them dissociated this season it is difficult to know which aspect of the characterization one cares to forego. One would not have liked to forego either.

### *Mr. Coward's Red Pepper & Wycherly's Snuff*

Did the wit I heard declaiming "Coward's in His Heaven—all's right with world" have his tongue in his cheek, or was he speaking for the gentlefolk in the orchestra? I shall never know, because the Rolls-Royce that whisked him away from the theatre was too fast for me. But it is a damning commentary on the season and its patronage that all its well attended new plays should belong to the featherweight class, and that one of its most heralded events should have been a triplicate *Tonight at Eight-thirty* that is little more than vaudeville, in full dress.

What New York has folded to its abundant bosom is a series of one-act pieces; three sets of them, to be precise, each of which consists of one miniature satire, one tragedy of passion and one song-and-dance number. The two sets seen by this commentator, from which the unseen items are not reputed to differ greatly, well performed divertissements at best, are two-thirds shoddy and one-third slight comedy. If they can evoke an enthusiastic response from large audiences which are rallied to infinitely better, let alone more important, plays only on the rarest occasions what inducement have playwrights and producers to lend their talents to so stony a field? If every allowance is made for slickness by

a press that is merciless to imperfections in truly important work, what hope is there for a non-subscription theatre? The briefest glance at the content of *Tonight at Eight-Thirty* should be conclusive—and rather disheartening. The sole extenuating factor must be Mr. Coward's own expert acting, and Miss Gertrude Lawrence's captivating performance.

Another reason for regret is that Mr. Coward can do better. There is no place here to review this fertile playwright's work, but the fact that he is the careless possessor of a talent is no longer news. That it does not wear the sable garments of woe is also not news; *Point Valaine* and such tragic duds among his current offerings as *Still Life* and *The Astonished Heart* belong in the evidence. To puff up a bit of erotica until it looks like a whale of an emotion is to be tedious, as well as pretentious. A little bird might also whisper into the author-composer's ear that, for all their commodity value, such numbers as *Red Peppers* and *Family Album* are at best a thimble-full of humor in a bucket of mediocre tunefulness. Mr. Coward is not descended from Orpheus. But several of his current sketches again attest his equipment for crackling satire. *Hands Across the Sea* is too slight and flip to really matter, but it is a masterly *reductio ad absurdum* of upper-class ineptitude, snobbishness included; the skit would be a gem in any ordered comedy of manners. The first two scenes of *Ways and Means*, before it turns mildly puerile, reveal the same talent, which consists in sharp observation and lean, nervous wit incalculably effective when it dangles sophisticates from its line. The age could use a major satirist. But Mr. Coward, who is too sparing with his red pepper while much that passes for pepper with him is little better than old snuff, would have to give himself full sway. It will doubtless surprise this eminently successful playwright to hear that he is frustrating himself. . . .

Since Mr. Coward stems from Restoration Comedy, there is a fortunate coincidence in Gilbert Miller's colorful production of *The Country*

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# GIVE ALL THY TERRORS TO THE WIND<sup>1</sup>

*A play in one act by Claire and Paul Sifton*

"This heavenly scarf beneath thy bosom bind,  
And live: give all thy terrors to the wind."

—*Leucothöe to Ulysses.\**

*The starboard boat deck and rail of the S.S. Noruh.*

*Upstage from left to right is the rail and beyond it the horizon of sky and sea. At right is the head of a flight of steps leading down to the forward deck. Farther downstage is a ladder up to the bridge and the wheel house. At extreme lower right is the corner of the Captain's house with a door set in. At extreme upper left, not necessarily visible on stage, is a lifeboat. Stacked along the rail is case oil (airplane gasoline) in crates of four five-gallon tins. Off to the left are the fidley-hatch used by the engineers and firemen and steps down to the lower after decks.*

*It is about 4 P.M. of a bright cold day in the late Fall. Joe and Pedro, two of the three Able Seamen in the crew, are on the deck at a pile of fresh gear and supplies. Both men are dressed in nondescript clothing. On this ship the one insignia of rank is the Captain's cap. It is new.*

*Pedro is making a rope lashing for a new water keg. Joe is folding the canvas cover of the lifeboat.*

*The Mess Boy, a college graduate, good physique and likeable, comes on from left. He is scanning the deck closely as he walks. Joe and Pedro look on, curiously.*

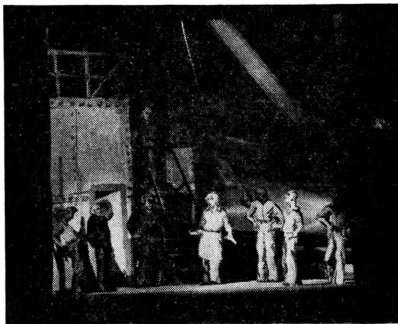
MESS BOY: Pardon me, but have you seen a smoke-sifter around here?

JOE: What kind of a smoke-sifter?

MESS BOY: Oh, a strainer, I think . . . a sort of wire hoop with gauze, as I understand it. (*Joe and Pedro look at each other.*) Cook said it might be on deck, drying.

PEDRO: Maybe it's up in the wheel house.

JOE: Yeah. The Old Man calls for it at night sometimes,



*Photo by H. Chamberlain*

to keep the dark out of his eyes when he's standing watch.

MESS BOY: The dark?

JOE: (*Gravely.*) Yeah.

MESS BOY: (*Hesitantly.*) Thanks. . . . awfully.

PEDRO: He is funny that way.

MESS BOY: He is rather odd.

JOE: You know why, don't you?

MESS BOY: No.

JOE: Ever hear of the Eleana?

MESS BOY: (*Startled.*) Yes.

JOE: He was Captain of that ship.

MESS BOY: (*Staring horrified at the Captain's door.*) Holy cats!

JOE: Better get that sifter, lad. (*Mess Boy nods and hurries up the ladder. Joe and Pedro hold in until they see him enter the wheel house. Smitty, the third Able Seaman, staggers up the steps from the forward desk, carrying an armful of new lifebelts and gear. Joe speaks sharply.*) I thought there was four.

SMITTY: (*Dumping the stuff on deck.*) Three. Say, is that water fresh?

PEDRO: Yes.

JOE: Where's the other one?

SMITTY: (*Avoiding their eyes.*) That's all there was.

JOE: (*Carrying the canvas off left.*) The law says there has to be four. Better find the other.

PEDRO: (*To Smitty.*) Always ready to snatch a few dollars—even at the edge of death.

SMITTY: Aw, t'hell with both of you! (*He folds up the lifebelts and waits sulkily to heave them to Joe in the lifeboat.*) Talking like one of them things ever did nobody any good! Me, I'll take me chances riding a hatch-cover any time.

PEDRO: (*Casually.*) Like on the Gulf when you beat off

\* From *Lloyd's Medal for Saving Life at Sea*, which is presented by the Corporation of Lloyd's "as an honorary acknowledgment to those who have by extraordinary exertions contributed to the saving of life at sea."

the hands that tried to board your raft. . . .

SMITTY: (*Leaping at Pedro.*) That's a bloody lie!

PEDRO: (*Catching Smitty's wrist and twisting him around.*) Relax, Smitty. Relax.

SMITTY: (*Struggling.*) . . . greasy Spick . . .

PEDRO: If it's a lie why do you talk in your sleep?  
(*Smitty stops, stares at him.*)

JOE: (*Sharply, as an old lifebelt flies through the air.*) Hey! (*Smitty and Pedro break and duck.*)

SMITTY: (*Lifting the belt by a torn strap.*) What's the idea dumping rotten stuff like this in a new lifeboat!

JOE: (*After throwing other old belts to the deck.*) Now! Take it easy!

PEDRO: (*Resuming work on the keg.*) Breaking out new lifebelts, but beans and slop till our teeth fall out.

SMITTY: 'Sall screwy . . . (*Tossing up the new belts, waiting between tosses for Joe to stow each one.*) . . . Picking out the middle of the ocean to do the replacing!

JOE: (*From the boat.*) It'd look screwier in port. Now . . . with a gale blowing up . . .

PEDRO: It just happened this morning that the Second Officer climbed into the boat and looked into the water keg. (*He laughs.*)

SMITTY: Ropey, hunh?

JOE: Hey! (*An 80-pound bread can falls and rolls on the deck.*)

SMITTY: (*Yells.*) Yeow! Don't do that! Once I seen a rat biggern' a cat jump out a bread can. (*He unscrews the lid.*) Hey, it's new! (*Lifts up fresh biscuits.*)

PEDRO: For the government inspectors.

SMITTY: Yeah . . . Just the top layer. (*He puts his hand to his nose as he closes the can. The Mess Boy drops down the ladder slowly.*)

JOE: Gimme the new can. (*Smitty does so, then takes the old can to the rail and pushes it over the side.*)

SMITTY: There's guys that wouldn't sail with Cap'n Luke, but me . . . a job's a job.

PEDRO: A man has to take a deep six sometime anyway.

JOE: (*As he comes on left.*) Sure, and the ocean's a nice clean grave. (*The Mess Boy pauses.*)

PEDRO: (*Philosophically.*) It's a matter of choice: worms or eels.

JOE: Eels eat faster, what with fishes and sharks to help 'em . . . specially sharks.

SMITTY: Me, I like eels. Used to know a girl up near Bridgeport. She could fry 'em so—makes me mouth water to think of it . . . She married a telephone lineman.

JOE: (*To Mess Boy.*) Well, lad, did you find that smoke sifter?

MESS BOY: No. They said it might be down in Number four hold.

JOE: They're kidding you! Blackie's probably got it down in the engine room, straining the smoke out of the boilers.

MESS BOY: (*Doubtfully.*) Well, guess I can look. (*Pointing to gear on deck.*) What are you doing with that?

JOE: Don't you know? (*Mess Boy shakes his head.*) Fixing to drop anchor.

MESS BOY: What for?

JOE: (*Laughs.*) Catch ourselves a mess of sardines. (*Notices that door of the Captain's house is opening.*)

Beat it! (*Mess Boy hurries off left, with a glance toward the Captain's door.*)

MATE: (*Stepping out, followed by Captain Luke.*) All stowed shipshape? (*Indicating lifeboat.*) Get the cover back on and don't waste time.

CAPTAIN: (*Looking at the sky.*) Wind's freshening a bit. Wait, Mate. We'll leave the cover off. Sea's running high. (*Tapping a crate of case oil.*) Quite a cargo.  
(*Smitty gives Captain a startled look.*)

JOE: Too much of a deck load, sir.

PEDRO: (*Casually.*) Uninsured deck cargo pays the cost of the insurance on the cargo in the hold.

CAPTAIN: (*Turning to look at Pedro, then to Joe.*) Ever live on a farm, Joe? A white house on the side of a hill, land rolling away in smooth green swells? I know the place . . . hollyhocks and delphiniums 'round the front door . . . the smell of the sea on the breeze.

JOE: (*Matter-of-factly.*) I grew up in a shack on Fire Island. My farm was the oyster beds. When the tide was out there was nothing pretty about it.

CAPTAIN: (*Not hearing him.*) . . . Costs eight thousand dollars and you can move right in . . . woodlot, furniture . . . A man could live out his days in peace down there . . . all the rest of his days . . . in peace.

SMITTY: I was on a farm once. A rum-dum place it is, sir. The only smells is from poultry and cows. Plenty of that!

MATE: (*With feeling.*) I'd rather be dead.

CAPTAIN: (*To Mate.*) When the wind howls and the sea runs like a pack of foaming dogs, this ship's your home. (*He leans on the rail, looks at the sea.*) When the wind sings and the ocean rolls smooth as a woman's back, a man talks of death. (*He shivers, turns, speaks gaily.*) Ships sink, mates; insurance companies pay up; and—

JOE: But our wages stop when we abandon ship!

CAPTAIN: (*Recovering quickly.*) Young man, I had orders to keep my eye on you. No organizing my crew. (*To Pedro.*) That goes for you, too. Sabe?

SMITTY: There'll be no organizing on this ship, sir. They's all organized except me and I'm a individualist . . . Are we getting off this trip, Cap'n?

CAPTAIN: How's that? (*He suddenly understands the question.*) Doesn't it strike you that the captain of a ship that's dropped from under him, leaving him on the beach a year . . . and every mariner afraid his shadow will fall on him . . . will be very, very careful to see that it doesn't happen again? (*He wants them to believe him.*)

JOE: If you had the choosing, Cap'n . . . if it was all left up to you.

PEDRO: And it's a scabby old laker they gave you, sir.

SMITTY: 'Tain't hardly a square chance for a comeback.

MATE: (*Bristling.*) She's seaworthy. A bitch in a storm, but she keeps her nose up. I sailed on her eight years. I watched her the two years she was laid up. She'll ride out a gale that'd founder many a trimmer-looking ship.

SMITTY: (*Laughing.*) I heard about men loving ships afore, but there was never a barge that rides like a wash-tub full of dirty underwear. . . .

CAPTAIN: When a man's lived with a wife for years, he doesn't see her any more. (*With a slight bow to the*

Mate.) She's yours, Mate; ours, to love, to cherish . . . as long as she's afloat.

PEDRO: With war in her belly; death stacked on every deck. Even the foc'sle so crowded have to cut down on the crew.

MATE: (*Brusquely.*) You, Spanish, relieve Bos'n at the wheel. (*He points to gear piled on deck.*) Clear this. Gotta get things tidy . . . neat and tidy . . . (*The men laugh. The Mate falls to, helping them stack, to cover his confusion.*)

CAPTAIN: Quite right, Mate; quite right. Many a ship—aye, and a man, too—that's been laid up a year, two years and more, can be tidied up to sail the broad sea meadows. (*His voice dies away. He turns to Joe.*) Brown cows grazing on a meadow . . . ever seen 'em? (*He looks at the Mate.*) And if one loses the love, the dream of his life—

SMITTY: I doubt Joe's ever seen a cow, sir. (*To Joe.*) It's where canned milk comes from.

JOE: Every man to his taste, but if you don't mind my saying so, sir, with thirty years of shipping back of you, one piece of bad luck shouldn't make you blow the gaff.

CAPTAIN: Never lowered the boom before . . . getting old . . . (*He laughs.*) Thirty years! You're right, Joe. When I retire it'll be where I can see and smell the sea. The shipping business, that's one of the marvels of the brain of man. (*He taps a can of case oil.*) Better deck cargo than passengers.

SMITTY: (*Snickering, making the motion of throwing a crate overboard.*) You can jettison cargo.

CAPTAIN: (*Sharply.*) Not on this ship.

JOE: And t'hell with the Plimsoll mark and safety at sea. Four ways from the jack.

PEDRO: (*At the ladder.*) Scrap iron for Mussolini; airplane gas for the Limeys in Gibraltar. Insurance if we sink; profit if we don't. (*He spreads his hands expressively.*)

CAPTAIN: (*Ironically.*) Airtight. The compass boxed. Full floating. The Company can't lose. (*Bitterly.*) The Company never loses.

JOE: Hasn't—yet!

CAPTAIN: (*Considers Joe a moment, then crosses to the ladder.*) Hrumph!

SECOND OFFICER: (*Sticking his head out of Captain's house.*) Aye there, sir. (*The Captain turns quickly.*) The Saint Agnes's one hundred miles off, heading due South to get around the low area. Barometer keeps dropping.

CAPTAIN: (*Nods.*) Anything more, I'll be up in the wheel house. (*He goes up. The Second Officer re-enters the Captain's house.*)

JOE: Well, Mate, how's your head?

SMITTY: Gord Almighty! Let's put on our Jesus shoes and walk home. (*He casually drops a lifebelt on the deck.*)

MATE: (*Doggedly, as they go to steps at right, each one loaded, with gear.*) Lots of ships overloaded. They do it all the time . . . too much. But she'll make it all right. She's . . . she's seaworthy. (*He goes off self-consciously.*)

JOE: (*Following him.*) Yeah. She's like the Letty B.—an old freighter out of Frisco. Everytime she came in

you could hear the owners groaning all the way up the Embarcadero.

(*Smitty drops back, waits, then stows the lifebelt back of some case oil. The Bos'n, a tall, spare blue-nose from the Newfoundland Banks, comes down the ladder from the bridge. Unobserved, he watches Smitty.*)

BOS'N: The Jinx! (*Smitty turns with a start, his face drawn and guilty.*) Ayeh! I spotted you when you came on ship, looking like all the souls left out on the Gulf was riding you. Ayeh, I knowed something'd go wrong . . . felt it in my stomik, like it was something I et. (*He crosses to the case oil, reaches back of it and pulls out the belt, kicking it across to Smitty.*) Watcha doing with that lifebelt? No passengers to sell it to aboard this hooker. (*Barking.*) Pick it up! (*Smitty reaches for it, balancing his burden.*) Where you stowed away the new ones? (*Threatening him with a fist.*) Speak up, you sea-going louse!

SMITTY: Who? Me? I don't know nothing about 'em. Honest t' Gord, Bos'n. That was old, no good; I was getting rid of it.

BOS'N: (*Herding him off.*) Ayeh, it'd keep your carcass afloat until you froze stiff anyway. Stow that gear and be clever-quick. Then go for'ard to help 'em batten down number 1 hatch. Make sure the hatch boards are set true before you tuck in the tarps. We're coming into some wind. Salt water'll be up to your waist down there. (*Bellowing over the forward rail.*) You, sailor, up here! (*He turns quickly, with a look at the sky and sea which is leaden gray and menacing, and moves like a cat across the deck, picks up a coil of rope at Right, goes off a few feet, makes an end fast and then strings it straight across to the head of the steps.*)

JOE: (*Coming up the steps.*) Well, Sharang, plenty of work on this ship.

BOS'N: Hey, you! Go below and break out those extra tarpaulins. Take Smitty with you, damn Jinx.

JOE: The hell! (*Indicating the bridge.*) What the idea, taking it on the beam?

BOS'N: Old Man's orders. He's holding her straight on course.

JOE: Cheesus, does he think she's on tracks?

BOS'N: Ayeh . . . (*He spits.*) Afore we know it, he'll be riding the old hulk bottom up. Two Jinxes on one ship, Dyin' Jesus!

JOE: The Old Man's no Jinx. No mariner afloat could've helped that.

BOS'N: Mebbe. But whatever, he's plumb daft. (*Sharply.*) Move, goddamn it. You heard me. I didn't stutter.

JOE: Starting your fog horn early, ain't you?

BOS'N: Gotta string life-lines, tighten up the cargo, batten down the hatches. Me, with three able seamen and the scrapings of the beach on as short a crew as a twelve hundred ton laker ever carried!

JOE: I'll move, Sharang, but don't push me around, see? (*Smiling.*) How many tarps you figure we'll need? (*Looking at the sky and sea.*) Plenty, to look at her. It was like this one time on the China Sea . . .

BOS'N: (*Cutting in.*) Four on each, for'ard; three aft. And watch that Jinx to see that the covers are snug and the wedges fast. (*Joe goes off, left. The Bos'n runs the*

rope back and across to the rail near the lifeboat, then down and across and off, left.)

(In a moment, the Second Officer comes out of the Captain's house, looks fore and aft, then crosses to the lifeboat. In a moment he is back, slows to a casual walk, sways with the ship. He sees the Boatswain.)

SECOND OFFICER: Where's the Old Man?

BOS'N: (Coming on.) Up in the wheel house.

SECOND OFFICER: Okay . . . Storm area from Lisbon west to the Azores, moving west and south. (He is thrown violently against the life rope. He yells, teeth flashing in an excited grin.) Here it is now. A whole gale! (The postures of the men indicate that the ship is awash to starboard.)

BOS'N: (Working himself rapidly along the rope bel-lows for'ard.) Stand by those hatches . . . Joe! Where's Smitty?

SECOND OFFICER: (As the ship rolls back.) She comes back slow.

BOS'N: (Yelling.) Aye, there's water on the for'ard deck.

SECOND OFFICER: (Crawling along the ropes.) The hatches are tight, aren't they?

BOS'N: Shore. She'll be streaming water like a mermaid's hair.

SECOND OFFICER: The radio! Gotta contact the Saint Agnes . . . see what else I can pick up. (As he re-enters the Captain's house.) Get position and direction. . .

MATE: (Coming up steps.) Where's the Old Man? Running in the trough of the sea with this cargo is risky. We're fair heavy for such weather.

BOS'N: There be such things as schedules and coal bills, Mate . . . can't lose a mile. The damn ship works hard enough for every knot she gains. Mebbe she can stand it. . .

MATE: Yes, for God's sake, but he ought to head her more to port instead of taking the sea on the beam. She's twisting with the roll. (The ship shakes as the nose goes down.) She'll kick the stern out if he doesn't! (He starts up the ladder.)

BOS'N: (Yelling to Mate.) Tell the Old Man it's moving west and south.

(An Oiler and a Negro Fireman come up the steps and stagger across the deck going aft.)

Hey, you, where you going?

OILER: (Pointing to the fidley hatch.) Below.

BOS'N: Never mind that. Chief says he can git along for a spell with you on deck. Go give Joe and Smitty a hand with those hatch covers. (As the two men go back down the steps he yells.) Put a rope on those two A.B.'s. We'll need 'em. And have a care with the tarps. They's old and rotten . . . been here since the war.

(The Oiler and the Fireman disappear. The Bos'n is thrown against the ropes, holds on, works his way back across to left. Black, Chief Engineer and a precise Scotsman, runs on from left, sees the Bos'n, yells.)

CHIEF ENGINEER: Where's my crew? I didn't say you could keep 'em all day. How can I run an engine room with one Christ-bitten fireman and a rum-dum engineer?

BOS'N: Easy, Mr. Black. Easy does it. They're for'ard.

We're putting on extra tarps to save you trouble later on. CHIEF ENGINEER: (As Captain Luke drops down the ladder.) Verra well. And shall I pull the fires and rig sail for the bloody tramp! Half'n hour more of this and the carrgo'll be moving in the hold like a troupe of waltzing dogs.

CAPTAIN: Full steam, full speed, Blackie, and keep standing by to throttle her down so she won't kick her stern out when her nose goes under.

CHIEF ENGINEER: (Following the Captain.) It's the blasted case oil. She's heavy all over. We'd ha' done better to put to sea with the dock. Are ye ready to chuck the deck load?

CAPTAIN: And you a Scotchman! Get down below and leave it to me. We'll be through this area in no time. (Slapping him on the back. The Chief Engineer goes off, left, holding to the life rope.) If you ever get tired of the sea, try farming.

CHIEF ENGINEER: (Reappears, crosses after him, speaks at white heat.) I heard what ye said . . . about farmin'. . .

CAPTAIN: 'Twas the wind, Blackie.

CHIEF ENGINEER: . . . As a fully certificated engineer, I resent y'r insinuation. (Seriously.) Mon, what's all this talk of farmin' an' the like! The crew's uneasy. I can see y're a mariner, if ye'll put y'r mind to't!

CAPTAIN: It's not mariners they want, Blackie, but businessmen that'll put the ship through with the heaviest cargo in the quickest time at the least expense . . . and to hell with the crew.

CHIEF ENGINEER: Aye, and since when was it otherwise? But it's no submarine you have in your command. One ship you've had go down under you; will you have another, trying to be a businessman first and a ship's officer afterward?

CAPTAIN: If it be the will of God.

CHIEF ENGINEER: God nothing. Ye an' y'r kind ha' made God a convenience for your bloody capitalism, if you want my word for it. Aye, below we keep wurrkin', stokin', trimmin', oilin', an' all in order an' up here we ha' brains that are addled by greed and womanish talk about cows and posies.

CAPTAIN: (Sternly.) My responsibility. I'll take it. Get below, or I'll order you put in irons.

CHIEF ENGINEER: (Stung, goes close to him, his tongue thick with anger.) I'll go, noo, and if ye log me wi' a single wurrud iv that . . . I'll ha' y'r blood.

CAPTAIN: (Laughs.) Not a word. It was a . . . figure of speech.

CHIEF ENGINEER: Good. (He crosses to left, looking back once at the Captain, who enters the Captain's house. He is bumped into by the Bos'n, who is carrying a 2-inch rope. They stagger and clutch for the life-line.) Send down my crew! Two men ye leave me; the rest doing dirty wurrk on deck and an addled captain asking for full speed when a mon can't stand still long enough to swing a shovel.

BOS'N: Creepy's gone below. Jake's battening down the after-hatches. He'll be down soon.

CHIEF ENGINEER: Send 'im down! Send 'em all down, if they ha'n't been carried overboard.

BOS'N: Aye. (*The Chief Engineer goes off. Joe, in oilskins, comes up the steps.*)

JOE: Well, Sharang, your damn tarps are on and a hell of a lot of good they'll do. This crate's taking half a fathom of ocean every clip and twisting like a snake.

BOS'N: Go give Jake a hand at the hatches aft.

JOE: (*Grinning.*) Not me! I don't want an argument in this weather. I'm going to get my whack of beans.

BOS'N: (*Pointing off, left.*) Dyin' Jesus, what's this? (*He stares at the Mess Boy, who comes on, staggering, green, lugging a mess bucket and a lifebelt, followed by the Cook.*) Hey, Waddy, watchu aiming to do with that lifebelt?

COOK: (*Bawling.*) Gangway! Hot fat coming through. One drop'll kill you!

MESS BOY: Cook's orders. (*To Cook, pointing in dismay to the ladder.*) You mean, up there?

COOK: Yanh, up there, Scenery Bum, and don't spill a drop. (*He too carries a mess bucket, but expertly. He turns to the Bos'n.*) Signed up to see the world. Cooking and such like don't appeal to him in this weather.

MESS BOY: (*Tries the ladder, turns.*) What'll I do with this? (*He indicates the lifebelt.*) Couldn't I leave it here? I'll only be a minute.

COOK: Carry it in your teeth, sonny. (*To Bos'n again.*) Wellington Waddington Oop, Jr. With that moniker you got to keep a lifebelt handy or you'll sink like a bucket a lead.

JOE: Drop it, lad. I'll watch it for you.

MESS BOY: (*To Joe as Cook crosses to Captain's house.*) Thanks. I thought it was premature. (*He manages to make it up the ladder.*)

BOS'N: Get ridda that slop, Cookee, and lend a hand. We're lashing up deck cargo and it's a good time to get your pants wet.

COOK: Oh, no, I'm Cook of this ship, not a lousy deck-hand.

BOS'N: You'll come, or I'll come and get you. Which'll it be?

COOK: (*Tapping the case oil.*) How'd you like to get blown to hell about five miles nearer the Azores than we are right now? (*He pauses for his effect, turns, and goes in the Captain's house.*)

BOS'N: (*Laughs, turns to Joe.*) Come on, Sailor. Got to save Mr. Rockefeller's oil for him.

JOE: It's Royal Dutch. That makes it English . . . and us twin admirals in the Siamese Navy!

(*The Negro Fireman comes on from the steps, right, followed by the Oiler.*)

OILER: (*Pointing to lifeboat.*) That's the new one. Pick out your seat. (*To Bos'n.*) Too early to make reservations, Sharang?

JOE: How about something nice amidships, on the port side so the sun won't get in your eyes?

FIREMAN: Boy I got a girl in Harlem making feet for stockings. Hope there ain't no Jim Crow on this ship!

BOS'N: Blackie's looking for you. Down the fidley hatch with you. And don't worry because the Old Man ain't taking chances.

OILER: That ain't what I heard. (*To Fireman.*) C'mon, let's get our ditty bags and hang 'em around our necks.

(*As they go off, lower left.*) I got a watch I want to wrap up watertight. God, I bet that water's cold. (*He shivers.*)

FIREMAN: (*With a chuckle.*) Wait till Creeping Jesus down below hears about this.

(*There is a heavy dull slap forward. The ship is jolted like a cow hit between the eyes by a hammer. The men exchange quick glances and start working along the lifelines toward the rail at right. Oiler and Fireman reappear.*)

BOS'N: The hatches! Dyin' Jesus!

JOE: (*First to rail at right, leans far over.*) Number 1 hatch stove in. She's flooding. Where the hell's the Old Man. . . . He oughta turn her hard a' port, bring her into the wind! (*Goes toward Captain's house.*)

VOICE: (*Calling high and clear.*) Man overboard!

(*Joe and Bos'n freeze.*)

BOS'N: (*Cupping hands, bellowing to the bridge.*) Man overboard!

MATE'S VOICE: (*From bridge.*) Where away?

JOE: (*Yelling from the rail.*) Astern . . . to sta'board . . .

BOS'N: (*Leaping to the Captain's house and pounding on the door.*) Man overboard! (*He runs off, left.*)

MATE'S VOICE: (*Fainter, calling to Pedro.*) Stop her, Spanish . . . full astern . . . half speed and hard a' port . . . and bring her up slow. . . . Man overboard. . . .

PEDRO'S VOICE: Aye, aye, sir.

CAPTAIN: (*At the door.*) Man overboard?

(*The Cook appears behind the Captain.*)

FIREMAN: (*At the rail.*) It's Jake!

CAPTAIN: (*Calling to Mate on bridge.*) Can you see him, Mate? Is he swimming?

MATE'S VOICE: Aye, sir . . . making for a doughnut. . . . (*To Pedro.*) Port! Pedro. Hard over!

OILER: (*Leaning far out over the rail.*) C'mon, you lazy pot-bellied square-head! Swim for it!

COOK: (*Hands cupped to mouth.*) Grab it! Make for it! Swim, damn you!

JOE: Hope he kicked his boots off, the backward brother. We'll have him on the picket line yet!

COOK: (*Pleading.*) Not so fast, Jake! Save yourself! I got a drink. . . .

OILER: Christ Jesus, he'll never make it!

FIREMAN: Swim, you good for nuthin' clam-digger! . . .

JOE: Wind's carrying it. . . . Look. . . . Oh. Jesus! Give the hunky another chance!

COOK: Attaboy! Come 'n get it!

JOE: He's closer! . . .

FIREMAN: C'mon, Jake! We got a fire waiting!

(*The men shift from the rail upstage, moving around to extreme left as their eyes follow Jake while the ship slowly comes about, rolling far to starboard. In the meantime, the Mess Boy comes down the ladder, picks up his lifebelt and walks toward rail, carrying the belt close to his body.*)

MESS BOY: (*Staring, horrified.*) I know him. . . . It's somebody . . . I . . . know. . . .

CAPTAIN: (*Calling to Mate.*) Full speed as you come about . . . and keep her up to windward.

MATE'S VOICE: Aye, aye, sir. . . . But she's slow. . . .

(*The Captain turns to look aft. Smitty, drenched,*

*staggers up the steps, right. He is battered, scared.)*

SMITTY: *(In a choked voice.)* Cap'n. . . .

JOE: *(Exultantly.)* He's got it! Good boy!

OILER: Pull on it, Jake! Grab it!

FIREMAN: Hold her, Jake!

COOK: Come on, you big slob . . . get on top 'er!

SMITTY: Cap'n Luke. . . . Cap'n. . . .

JOE: *(Whipping round.)* The boat . . . the port lifeboat. . . . *(They start off, lower left.)* Joe summons Smitty with a wave of his arm.) We can make it, Cap'n. He's got it . . . we can get him. . . .

VOICE FROM BELOW: *(For'ard.)* The hatch!

BOS'N: *(Running on, from left, yelling.)* What about it, Cap'n? Shall we lower 'way the boat?

SMITTY: *(Hand on Captain's sleeve.)* Listen, f'r Chris' sake, the hatch! . . . 's gone! Stove in! . . . She's filling . . . pouring in. . . .

JOE: That can wait.

CAPTAIN: *(Calling.)* Do you still see him, Mate?

MATE'S VOICE: Aye, sir, holding on . . . five hundred yards off the port bow. . . .

CAPTAIN: *(Calling.)* Quarter speed. *(He looks about as if in a daze, turns to Bos'n.)* Well, Bos'n, can we get a boat away in this sea?

BOS'N: Which side? *(The other men crowd about him.)*

CAPTAIN: Either.

BOS'N: Sta-board, aye, sir, if you'll come about and give us the lee of the ship.

OILER: Wassamatter with the port lifeboat?

BOS'N: *(Shortly.)* Patched with tarpaper and paint . . . no good!

CAPTAIN: Can you get back?

JOE: *(Breaking in.)* Christ, yes, if Jake can hold on that long. You can pull us aboard with a line.

BOS'N: I'll go.

OILER: Yeah, me, too. . . .

FIREMAN: Sure. . . .

JOE: How about it, Smitty? And you, Cookee?

SMITTY: We-ell, how you gonna get back aboard?

COOK: Oh, no. I'm no sailor, not me.

SMITTY: The hatch . . . center cleat's tore off . . . cross-batten's gone. . . . Whole damn ocean's falling into the for'ard hold.

CAPTAIN: *(Sharply, glad of the excuse.)* Bos'n, take these men for'ard to cover Number One hatch. . . .

BOS'N: *(After a pause.)* Aye, sir. *(To men.)* Come on. Get going.

JOE: *(Standing his ground.)* What about Jake?

CAPTAIN: I'm giving you an order.

JOE: You're going to leave him riding that doughnut when you got a crew ready to put off to pick him up?

CAPTAIN: *(Angrily.)* You damn well know we've only one good lifeboat.

JOE: What you saving it for?

CAPTAIN: *(Screaming, raising his hands as if to strike.)* Get for'ard, man! All of you! Don't you think I know it's murder? What can I do?

JOE: Shove off! Go overboard! . . . Dump ashes! . . . *(Indicating Smitty and the Cook.)* Aye, and garbage, too. *(He turns to the others.)* Well, does Jake get left? *(A pause. The four men exchange looks deliberately.)*

BOS'N: Come on. The hatch. It's the hatch or all of us. *(They hesitate a moment, agree, and go off, their heads turning as they watch the Captain from the corners of their eyes.)*

OILER: *(As they file down steps, right.)* Gutless! Christ . . . sending the hunky to hell on a doughnut!

FIREMAN: *(Bending over Joe as they go down the steps.)* Joe, what you say? What we do?

JOE: *(Quickly.)* The hatch . . . then . . . we see.

MESS BOY: *(To Cook.)* I didn't have the nerve. I couldn't say it. I wouldn't have had the nerve to go! *(Almost crying in self-accusation.)* I didn't have time to think . . . it happened so quickly. . . .

COOK: Aw, dry up. Nobody asked you.

CAPTAIN: *(At the sound of their voices.)* You, Cook, boy! Up for'ard . . . on the hatch! *(The boy goes forward with alacrity, eager to regain his self-esteem. Cook goes sullenly.)*

PEDRO'S VOICE: *(From the bridge.)* Cap'n, Chief's calling. Water in Number One hold. Cargo's moving.

MATE'S VOICE: *(Bawling.)* Break it out to windward, you lubbers! Now! Oh, Jesus!

CAPTAIN: *(As Mate hurries down the ladder.)* Where you going?

MATE: Give a hand with the damned tarps. The wind's tore one loose already, the blasted fools!

PEDRO'S VOICE: Chief's calling, Cap'n. . . .

MATE: *(At head of steps, right.)* For God's sake, sir, heave to . . . run half speed. We can't stand no more pounding.

CAPTAIN: *(To Pedro.)* Tell Blackie quarter speed . . . keep the pumps going. We're getting the hatch battened down. And keep her into the wind. . . .

*(The Mate goes off.)*

PEDRO'S VOICE: Aye, sir. Into the wind, quarter speed.

*(The Second Officer comes out the door, notes changed course and lull in the gale, crosses to the Captain.)*

SECOND OFFICER: Captain Luke! *(The Captain turns quickly.)* I sent "stand by" to the Saint Agnes. She's bearing down, coming Sou'west by South.

CAPTAIN: Whose orders?

SECOND OFFICER: *(Insolently.)* Mine. It'll take her four, five hours to get to us as it is. The damn coffin's rolling like a 'gator now.

CAPTAIN: We've put about. The hatch is being battened down.

SECOND OFFICER: They won't last. Wait till we get back on course. *(Suspiciously.)* You aren't backing out, are you?

CAPTAIN: One man dead already. . . .

SECOND OFFICER: *(Eagerly.)* It's our chance.

CAPTAIN: I remember too much as it is. Sometimes at night I see that baby swimming like a dog into the dark. . . . *(He shudders.)*

SECOND OFFICER: By God, you've got to.

CAPTAIN: The inquiry . . . the stupid questions. Even a farm. . . . *(Clutching at an excuse.)* The crew knows too much.

SECOND OFFICER: Let the lawyers worry.

CAPTAIN: *(Hopefully.)* She'll sink sometime anyway. Wait. See what happens. She's down by the head.

SECOND OFFICER: Goddam it, on this course we're *running away* from the Saint Agnes! You'll lose both ship and crew.

CAPTAIN: You'd put about in this sea!

SECOND OFFICER: On course. Dead for Gibraltar. (*He laughs shortly.*) They'll call it "an error in judgment."

CAPTAIN: (*Walking away from him.*) Aye. And then "retired!" . . . I wanted something else. Even as a lad. . . .

SECOND OFFICER: (*Pressing him.*) Well, you got it. Master of the Western Belle. The Shenandoah. Kid Captain of the Line!

CAPTAIN: (*Turning.*) Then . . . the Eleana!

SECOND OFFICER: Sure. (*Taunting him.*) A floating hotel. Master of fifteen hundred people . . . a small town. Power of life and—(*He breaks off.*)

CAPTAIN: (*Wheeling around.*) Yes, at fifty dollars a week! The crew was handed to me . . . overworked and underpaid, not understanding sea talk, half of 'em . . . what I'd mean. All true, too true, what came out at the trial. Cheap flashy wood in First Class, the damn draperies. . . . A cigarette in a wastebasket. . . . God knows! Fire came up those stairways; passageways were funnels. They were jumping off like rats. (*Intensely.*) No one on God's earth could stop it. (*He turns away.*)

SECOND OFFICER: (*Following him.*) No passengers this time and the lifeboat's ready.

CAPTAIN: They pull your backbone out like a wire from a string of beads, little by little, year by year. To get ahead. . . . I wanted my boy to go to college. . . .

SECOND OFFICER: (*In front of him.*) Put her on course. The rest'll be easy.

CAPTAIN: (*Walking away.*) For the Company, for loyalty . . . they called me all the names. I was tried, condemned, beached. For that, they can ask *me* to do this . . . to do anything. (*Turning.*) I am an honorable man, Gordon, and I have to do this. But you . . . you're young. What have they got on you?

SECOND OFFICER: I'll have it on them. The Company'll know I know why the course was held Sou'east by East. I'll have a berth for a long time.

CAPTAIN: (*With sarcasm.*) The beginning of a successful career!

SECOND OFFICER: When you think of the tricks and orders that are thought up ashore! *We* have to gamble *our* lives—putting out in an open boat in that sea—for the dirty little thousands and hundreds. (*Indicating himself.*) But when the stake is millions!

CAPTAIN: Some day, with luck, you'll be Commodore of the Line.

SECOND OFFICER: (*Understanding the cut, but topping it.*) Aye, that's how my course is laid. And why not! To sit ashore thinking up ways to make money . . . dipping my hands into all the ways it's made, up to my wrists, up to my elbows. . . . Aye, swimming in it before I'm done! (*Urgently.*) It's a gamble, Captain, with marked cards, loaded dice. And we're playing with the house.

CAPTAIN: But we play with men's lives and our own honor.

SECOND OFFICER: Too late for that talk. (*His right*

*hand is in his coat pocket.*)

CAPTAIN: (*Noting that.*) You'd drive me to it, if it came to't.

SECOND OFFICER: Aye, I'd do that. (*They stand tensely.*)

CAPTAIN: (*Putting out his hand, speaking in a tone that commands obedience.*) Give me my gun.

(*A pause. Second Officer hesitates. The Mate appears on steps, right, followed by Joe.*)

SECOND OFFICER: (*Falls back, speaks in a high relieved voice.*) The Saint Agnes is four hours off, maybe three. As near as I can reckon. . . . (*Joe looks at him. The Captain turns.*)

MATE: (*Oblivious.*) Both for'ard hatches tight. They'll hold if we keep quarter speed and heading into it.

(*The Oiler, the Fireman and Smitty in oilskins come up the steps, right, followed by the Cook and Mess Boy, the latter very wilted.*)

JOE: Have you sent an SOS?

SECOND OFFICER: A "stand-by."

JOE: (*To Captain.*) What for? If we stay into the wind, she'll ride, if we jettison the deck cargo. (*The men, except Smitty, draw close.*)

OILER: Aye, dump the frigging case oil!

COOK: Blow her to hell!

SECOND OFFICER: We're going back on course. (*A pause. They stare incredulously.*)

JOE: (*To Captain.*) Is that right, sir?

CAPTAIN: That's right.

COOK: Attaboy!

SECOND OFFICER: (*Sternly, to Cook.*) Get below, you! (*The Cook goes, followed by the Mess Boy.*)

JOE: (*To Captain.*) Why?

MATE: (*Hysterically.*) He's throwing her away . . . sending her to the bottom of the sea. She's a good ship . . . seaworthy. She'd take it, deck load and all, if you'd keep into the wind . . . a good ship . . . seaworthy. . . . (*He staggers off, holding to the lifeline.*)

JOE: We have something to say about this.

CAPTAIN: (*Hard.*) I'm master of this ship.

FIREMAN: We're the crew.

JOE: This ship's our job. We've done our work, short crew and all. It's a hell of a risk . . . no need.

OILER: (*Shrilly.*) It's barratry, that's what it is. (*Shock, pause.*)

FIREMAN: Sure. They *want* the ship to go down!

CAPTAIN: (*Angrily, to Oiler.*) You, get down, report to Blackie. (*He looks at the two A.B.'s, as Oiler goes slowly.*) Whose trick at the wheel?

JOE: Mine.

CAPTAIN: (*Instantly.*) Get aft, lend a hand with the hatches. (*To Smitty.*) Smitty, relieve Pedro at the wheel. (*Smitty steps forward one pace.*) Stand by to put about. Resume course and full speed. Tell Blackie to stand by the throttle himself to catch her when she pitches. (*Smitty stares. He shouts.*) Did you hear me? Get to that wheel!

SMITTY: (*Measuring the distance to the lifeboat.*) Aye, aye, sir. (*He goes up the ladder, and off.*)

CAPTAIN: (*Turning on Joe.*) Well, sailor, are you paralyzed or are your pants dirty? Wild talk on the beach

and—"organizing"—hasn't changed the sea. I'm master here; I give the orders and I take the responsibility. (*In white anger.*) Get aft! (*Derisively.*) If you're so anxious for her to float. . . .

JOE: (*Levelly.*) Aye, sir . . . if you're keeping her floating.

SECOND OFFICER: (*Calling.*) Take the Boogie along! He'll be good with those tarps.

FIREMAN: (*Turning, crossing back.*) You can't call me names, boy, not to my face. I guess I didn't hear right. Ain't that it?

JOE: (*In warning.*) Phil!

FIREMAN: I ain't afraid . . . nothing. . . . (*The ship rolls. They all stagger.*) Ain't near's afraid as some guys I know. . . .

(*The Fireman, crouching, takes another step. The Second Officer, hand in pocket, steps back toward the Captain's door.*)

JOE: Forget it, Phil. C'mon; we have plenty to do.

FIREMAN: (*As he halts.*) But nobody's going to get away with calling me dirty names. (*He turns toward Joe and they go off.*)

CAPTAIN: (*Relieved, turns his raw temper on the grinning Second Officer.*) And you, Shark-face, get back on that radio. That's all you're good for. Keep her open. I'll be on the bridge.

SECOND OFFICER: (*Salutes ironically.*) Aye, aye, sir. (*Goes in the door.*)

CAPTAIN: (*Pushing past as Pedro comes down the ladder.*) Make way! Couldn't trust that A.B. alone at the wheel if we were anchored! (*Calling back.*) Find the Mate. Send him up.

(*Pedro follows the Captain with his eyes into the wheelhouse, then turns quickly, cautiously.*)

PEDRO: Hey, Joe! (*He glances again toward the bridge, leans over the rail, right, then crosses toward center stage as Joe comes on followed by the Oiler and the Fireman. The men are cat-like, alert, aware of the bridge and the Captain's door.*) Why's Smitty doing your trick?

JOE: Sure, guess why!

OILER: The Old Man's suck!

PEDRO: The hell. . . . That wheel . . . (*He flexes his arms, easing the muscles, stops half way as he feels the ship begin to come about, listing far over as she turns. They brace themselves against the lifelines.*) My God, he's bringing her about . . . back into the trough of the sea! (*They are tense as they steady themselves, the howling gale in their faces.*)

FIREMAN: Sweet Jesus! Try walking on that water!

(*The Bos'n comes on, looks at them, at the sea.*)

OILER: (*Indicating the bridge.*) He's crazier 'n hell!

JOE: Crazy like a fox.

PEDRO: He can't do it! Too heavy for'ard. It'll break her back!

OILER: Try'n stop him!

FIREMAN: All we gotta do now is row him ashore!

JOE: (*As the ship rolls far over to port.*) Oh, no, he's sent "stand by" to the Saint Agnes. We get a free ride home on another Company crate.

OILER: (*As the sea pounds across the for'ard deck.*)

Whoosh! . . . He'd better make it SOS.

PEDRO: (*Answering Joe.*) If we get off the ship!

OILER: How far away is she?

JOE: Plenty.

BOS'N: (*Slowly.*) Ayeh, so that's the lay!

OILER: Cheesus, that lifeboat don't look good to me!

JOE: A-1. They fixed her up special for us.

FIREMAN: Big hearted buzzards!

BOS'N: (*Casting up accounts in his mind.*) Ayeh, there was storm warnings when we shoved off. Nor'east gales from the Capes to Portland. I saw 'em myself on the Second Mate's table. But we missed it close to shore. . . .

JOE: (*With a gesture to the Second Officer inside the door.*) He's in, all right—shares.

OILER: Why don't somebody divvy up with us! Cripes, could I use it!

BOS'N: Dyin' Jesus! When I sign off this v'yage I'm going back to the Banks and the trawlers! My missus looks like hell in black!

(*There is the heavy dull slap forward. The ship rolls far over and hangs there.*)

FIREMAN: There she goes!

OILER: Better get down . . . help Blackie. Creepin' Jesus'll be busy SOS-ing God.

PEDRO: (*Sharply.*) Wait!

OILER: What about orders?

JOE: We got one foot on the plank and another on a fish gut and he talks about orders!

PEDRO: Our wages stop when this ship goes down.

JOE: Goddam right. The Company won't have to worry; they get insurance—

BOS'N: Ayeh, plenty, I don't doubt.

PEDRO: The Old Man gets his farm.

FIREMAN: We get the beach.

JOE: Or the fishes.

OILER: Like hell! I seen these floating graveyards before, sent to sea to go down. (*He turns to the bridge, shakes his fist.*) Goddam it, keep her afloat this trip!

JOE: *We* could do it.

FIREMAN: I sho' don't like getting my feet wet on my own time.

PEDRO: What do you say, Sharang?

BOS'N: (*Slowly.*) Ayeh. It might be done, if there was the will. . . . (*Looking up at bridge.*)

JOE: (*Striking his fists together.*) 'Swat I say. . . .

OILER: (*To Bos'n.*) Chees, I'm with you!

BOS'N: (*Eyes on bridge.*) Up there.

JOE: (*Flashing, as the Mate, unnoticed by the men, comes up from the steps at right.*) If there was the will right here!

BOS'N: N-no. Not that. The laws of the sea. . . .

PEDRO: (*Quickly.*) Who made them?

MATE: (*Distract.*) Water in the stokehold . . . bulkheads buckling. . . . Oh, Jesus!

JOE: (*To Bos'n.*) Where's your Goddam Yankee pepper, sailor?

MATE: (*Becoming aware of the men, turns on them.*)

What're you doing? Get to work! God send your souls to hell, she's filling. She'll go down. What you standing there for?

JOE: When she's hove to, we'll get to work. (*The men,*



*except the Bos'n, crowd back of Joe, supporting him.)*

OILER: What'd you want us to do—start bailing?

FIREMAN: Yeah! Ask Cookee for a spoon!

MATE: What'd you say? What's that? *(He crosses frantically to Bos'n.)* D'you hear them? Make 'em get to work. *(To the men.)* It's orders. He knows what he's doing. He's master. *(They stand their ground. He says entreatingly.)* It's mutiny!

JOE: It's our wages, our jobs; or the beach.

FIREMAN: Cold murder. Look at that water!

OILER: It's barratry!

BOS'N: No sense sending her down!

PEDRO: *(Ironically.)* Safety at sea! . . .

JOE: How's he know we'll all get off and aboard the Saint Agnes?

OILER: The ship! Our jobs! Our lives!

FIREMAN: We could save the ship, Mate!

PEDRO: Save our ship!

OILER: Stinking grates and all.

MATE: *(Tempted.)* Save our ship . . . my ship.

JOE: We can save her.

PEDRO: We can heave her to and pull her through.

MATE: *(Frightened.)* It's mutiny, Bos'n, you know it's mutiny, don't you? Where's the Old Man? The hatches are leaking.

JOE: We heave her to, she'll stop shipping water!

OILER: Easy! Once she's out of the trough of the sea.

MATE: She would sail to the Azores . . . repairs. . . .

JOE: *(Instantly.)* That's it!

PEDRO: Mate, are you with us?

MATE: *(To the Bos'n.)* The ship . . . Bos'n, how about it? *(A pause.)*

BOS'N: *(Slowly joining the men.)* Case like this, I'd do time for mutiny.

FIREMAN: Hot damn! Where's the Chief? Where's the gang? Goddam, gotta tell 'em. *(He starts off, left.)*

JOE: *(Calling after him.)* Tell 'em to get up top, quick. Tell the firemen, the cook. Get that scenery bum on deck, the rum-dum engineer. . . .

OILER: Tell the lad to leave his lifebelt home. He won't be needing it. Oh, Jesus! Oh, Lizzie!

COOK: *(Coming on from left, half-turned, yelling after the Fireman.)* Yanh. . . . Lookit where you going or you'll break your Goddam neck. Down the fidley hatch and stay there till the boilers blow up. *(As he sees the group of men.)* Hey, are we shoving off or do I have to cook another mess on this bleeding blasted load of scrap iron and corruption!

JOE: *(With a warning gesture to the bridge.)* Damp 'er down, Cookee. . . .

BOS'N: *(Disgusted.)* Drunk again!

COOK: Yanh, drunk, and donchu wish you had it? *(To Joe.)* Grog for all hands, that's sumphin to strike for. I'm twice the man drunk I am sober.

JOE: And only half a sailor at that. Stop the drip. You with us?

COOK: *(As the Mess Boy comes on from left.)* Huh? Hell, no! I ain't saving no ship! Sink her. Blow her to hell! Munitions, war materials below and above decks . . . for imperialist expansion, to rivet the chains of murdering Fascist and British imperialism for another

generation. Never! No, sir! *(Trying to take a noble stance.)* Up Ireland, up Abyssinia, up Egypt, up ye brave boys of the Barcelona gutters, ye sailors of Marseilles and be damned to the dirty cowards that'd hold our hands. Let 'er sink and a good thing, too. *(Confidentially.)* I' been fixing to blow the maggotty crate to hell myself, but. . . . *(Suddenly near tears.)* The damn kid won't let me. *(He points accusingly to the scenery bum.)* He won't let me. . . . Sober, 'at's what's wrong with me. I ain't got the guts to sacrifice a few sailors for the Cause. Nobody can git determination from vaniller extract. What I need is a drop of rum. Then. . . . Wheyowee! Let 'er go down! Let 'er go Gallagher! We stay aboard and die like heroes!

OILER: Aw, Cripes, shut up!

CAPTAIN: *(Bellowing from bridge.)* What's going on there? What's this all about Mate? *(They turn, faces upraised.)* Hey, you men, I gave you orders. Get aft to the hatches! Move! Joe, Pedro, Bos'n! Move, God-damn it . . . look alive! Why aren't you below?

JOE: Spread out; don't bunch up; take it easy.

BOS'N: Ayeh, keep clear!

CAPTAIN: *(Coming down the ladder, facing them.)* I'll log you. . . . I'll log every damn one of you! Get aft to the hatches if you want to keep her afloat! *(To Mate.)* Get to the wheel . . . take it over. *(The Mate, relieved, hurries up the ladder.)*

COOK: T'hell with it! *(Reeling.)* Go ahead n' sink her, Cap'n. . . . You'n me got guts. . . . Whadda we care about lifeboats, lifebelts n' all that slop! *(Throwing his arms vaguely for the Captain's shoulders to save himself from falling.)* Stan' together, Cap'n, bottoms up!

CAPTAIN: *(To the men, as he sends the Cook reeling across the deck.)* Goddamn you, didn't you hear me? *(His voice cracking into a screech.)* Are you going to get aft or aren't you? *(No answer. The Captain looks at each. His eyes go to the door. Attempting off-handedness.)* Very well. That means an SOS.

JOE: The hell it does. *(He barks sharply.)* Bos'n!

*(As the Captain makes for the door, the three crash together against the door of the Captain's house, fall back, struggling.)*

*(Smitty drops down the ladder slowly, taking in the scene.)*

CAPTAIN: *(To Joe.)* Is this your idea, to mutiny on a sinking ship?

JOE: She ain't gonna sink. We're going to heave her to and ride it out.

*(Blackie appears at left with two of his crew. Pedro goes toward the ladder, followed by the Bos'n. Smitty makes for the lifeboat, stealthily.)*

CHIEF ENGINEER: *(Roaring.)* Noo, will ye listen, Cap'n, when the whole bloody crew has the guts to face ye? Heave her to or ye'll not have a screw turning over nor a rudder to steer her by. Rivets in the for'ard bulk-heads sheared off wi' the strain of the seas and the burden in the bow. Water coming through and a scant three feet to the fire boxes.

SECOND OFFICER: *(Stepping out the Captain's door, to Pedro and the Bos'n.)* Get away from that ladder. *(He has the gun out. To the Captain.)* I sent SOS. *(The*

*Fireman starts edging round toward the Second Officer's flank.)*

CAPTAIN: That's fine! *(He turns to the crew.)* All right, stand by to abandon ship. *(To Blackie.)* If your men have the guts, draw the fires so we won't be blown to hell when the water gets to the boilers. *(Smitty dashes quickly out of sight down the steps.)* Bos'n, rig a sea anchor, so we won't drift broadside to.

JOE: Don't move, Sharang. *(To the Chief Engineer.)* Let the fires be. *(To Captain.)* We know there's a hook-up between the way you've run this ship, and the stinking farm you been yarning about. That's swell for you.

SECOND OFFICER: *(Emotions fuzzing his watchfulness.)* Pipe down, you un-American anarchist bastard. . . .

COOK: *(Shrilly.)* He ain't no anarchist! I'm the anarchist. I'm the only anarchist on this ship. . . .

CHIEF ENGINEER: No more are you!

BOS'N: *(Drawling, to Second Officer.)* Be careful of that gun, sonny. If it goes off, it only shoots six times. *(The Second Officer's eyes flicker as his head turns slightly, against his will, toward the Bos'n.)*

JOE: *(To Captain.)* We're selfish about this. Just like you. Besides not liking cold water, we need the money . . . never mind why.

CHIEF ENGINEER: If ye wurr a canny mon, Cap'n, ye'd take the sailors' orders an' make like they wurr y'r own. When ye think of the inquiry n' the testimony of twelve fine seamen and engineers to the effect that ye acted like a fool, a madman or a criminal and that afore-said conduct did cause the ship to take water and thereafter to sink with total loss of vessel, cargo n' God knows how many lives, ye'd be inspired if ye was to move us a vote of thanks and heave her to without further argument.

*(To Joe.)* What are ye waiting for? Heave her to while we have life in the boilers.

JOE: That's right. Are we ready, Mates?

SECOND OFFICER: *(Gun levelled.)* The first man that moves gets it. Okay, Captain?

*(The Fireman pounces on him from the side and behind, both hands clamping on the Second Officer's right wrist, raising his hand and the gun high above their heads. The Second Officer fights hard, kicking, screaming, wild with rage.)*

FIREMAN: *(Forcing the Second Officer across the deck.)* Called me a name, didja? Leggo that gun, Florida boy, you's a hell of a long ways from Tampa, yeah, or even Georgah now. . . . Gimme that gun, 'fore I throw you both ovahbo'd. *(They are struggling at the rail.)* Shark poison, that's what you are. *(He makes as if to lift and throw the Second Officer over the rail. The Second Officer lets go the gun. The Fireman, still holding him, offers the gun to Joe, who holds it loosely and turns to the Captain.)*

JOE: Seconds count, Cap'n, in this sea. Will you heave to, or do we do it?

CHIEF ENGINEER: *(To Captain.)* Laboring men pick up your honor out of the filthy scuppers where you threw it away and are handing it back to you.

CAPTAIN: I can't eat honor.

SECOND OFFICER: *(With the Fireman standing watch over him.)* Let her go, Captain. Next time . . . with another crew. . . .

JOE: Oh, no! When we drop anchor at the Azores, at Gibraltar; when we sail into Genoa—and back to the States, by God—they'll know about you on every waterfront, in every focs'le and union hall on both coasts and all the seas there are. . . . The time's come when seamen have something to say about seamanship! *(To Captain.)* The owner'll be done with you, but not us. Last chance, Cap'n, to be a sailor! *(A pause.)*

CAPTAIN: It's last chance for me, whatever goes. *(To Second Officer, wearily.)* Cancel the SOS. Tell the Saint Agnes never mind; we're making round for the Azores under our own steam. You and your kind can try to sink her; I'll take the beach. *(To the men.)* I'm going to heave her to. *(He crosses toward the ladder and goes up, beckoning to Joe to follow.)*

*(The Fireman opens the Captain's door and helps the Second Officer through it.)*

*(As the Captain puts his foot on the ladder, Smitty stumbles on from left, two new tied lifebelts on, another under his arm and a small movie camera ready on tripod.)*

SMITTY: Hold it, everybody! . . . Wait a minute, I'll have everything set. See your pitchers in the news-reels soon's you get ashore. *(As he tries to aim camera.)* I gotta contrack for pitchers . . . every wreck I'm in. Hold it! *(Joe, at the ladder laughs. Others, as they go back to their stations, turn to laugh at Smitty.)* Hey, wot' t'hell's going on!

BOS'N: *(Crossing, flipping open the strings of Smitty's lifebelts, snatching the third from his arm and throwing it across the deck.)* New! Take 'em off. Get to work.

SMITTY: *(Divided between relief and new fears.)* Ain't we getting off? She's half-foundered already.

OILER: *(Pointing forward.)* She's turning! She'll do. *(They all look forward.)*

BOS'N: She'll damn well have to do.

JOE: *(As he goes up the ladder.)* We're going places, mates.

CHIEF ENGINEER: That may well be, with harrd wurrk and the proper use of our own intelligence. . . . *(He crosses and starts off left.)*

PEDRO: Aye, she'll do . . . until every one of us can ship aboard a sounder vessel.

#### CURTAIN

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# The Reign of the Director

BY LEWIS MILESTONE

A sapling stood in the shadow of a mighty oak, so mighty that the appearance of the little sapling filled the oak with both pity and disgust.

A storm hit the forest. The oak proudly faced it, refusing to bend or even sway before it, but the little weak sapling bent to the ground with each blow of the wind. Such humility filled the mighty oak with disgust, and proudly, and more stubbornly than ever, he faced the fierce storm.

But when the storm had spent itself the sapling still stood as before. The mighty oak that had refused to sway and bend lay prone on the ground, torn out by the roots—dead.

I first arrived in Hollywood at the end of 1919. That and the subsequent three or four years can be called "the reign of the director"—a power supreme and absolute. D. W. Griffith! *Way Down East!* *Dream Street!* James Cruze! *Covered Wagon!* Merton of the Movies! Eric von Stroheim! *The Devil's Pass Key!* *Foolish Wives!* Rex Ingram! *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse!* *Scaramouche!* Mickey Neilan! Another Neilan picture! What difference does it make who's in it or what the title is—it's a Neilan picture! Who can afford to miss it? The latest and the best in comedy, sophistication, speed. Another lesson in what the best motion picture can be like. Learn about inference, power of suggestion, subtlety; the most told in the shortest possible footage. *Why Get Married!* *Go and Get it!* *Fools First!* Raymond Griffith is born—again Neilan!

And then came the storm. It started with a tiny gust of wind.

Irving Thalberg, the baby producer, the important general manager of the very unimportant Universal Manufacturing Company. And the first oak hit was von Stroheim, then directing *Merry-go-Round*.

The saplings (all unemployed at

the time), Richard Wallace, W. K. Howard, Bill Wellman, and the writer of this piece, were sharing a borrowed dollar at Levy's Cafe. We sat through the lunch hour and long past it. The subject of conversation was (Hollywood forgive me!)—pictures.

"Let's start a rumor," said Wallace, "let's start a rumor that Irving Thalberg—you know, the little fellow at Universal—well, let's start a rumor that Irving Thalberg fired von Stroheim—took him off the picture."

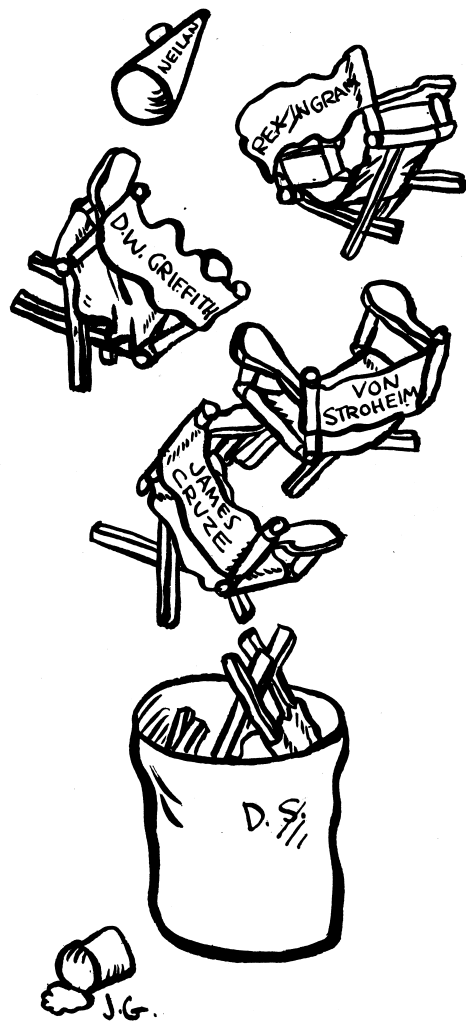
When the laughter subsided we agreed that a more startling tale couldn't have been invented by Munchausen himself, and we promptly scattered to circulate the rumor. But Wallace must have been psychic. That evening Hollywood was shaken like no earthquake ever shook it. Newspaper headlines carried the startling news that Irving Thalberg fired von Stroheim—took him off the picture. At first we, the members of the conspiracy, thought it was the result of our own work, for no place in the world can you spread a rumor more quickly than in Hollywood (with the exception of an Army latrine). Imagine our surprise when we found out that we started the rumor simultaneously with the actual happening.

Well, that was the beginning of the storm and the end of the reign of the director, the mighty oak. The storm grew fiercer. Following the birth of the first producer, Irving Thalberg, came others, each adding to the ferocity of the storm, each outdoing the others in establishing his absolute power, and when the storm subsided there was no D. W. Griffith, no Cruze, no von Stroheim, no Ingram, no Neilan. These men knew only one way of working—the way of a director; select the story, have a hand in the writing of the story, cast it, cut it, etc. Deprived of that method, they couldn't function. They

were forced to go and they went.

A come-back for a top-notch director is practically impossible. The reason is simple. To make a great picture a director needs the producer's absolute trust and confidence and a great deal of money, money to buy material, cast, etc. Once fallen into disfavor he gets none of those things, yet, because he had a great name once, the producer expects him to deliver a picture up to his old standard.

And, since I started this piece with a fable I suppose I should finish it with a moral, but I'm afraid I can't, for I have been both a sapling and an oak. What am I now? You'll have to wait until the next storm to get the answer.



# Runs, Hits, Errors—1936

BY ROBERT STEBBINS

The great Schnozzle was in one of his most frenzied moods. His necktie was torn to shreds. His shirt barely hung on by one sleeve. He had already demolished the microphone he was talking through. Finally when only the mouthpiece remained he flung the following out of his expansive soul: "an' duh depression? What's duh depression? The dictionary says it's a hole. An' what's a hole? A hole's nuttin'. An' if you tink I'm gonna stan' here an' talk about nuttin', you're crazy." That was back in 1932 and the film *The Phantom President*. Whether the Schnozzle realized it or not, he was talking for the entire motion picture industry. As far as it was concerned, the depression *was* nuttin'.

Looking at last year's films it becomes hard to keep from exulting at the signs of change, however vague and tentative they may appear. The unanticipated conflux of such comparatively enlightened films as *Fury*, *Modern Times*, *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, *The General Dies at Dawn*, *Winterset*, *The Story of Louis Pasteur* and to a lesser degree, *Things to Come*, *Legion of Terror*, *Road Gang*, and *My Man Godfrey* is more than encouraging. Add to these such adult presentations as *Dodsworth*, *Craig's Wife*, *Nine Days a Queen*, *I Married a Doctor*, *Peg of Old Drury*, *These Three*, *The Milky Way*, *Ceiling Zero*, *The Ghost Goes West*, *A Night at The Opera*, *Sing, Baby, Sing*, *Green Pastures*, *The White Angel*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *As You Like It*, *Theodora Goes Wild*, and you almost have reason to indulge in jubilation. Yet when you pause to consider that Hollywood turned out some thousand full-length features during 1936, the overwhelming majority of which enforced the clichés and crass stupidities of the old order of things you come down a peg or two.

Still there is no reason for despair. If anything, there must be no let up in public pressure for more films like *Fury* and *Modern Times*, with

even clearer intentions and less compromise. For those who are impatient let us say that what is one man's pink tea is another's red herring. Mr. G. A. Atkinson, editor of *The Era*, a British trade paper, for instance, has many nasty things to say of "Left Wing Talkies From Hollywood." "American film producers, in their public utterances on either side of the Atlantic, are in the habit of paying conventional lip-service to established institutions, but their films show an increasing and painstaking devotion to what are politely called 'left-wing tendencies'. . . . There was recently released here an American picture publicized in these terms: 'It stresses equality of men, that all are entitled to a share of land and freedom; these and many other things today quite obvious in our political picture are brought to life with startling realism. . . . It is understandable that Hollywood film producers should be opposed to dictatorship . . . but the frankly Communistic trend of their current output is not so easily understandable.'" What *can* be understood is that great numbers of Americans have tired of the usual run-out powders and prefer looking at the ruins of a world with clear eyes. But then Mr. Atkinson would object to giving the public what it sometimes wants even in sparing doses.

Though the absurdity of Mr. Atkinson's remarks will be apparent to anyone who has the faintest inkling of the complete control of Hollywood by reactionary elements, to some extent he sounds a warning that this department promises to heed. There has been a tendency on our part to lose perspective on the American film. There is something wrong somewhere when we dismiss *To Mary—With Love* as "nothing but insufferable pathos and wretched mishandling of a significant theme" and the reviewer of *Regards*, the French Popular Front weekly, offers the opinion—"It is a work of very good quality, a document of our times of the first

order, and at the same time one of the better films of the American realistic school. One must applaud *To Mary—With Love*." Perhaps one reason for this vast difference of opinion is that at the time we were repelled by what seemed an unmistakable lack of sincerity in the film. Consider *Fury*, *Deeds*, *Modern Times*, etc. Not one can stand up as a thorough answer to the great questions of the day. Their limitations have already been pointed out sufficiently. But what was chiefly amazing about them was the new note of genuine concern with the condition of humankind. Perhaps we did *To Mary—With Love* an injustice. Undoubtedly by comparison with the average French film it looked better than we thought.

After this bit of self-stock taking we may be pardoned if we refer to our colleagues—the newspaper film critics who are deserving of more sympathy than they ever get from this quarter. The impossibility of retaining integrity and at the same time keeping your advertisers happy can only work detriment to the former. We know of one film critic on a leading liberal New York paper who was put on the carpet because he was foolhardy enough to express an honest opinion of a recent Warner Brothers' super-super. His subsequent avoidance of anything vaguely resembling outspokenness has been painful to observe.

That the charge of advertisers interfering is not another calumny on the industry is more than partially indicated by the brazen editorial, "Artiness in Criticism" in the *Motion Picture Herald*, chief mouthpiece for the producers and distributors. The editorial constitutes a deliberate attack on the right of any critic to speak his mind on "an expertly and *expensively* produced attraction intended for the entertainment of a mass audience." (Italics mine.) To date not a critic has replied. The right of critics to participate in the publicity plans of Hollywood—the presentation of the film prizes over

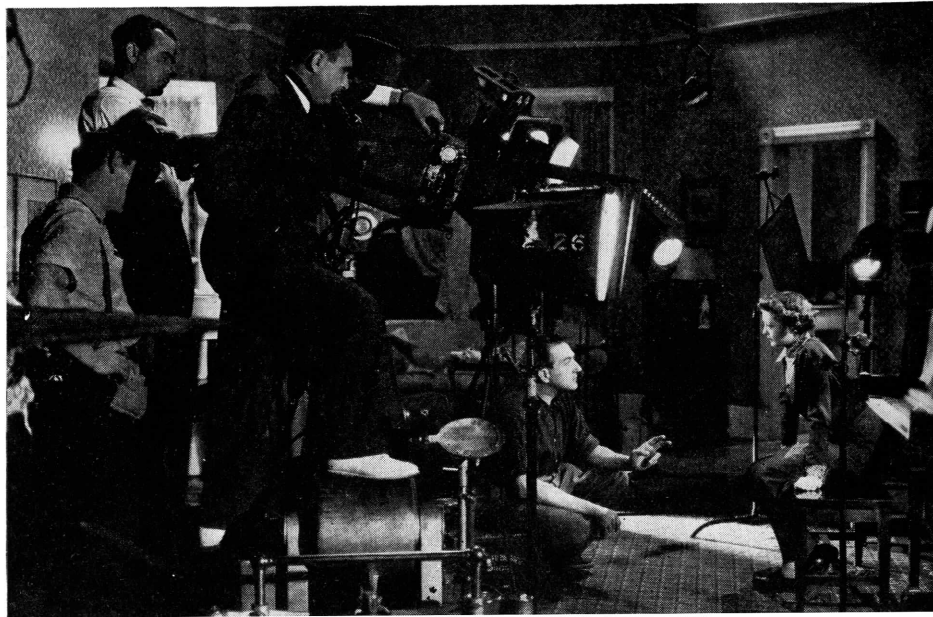
a national radio hook-up—must seem small compensation for wearing a muzzle.

On the matter of the awards, the selections were less objectionable than the logic whereby they were arrived at. No quantity of Scotch consumed at the film critics' meeting can explain giving the nod to Mamoulian as the best director of the year. This isn't intended as a slight to him, but he must have been amazed at the reasoning involved in the decision. The idea seems to be that he deserves the prize because *The Gay Desperado* could easily have been so much worse. But you don't make garbage more edible by perfuming it. Another surprise was the complete overlooking of *Modern Times* and of Chaplin either as director or actor. Certainly as a performer Chaplin towers over the entire generation of his confreres. Who can equal his pantomimic genius and his great insight into the souls of little men? The four million dollars gross *Modern Times* did at the box-office seems to argue against the contention that Chaplin, like Shakespeare in literature, is our greatest classic but that nobody bothers about him.

Departing from post-seasonal transgressions the chief critical blunder of 1936 was the indifference of the press to Jean Renoir's *The Loves of Toni*, one of the noblest and most unaffected works we have ever seen.

Compared to the theatre Brahmins, however, the film critics proved far less lethal. Certainly it is difficult to forgive the former their treatment of *Ten Million Ghosts*, *Johnny Johnson*, *Aged 26*, *Plumes in the Dust*, Leslie Howard's *Hamlet*, Walter Huston's *Othello* and their disgraceful behaviour at the opening of *Pepper Mill* which even the hard-boiled *Variety* describes as "the most completely rude performance of the season. They talked to each other, kidded among themselves and walked out en masse (with a single exception) at the end of the first act."

On the lot with the director: production stills from three outstanding films of the new year. Top to bottom: John Ford readying a scene from *The Plough and the Stars*; Alfred Hitchcock with Sylvia Sidney and John Loder, principals of his *The Woman Alone*; Fritz Lang directing Sylvia Sidney in *You Only Live Once*.



*The Loves of Toni* was not the only fine film from the French studios. There were *La Kermesse Heroique* and *Les Miserables*, the former winning the award as the year's best foreign film on all lists compiled. From Russia came *Revolutionists*, *We Are From Kronstadt*, *A Greater Promise*, *Son of Mongolia* and *Gypsies*, a goodly representation though failing to equal the great heights of the previous year's imports—*Frontier*, *Chapayev*, *The Youth of Maxim*, *Peasants*, and *The New Gulliver*. We were fortunate to be shown the works of the distinguished Dutch film maker, Joris Ivens—*Rain*, *Industrial Symphony*, *Borinage* and the *New Earth*. Germany's two films *The Old King and the New*, and *Friesenot* vied with each to see which could be the more bestial. And finally, Czecho-Slovakia came forward with a really excellent work, *Janosik*, which deserved much better than it received.

To return for a last summary of the season's domestic productions: 1936 saw the welcome incursion of at least ten films of wholesome social tendencies and a general rise in the intelligence quotient of the entire field. *The Plough That Broke the Plains*, a technically beautiful two-reeler produced by the Resettlement Administration, proved that good films can be made in America outside of Hollywood. Furthermore an excellent beginning was made in left-wing film production by *Millions of Us* and the first issue of *The World Today*, a labor feature on the lines of the *March of Time*. In Paul Strand's *The Wave (Redes)*, the release of which has unfortunately been held up thus far, American labor film production has its first great classic. But whatever has been accomplished is the result of ceaseless criticism and agitation. If 1937 is to see an increase in the number of films that make for a better life it can only be at the cost of unremitting vigilance and demand. 1937 will perhaps be crucial in the history of the film industry. The complete organization of workers in Hollywood along industrial lines will undoubtedly get under way. We must be prepared to give every assistance in the struggles that will ensue.



**THE ETERNAL MASK** (Produced by Progress Films and presented by Arthur Mayer and Joseph Burstyn. Directed by Werner Hochbaum—with Peter Petersen and Mathias Wieman):

We hardly think a chronic case of St. Vitus' dance and a nodding acquaintance with Haldeman-Julius' Little Blue Book, *The Libido and Its Every Day Uses*, makes us an authority on psychoanalysis, although we too dream. All movie reviewers do. And judging from the press *The Eternal Mask* received, it must be the answer they've been looking for. Not that we don't concur with them. *The Eternal Mask* is a film of fine intentions and fine execution. Its greatest merit, one that evidently bowled over the unsuspecting critics, is that rather than serving as a new vehicle for "boy meets girl," it really has something to say and actually confines itself to the subject in hand—the wanderings of the insane mind through the mazes of madness to final recovery. The film has been conceived and photographed in two distinct styles. One—hard, rather bright and clear: the world of the sane; the other—murky, dank—the swamp that closes over the heads of the lost ones. The only work that suggests itself to mind as at all similar is Pabst's *Secrets of the Soul* but there the complications were purely of a sexual nature. There also the duality of the patient's mind expressed itself in a duality of treatment. We must, however, give voice to a hankering for "straight" treatment. We have a conviction that if *The Eternal Mask* had remained on one plane it would have proved even more effective. At no moment during this film did we experience the agitation Joan Bennett created in *Private Worlds* when before our very eyes in the hard light of day she sud-

denly disintegrates. Perhaps it is the stylization—frankly experimental in an arty way, and dated—that we object to. In any case, let nobody be kept from the film by our preference. *The Eternal Mask* is worth seeing, even if there seems some doubt as to where it was made. It's supposed to be Switzerland, but *Variety* in the annual summary of "Foreign Film Biz" says the following: "Switzerland announced it would enter film production. That's an annual announcement. No pictures yet." Our guess is Austria.

**LLOYDS OF LONDON** (20th Century-Fox—directed by Henry King—with Freddie Bartholomew, Douglas Smith, C. Aubrey Smith, George Sanders, Sir Guy Standing, Tyrone Power, Madeleine Carroll):

Among the more tolerable of recent historical cine-romances, though offhand it would be hard to say why. Made entirely of whole (English) cloth, (Hollywood has never forgiven the French their revolution) *Lloyds of London* is a glittery succession of apocrypha relating to the early history of the internationally known underwriters. It must have been the work of the excellent cast and the rather good detail, if you will except the inevitable "Dr. Franklin, I want you to meet James Boswell," that caught our eye. George Sanders delivers a bang-up performance as the malignant heavy who frustrates "boy" and "girl" but not long enough. Some day we promise to do a piece on movie villains and why they're generally so much more likeable than the heroes of hearth and home, but until then we merely state that George Sanders considerably strengthens our case.

**REVOLUTIONISTS** (Russian—directed by Vera Stroyeva—with V. V. Shchukin, N. P. Khmelev, L. I. Tarasova, V. P. Maretskaya):

An important and eminently worthwhile item from the Mosfilm Studios. The film recounts the transformations and the role of the Russian Communist Party in the early revolutionary struggles that set the stage for 1917. For fidelity of detail and interest of anecdote *Revolutionists* succeeds as do few films. At times though, Stroyeva's realization of her material lags

(Continued on page 57)

# Plays on Parade

## *But for the Grace of God*

Leopold Atlas' *But for the Grace of God* (Theatre Guild) is a play about a kid whom bitter economic wounds drive to an amateur holdup, and to jail. Its failure—and I think it is a failure in more than box office terms—is more important than the successes of the season. Its material is deeply important. It shows the corroding effect of three jobless years on the boy's father, the sickening of his brother from sweatshop work and his death through neglect by charity hospitals. It shows a horrible sweatshop accident caused by speed-up, and the buyer's pressure which forces that speed-up on the sweatshop boss. It hints at the love of the boy for a girl in the tenement, poisoned by the cynicism that poverty has given him. And it culminates in his bitter rebellion against the economic prison. He joins two neighborhood pals, swipes a gun from a cop, holds up the sweatshop boss, and shoots him when the old Jew will not give him the money he believes must be hidden in the loft.

Such a story is true to our civilization. If it worked out under our eyes in real life we would call it drama. But it does not become drama in fact until the writer finds ways of giving it freshness, new interest, unanticipated color, theatric excitement and arresting revelation of characters. In the person of the sweatshop boss, in certain sensitively realized passages of writing, Mr. Atlas has achieved such freshness. But elsewhere the very generalized pattern of his material is too much for him and the play seems flat and familiar. We are aware of the general interrelation between economic exploitation and crime before we see the play. Even the part of the audience which would like to deny it, is quite familiar with it as theory.

And besides the eternal difficulty of animating generalities, there is a new temper in the middle class to be reckoned with. The touch of the new "prosperity" has created a much wilder longing for escape from eco-

nomie facts than ever they showed at the depth of depression. Whoever writes or produces or acts for them now must use every theatrical resource. We must find the key to emotion in story and situation, humor in balanced but fresh satire and in real people, we must have showmanship that dramatizes freshly the truths that the author wants to clinch.

For that very reason it is good to see that a playwright of Mr. Atlas' ability intends to put his skill on material of social importance. The fact that that skill foundered when he tried to follow the line set by plays of the *Peace on Earth* type, should set him to searching for forms more personal to him. When he finds them, we should have plays which carry their themes less self-consciously, and to greater effect because they will be better theatre.

Benno Schneider, in his first directing under a commercial setup has failed completely to control the performances of his actors. And at that his results are better than the usual. Under his handling, the stage is always pictorially alive and visually expressive. Katharine Grill, lately of the Actors' Repertory Company, shows the potentiality of becoming a very moving actress.

MOLLY DAY THACHER

## *Chains*

*Chains*, the Artef's second production of the season, is no facile entertainment. To sit through it is to witness an almost terrifying experience. There is the sound of a harmonica and someone humming, the curtain rises, and we see a Siberian prison cell, in the Russia of 1905. The eight political prisoners, on edge after their long imprisonment, quarrel among themselves. One of them has sawed through the bars of the window, and convinces the others that they must escape to help transform the impending strike of the gold miners into a rebellion. The escape frustrated, the prisoners go on a hunger strike to protest the punishment

they expect. But the striking miners release them, and they assume their places as leaders in the revolt. Again there is dissension among them; three are brought back to the cell. The revolt fails, and once more they are all united in prison. One of them, led out to be shot, leaves behind him a file which the others immediately begin to use as a means to set them free again.

What gives this play such extraordinary intensity is its basis of fact. It possesses the same quality found in the best Russian films—we feel that here is the living stuff of history before our eyes. The writing of H. Leivick has gone deeply into the psychological and historical truth of the lives of these revolutionists, examining carefully the conflict of individual freedom as opposed to unity of action.

Under the splendid direction of Joseph Buloff, the actors realize their characterizations so completely that it is the actions and feelings of these people, the events taking place, that seem to move us, rather than any artifice.

Moi Solotaroff's simple device of constructing a stone arch within the arch of the proscenium, draws us into the prison cell where the entire play takes place.

IRWIN SHAPIRO

## *Brief Reviews*

**THE WOMEN**, by Clare Booth. A deservedly savage satire on the useless women of the fast set. Excellent portraits by an all-female cast, with Ilka Chase shining like a naughty deed.

**BROTHER RAT**, by John Monks, Jr. and Fred F. Finkelhoffe. Mr. Abbott's gift to the bilious and the adolescent. A funny farce about adolescents in a military institute, and a comic counterpart of *So Proudly We Hail*. Excellently staged by George Abbott. Nothing much, but much about nothing.



Martha Graham and Group in Primitive Mysteries

## Artist and Audience

BY EDNA OCKO

A two-thirds completed dance season has shown us nearly all the leading soloists and groups, and still the dance world has not as yet presented its public with a production of significant proportions or permanent value. Several full-length works have been on view: *Prodigal Son* by the Jooss Ballet, *Symphonie Fantastique* by the de Basil Ballet Russe, *Momentum* by Tamiris, *The Eternal Prodigal* by the WPA Dance Theatre, *Chronicle* by Martha Graham. But almost all of these could use serious reworking, and one or two should never have been performed.

The recent reappearance of the Jooss Ballet is a case in point. In 1932, this company won first prize in an international dance competition for *The Green Table*, a brilliant and stirring dance drama exposing international diplomacy as the harbinger of war and destruction. The influence of *The Green Table* on experimental and left-wing dance groups was immeasurable. International renown greeted the company on the basis of this work. Tours throughout the world were successfully conducted—with one recent exception, as a matter of record.

Several days before the signing of the German-Japanese anti-Communist agreement, the Jooss company was forbidden its Japanese tour. The only reason, unofficially vouchsafed, was that authorities there might not like the anti-war sentiments expressed in *The Green Table*.

Nothing of equal provocative calibre or theatrical distinction has followed this ballet. *The Mirror*, its sequel, dealing with the aftermath of war, has fine dramatic passages, but they are completely invalidated by a conclusion which unites Capital, the Middle Class, and Labor in spiritual and brotherly love.

*Prodigal Son*, seen for the first time in America on October 17th, is an unacceptable offering coming from this company. The libretto is uninspired. The Son leaves the rhythm of his home for adventure in the world. He ascends to royalty through marriage with a Princess. As King, he becomes Tyrant. He barely escapes with his life. "He thinks of returning home, but two women of the streets entice him a different way." He succumbs to the blandishments of the Queen of Harlots; he is "swamped in an orgy of mockery and scorn." He returns home and is pretty glad to get there.

We have come to expect the selection of such stereotyped material from old fashioned neighborhood dancing schools, rather than an internationally admired, subsidized company.

The fault does not lie in the approach to material, which has come to be recognized as a unique contribution to the vocabulary of dance. The ballets are nothing if not clear; their statements are set in simple direct, immediately communicable terms, for which we are grateful. The simplicity of *Prodigal Son*, however, borders on naiveté. The subject matter having been drained

of all save the baldest and most obvious continuity, a resultant thinness of material leads to a pitiful lack of vitality and fire. In withdrawing from the sphere of contemporaneity and satire, the Jooss Ballet has also withdrawn from those very sources which gave it stature and maturity.

Whereas the Jooss Ballet erred on the side of oversimplicity in its re-statement of an old, old story, the Gluck-Sandor version of this tale, *Eternal Prodigal*, presented by the Dance Theatre Project on December 2nd, was strangled in its own over-elaborate trappings. A curiously revamped version of the story was used as a peg to support all of Mr. Sandor's ingenious bag of tricks.

The Prodigal Son (William Bruce), in an obviously biblical setting, falls asleep and endures the weirdest conglomeration of present-day nightmares. An Evil Genius (played to the hilt by Mr. Sandor) fights for possession of his spirit. At an opera, three dancers (Grecian, ballet, and modern) attract him. He falls in love with the third because she shows him visions of factory workers and speed-up. They run away. The Prodigal finds himself in a brothel, then in a subway crowd. Next, as a tortured musician in a mad orchestra, he commits suicide. The Evil Genius is annihilated by the Beloved, and the harassed Son awakens to re-enter the comfortable bosom of his rejoicing family.

Is it that the director, having so confused a libretto to project, could not prevent all manner of tricky and showy odds and ends creeping into



the presentation? Or rather did Gluck Sandor, possessed with a desire to exhibit all possible variations of dance theatre, let these supposed ingenuities work havoc with the script? The result is disastrous. In sacrificing simplicity, Gluck Sandor fell into the equally distressing vice of non-sequential, non-functional choreographic rococo.

The dancers of the Project performed admirably nonetheless. The SRO sign frequently appearing during the record-breaking run of *The Eternal Prodigal* testifies even now to the eagerness of the public for dance productions. It is a crying shame that inept administrative officials prevent the finished works of Tamiris, Humphrey, and Weidman, choreographers with Sandor on the Project, from seeing the light of a theatrical presentation.

Gluck Sandor's unequal efforts to theatricalize the modern dance sets into bold relief an expert piece of theatre in the ballet field: *Symphonie Fantastique*, which received its American premiere on October 29th.

Leonide Massine, of the Monte Carlo Ballet, is a brilliant dancer and a supremely talented choreographer. He is, also, a sagacious artist who tempers exploration and choreographic experimentation with a realistic evaluation of his own talent and capability. In his thorough understanding of the ballet medium, he felicitously combines acceptable balletic practice with an incomparable showmanship. It is his intuitive understanding of the latter that assures his success with the general public. If in *Fantastique* he swings too much to the side of dramatic sensationalism, as in certain moments of the *Procession to the Stake* and *Witches' Sabbath*, he neatly counterbalances it with a magically lyrical Pastorale and a conventional but charming ballroom sequence.

It is all very well to clamor for social or contemporary comment in the classic ballet. The limited appeal of *Public Gardens*, and to a lesser degree, of *Union Pacific*, is answer enough for the insistent. It is not from Massine or the present choreographers of the de Basil company that any new ideological approach will come. At the same time,

however, one cannot deny this company the credit for keeping alive the Diaghilev repertoire for a large public, and of giving talent like Massine's ample occasion for development along his own lines.

On the concert stage, two major offerings this season suffered from a common malady, which appears most often in works relating themselves to contemporary material: a wide disparity between the theme selected for presentation and the choreographic methods chosen for this projection.

On November 8th, Tamiris and her group produced *Momentum*, a forty minute suite of group and solo dances. In *Momentum*, the unemployed, preyed upon by the American Legion as well as the Black Legion, become the gas-masked cannon fodder for the next war.

While Tamiris proved herself an increasingly able group choreographer, notably advancing past earlier achievements, the gap between artist's purpose and audience communication was not bridged. The director in this case could not solve the method of approaching her material. Literal gesture combined with incomprehensible sequence within the dance, and the sum total left the audience uncertain and puzzled.

One other opus falls into this category. *Chronicle* by Martha Graham "is based upon the advent and consequences of war" and "concerns itself with the contemporary situation." *Dances Before Catastrophe* (*Spectre*—1914, *Masque*), *Dances After Catastrophe* (*Steps in the Street*, *Tragic Holiday*—*In Memoriam*), and *Prelude to Action* constitute the entire suite.

Those who, like this reviewer, felt that Martha Graham, as a sensitive and great artist, would find herself irresistibly drawn to the profound currents of contemporary life as source material for her dances, had cause for elation. The success of this work could, in part, justify the persistent point of view held by pioneering young dancers in the face of violent critical and professional opposition; a point of view which protected the right and ability of the modern dance to deal with contempo-

rary social material. The success of this work could, in addition, serve as guide and inspiration not only to the immediate followers of Miss Graham, but also to the entire dance world. Finally, the work could serve to influence whatever audience in any part of the country had occasion to witness its performance. With this in mind, the premiere of *Chronicle* on December 20th was an event in the entire dance world.

It would be a desperate and futile attempt at self-inflicted blindness to say that *Chronicle* was equal to its admitted theme. We say *Chronicle* with reason, because we want to believe Martha Graham the artist, is capable of a dance which can deal with the "advent and consequences of war;" and with the contemporary situation. But *Chronicle* as it now stands, is not that dance.

The intention to create significant anti-war material is there! So also is the intention to make the *Prelude*  
(Continued on page 64)



Angna Enters Martin Harris

# EDITORIALS

## *Frontier Films*

A gathering of some seventy-five of America's most important writers and film makers recently repudiated the notion that independent films of valid social import cannot be produced in this country. The occasion was a private screening of *The Wave* (*Redes*) produced in Mexico by Paul Strand, and the first issue of *The World Today*, a short patterned somewhat along the lines of *The March of Time*. These extraordinary works settled for those present the many doubts that for years have sidetracked the progress of independent film production. In the words of one of the speakers, "This is what we've been waiting for." Skepticism was brushed aside. Plans were immediately launched for the solidification of all progressive film forces in the East. Today we can report the successful reorganization of those forces into Frontier Films. Included in this body are the producers of *Redes* and *The World Today*. Not the least of its features is a permanently associated advisory board consisting of the finest literary talent in the field. Already five writers of distinguished accomplishment have turned over the film production rights to well-known plays to Frontier Films. Definite progress has been achieved in securing tie-ups with key labor organizations. NEW THEATRE AND FILM sees in the organization of Frontier Films a step of incomparable importance to be welcomed and supported by all who resent the distortion of American life by the products of Hollywood.

## *The Equity Election*

The record of Actors' Equity in recent controversies has been nothing to alarm the soberest of conservatives. Last spring the union permitted its president, Frank Gillmore, to play a role in the dramatists' strike which approached actual opposition to the union involved, and allegiance to the producers; this fall Equity was conspicuous by its absence when all the other stage and artists' unions involved sent a delegation to Washington to protest lay-offs from the four arts projects of the WPA.

In striking contrast to this peaceful idyll is the record of the Screen Actors Guild during the past twelve months. That organization has swung wholeheartedly into the organized labor movement. Its secretary, Kenneth Thomson, has been elected a vice-president of the California State Federation of Labor, and the Guild has received representation on the Los Angeles Labor Council. Its members, some of them the highest salaried in the profession, have unequivocally backed the Salinas lettuce pickers and the maritime workers. In return, other unions have stood staunchly back of the Guild in its fight for studio recognition. Recently the Paramount executives, assembled to do honor to Adolph Zukor, were hailed from their viands to cope with a threat by members of the Seamen's Union to suspend work on the location where *Souls at Sea* was being filmed, unless the

Guild's demand that seven players not in possession of Guild membership cards be dropped, were acceded to. "We do not recognize the Screen Actors' Guild," the executives are reported as saying. "But we do," replied the Seamen's Union—and that settled it. The seven actors were replaced by Guild members.

Recently there has been discernible a growing sentiment of dissatisfaction with the passivity of the present Administration among Equity members. The name which has bobbed up most frequently in connection with a change in administration, more particularly the presidency is, oddly enough, Kenneth Thomson's!

It would be well indeed if some fresh wind would blow through the ranks of Equity bringing with it rumors of the life that is stirring outside in the labor movement; if more actors awoke to the fact that, as members of Equity, they also belong to the Associated Actors and Artists of America, with which are affiliated such bodies as the Screen Actors Guild, the American Federation of Actors (vaudeville), the Burlesque Actors Association, the Hebrew Actors Guild, and others. One reason that Equity members are not alive to the responsibilities—and possibilities—of such an organization as the 4 A's, may be that it has been slumbering peacefully under the soothing leadership of Frank Gillmore for some years. What this body could do if it were roused to action, if for instance it moved to militant organization of such an untouched field as radio, is incalculable. Unorganized radio workers constitute an enormous reservoir of scab labor in the case of any showdown between the theatre unions and producers at some future date. Again, close cooperation between the 4 A's and the writers' organizations—the Authors League (including the Dramatists' Guild and the Screen Writers Guild)—would immeasurably strengthen both groups.

At the March meeting of Equity the membership will choose a nominating committee which will in turn select the candidates to run for office, and for the vacant places on the council, on the "regular" or Administration ticket. Upon the nomination for president depends the future degree of activity of Actors' Equity, for the next three years. Kenneth Thomson, while declaring that he will not run against Gillmore (on an independent ticket, if Gillmore were the administration candidate), would undoubtedly accept the "regular" nomination. Equity members would do well to vote for a progressive nominating committee, bearing in mind that they are not artists working alone in a realm apart, but members of a vast and organized movement—the labor movement.

## *Case of the Group Theatre*

In a recent Sunday column of the New York Herald Tribune, Richard Watts, Jr. read a regretful burial service over the Group Theatre. Its demise appeared to him an inescapable conclusion, since it had closed its

season in January because of the failure of *Johnny Johnson* and the organization's inability to find a suitable play to follow it, and since its actors had scattered to Hollywood and other New York productions. Only a week earlier however, in the columns of the Times, Harold Clurman, executive director of the Group, had roundly declared that the suspension of activity was only temporary, and was taking place solely because of the Group's desire to take stock of its past and examine its future.

Mr. Clurman's reassurance might have carried more weight if his statement had given any hint that there was that in the Group's past history which might give rise, not only to pride and satisfaction, but to grave disquiet. The more closely one examines the Group's record—while recognizing its vital contribution to the new theatre movement and to the building of an audience for social plays in New York and other cities—the more it becomes apparent that the Group reached an impasse this winter (Mr. Clurman to the contrary notwithstanding) because of certain grave fallacies in its organization and point of view, fallacies which will have to be eliminated if the Group is to continue. In the July issue of *NEW THEATRE* the Group's structure, the role of the directors, the part played by the organization in such recent controversies as the dramatists' strike last spring, as well as the social implications of its recent productions, were examined in detail. Word for word that analysis still holds good, since there is still the same sharp cleft between the Group's word and deed, intention and execution.

How else describe the dilution of *Johnny Johnson*, an avowed anti-war play which led to the illuminating conclusion that war was an aberration which periodically overwhelmed mankind? Individual members of the Group know better than this, and yet *Johnny Johnson* stands as the sole offering for the 1936-37 season. Is this an adequate showing for what is so often called our leading social theatre? We have heard repeatedly that the Group Theatre wishes to base itself on a solidly organized audience. Yet how can the organization's growing tendency to compromise its social point of view (witness *Weep for the Virgins*, *Case of Clyde Griffiths*, *Johnny Johnson*), to compete with Broadway on its own ground by substituting dilution and extravagance for social clarity and forcefulness (*Johnny Johnson*), do anything in the long run but alienate such an audience, and throw the Group back on a purely Broadway audience, and the backing of Broadway producers and film companies, for its support? Even if the Group is successful in its present campaign to raise a fund which will secure it financial independence and security, how can such a policy fail to undermine its relation to its audience on the one hand, and its artistic standards on the other? As was pointed out in the article last July, Harold Clurman has repeatedly called the Group a Marxist theatre. But Marxism knows no divorce between form and matter, artistic expression and social content. It is to be hoped that the soundest elements in the Group Theatre will struggle to achieve that unity in its program and purpose which alone can justify the financial independence it is now working for.

## WPA "Schupos"

The air is so full of straws pointing to the militarization of the Federal Theatre Project that it is almost impossible nowadays for us to see such civilian figures as Hallie Flanagan or Philip Barber with the naked eye. Following in the wake of Colonel Brehon Somervell's appointment as WPA administrator for New York, has come an influx of army officers into every department of the Project. Aside from the fact that we know of no course in dramatics at West Point which might qualify these gentlemen to assume a position of leadership where the theatre arts are concerned, evidence is rapidly accumulating which makes them appear undesirable from quite another point of view. Some of them would even seem likely candidates for Hitler's "Schupos." There is for instance Captain Roy W. Grower, acting administrative assistant of the Federal Theatre Project. Affidavits exist to the effect that Capt. Grower, discovering that an assistant supervisor of one of the projects was a Negro, declared, "Get rid of him! I don't want niggers in supervisory positions. I wouldn't take orders from a nigger and I don't expect any other white man to take orders from a nigger." The Negro in question was fired. Other Negroes were not allowed to accept positions on the Project when it was found they were colored. Capt. Grower's anti-Semitism is likewise unquestioned. Other no less flagrantly Fascistic practices within the Project come to light daily—desks searched, wires tapped, workers intimidated. It is high time that the forces lying behind such practices and behind the increasing army penetration of the WPA, should be exposed and routed.

## Trade Unions, Attention!

As we go to press Broadway is host to the first Fascist play of the season, *Tide Rising*. Significantly enough, it received a bad press only because it was a bad play; Richard Watts, Jr., was the sole critic to point out its full political and social implications. Since the play is openly anti-Semitic and anti-trade union there should be no lack of organized support for the campaign now being organized by the New Theatre League, not only to boycott the play but warn the picture companies. . . . There is no denying that the film companies have the right to feel aggrieved. Two of their newly-discovered white hopes have turned and roundly bitten the hand that fed them, in the person of the Bureau of New Plays, which the film companies set up to find and foster new talent under the terms of the *old* Minimum Basic Agreement between producers and the Dramatists' Guild. Recently the Bureau, which is headed by Theresa Helburn (a director of the Theatre Guild) awarded five fellowships and one prize, totaling \$9,250, to entrants in its new play contest, only to have two of the winners return the money. In this connection we wish to state that Mr. John Gassner, our reviewer, who was announced as officially connected with the Bureau is not a sponsor nor in any way in the employ of the Bureau. Mr. Gassner states that he would not have considered any connection with an enterprise which in any way conflicted with the Dramatists' Guild.

# shifting scenes

Having urged and prophesied for many months that the new theatres would find lasting vitality and stability only through close and active contact with the organized labor movement, we can now report that such a fruitful state of affairs is an actuality in an evergrowing chain of cities from New York to San Francisco. Trade union, and other progressive and labor organizations, have provided mass audience support and cooperated on matters of finance and publicity.

For instance, the Detroit Contemporary Theatre have found time, along with a full-length production of *Help Yourself*, to present a series of mobile skits, including *Gimble Sprockets*, for striking auto workers.

The Chicago Repertory Group has brought Clifford Odets' *Waiting for Lefty* up-to-date, so to speak, by introducing the question of company unions, and the Pittsburgh New Theatre has been presenting *Mighty Wind a' Blowin'* to audiences of the C.I.O. unions.

The Philadelphia New Theatre has been making a regular practice of doing short scripts for trade union and labor groups, among them *Pop Comes Home* by Ben Bengal, *Jack Robinson* by Cyril Schoenen, and *A Day at Bord Motors* by Oscar Saul and Lou Lantz. The National Office of the New Theatre League has advised all groups to keep several scripts such as *Private Hicks*, *Union Label*, *Day at Bord Motors*, and *Take My Stand*, in readiness for immediate performance.

*Bury the Dead* continues to be the season's most popular social play, with a steadily rising performance total that threatens the record of *Waiting for Lefty*. Among recent productions were those by Fresno State College in California, the Universities of Kansas, Michigan and Oregon, the Stamford Players, and the Calgary (Alberta) Theatre of Action. The Toronto Theatre of Action has continued its unflagging and ambitious efforts with its recent produc-

tion of Tretiakov's masterpiece of Russian theatre, *Roar China*.

The Washington New Theatre, working with the Civic Theatre in that city, is preparing *It Can't Happen Here*. Albert Maltz's *Black Pit* was given an extended run of some twenty-odd performances by the enterprising Chicago Repertory Group (who are now preparing *Help Yourself*), and has also been given by the San Francisco Theatre Union. *Tabloid Reds*, from the musical, *Parade*, appeared on a bill of the Cleveland Playhouse, while out in Seattle the Repertory Theatre, recently affiliated with the New Theatre League, is at work on *Bury the Dead* and also the full-length *Class of '29*. The Minneapolis Theatre Union program of four long plays is taking its impressive course. With *Awake and Sing!* and *Inheritors* behind it, *Let Freedom Ring* will follow in February and *Help Yourself* in April.

In New York Labor Stage is presenting John Wexley's *Steel* on Sunday evenings. The newly organized Allied Players, latest theatre to join the New Theatre League, presented *This Earth Is Ours*, a one-act play dealing with the Crempa case, by William Kozlenko, during January.

The Play Department of the League has recently published A. B. Shiffrin's *Return at Sunset* and *The Bishop of Munster*, an anti-Nazi monologue by A. S. Kraft. This month it will publish a labor comedy by Byron Dexter, *Someone to Carry the Halo*. It has furthermore acquired amateur agency rights on two Negro plays, *Mess of Potage* by John Rimassa and Richard Oliver, and *Oliver Henry* by Frank Wells. Another one-act negro play, *Smell the Sweet Savor*, by Harold Anderson, which is being handled by the Play Department, has been bought by the Federal Theatre, and will be initially produced on a New Theatre night.

An unusually interesting number of play contests have been announced for the next few months. Two prizes totalling \$3,000 for the best full-

length original plays dealing with "social conflicts in contemporary American society" have been offered in a contest sponsored by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union Educational Committee. The contest closes July 1, 1937. In writing for the contest playwrights are confined neither to any particular aspect of American life nor to any strata or section of American society. The plays must, however meet the "technical requirements of the theatre," and avoid sectarian criticism of any part of the labor movement. Inquiries and scripts should be sent to Mr. Louis Schaffer, Labor Stage, 106 West 39th Street, New York City.

The Philadelphia Art Alliance is running a contest for plays suitable for production by Little Theatres. No other limitation is made. Manuscripts must be mailed to Little Theatre Associate Groups, c/o Art Alliance, 251 South 18th Street, Philadelphia, no later than February 28, 1937, accompanied by a handling fee of fifty cents.

The International Workers Order is conducting a contest for plays for children, to close April 1, with prizes of \$100, \$50 and \$25. Plays should not be more than 45 minutes in length when produced. Manuscripts can be mailed to "Plays for Children" Contest, International Workers Order, 80 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

With over seventy-five entries in the contest for plays dealing with social aspects of contemporary American Jewish life, sponsored jointly by the New Theatre League and the 92nd Street Y.M.H.A. of New York, A. B. Shiffrin's *Return at Sunset* was announced as the winning play.



# Books in Review

**AN ACTOR PREPARES.** By Constantin Stanislavski. New York, Theatre Arts, Inc. \$2.50.

The fundamental purpose of Stanislavski's new book is to show the actor how to *pretend to himself* that what he is doing on the stage is happening to him for the first time. If anyone not an actor thinks this is easy, let him try the following: after telling a friend of something that has moved you deeply, immediately do it again, thinking the same thoughts that went through your mind before, and feeling the same emotions. In his book Stanislavski demonstrates that this feat, which is the basis of all acting, is so difficult that it requires of the actor a bodily and spiritual training and equipment comparable to that of the musical virtuoso.

The general outline of his system has been known for some time by those who have read his earlier *My Life in Art*. Now for the first time he has described it fully, and integrated the various parts, with beautiful clarity, into a complete synthesis that leaves nothing in the actor's task untouched.

The implications of the book are far-reaching. Reading it, I became convinced that if a company of talented actors bound themselves together under an actor-director here in America, they could, after a considerable period of work, achieve results comparable to those of the Moscow Art Theatre.

The difficulty of maintaining a company over a long period of time is one obstacle to the application of Stanislavski's system here. There are others no less important, such as the calibre of the director. Primarily, and Stanislavski emphasizes this repeatedly, he must be an actor. But no ordinary actor. He must have imagination, a great sense of truth, and be deeply versed in the workings of the mind and spirit. Also, and this is not sufficiently emphasized by Stanislavski, he must be enough of a

realist to retain only those actors who have talent after the period of preliminary work is over. This may seem obvious, but the System, with its emphasis on real feeling, real human emotions, can lead a director to select his actors for their earnestness rather than their acting ability. We all know actors and actresses who come off the stage, their faces streaming with tears, without having succeeded in communicating anything to the audience. They have *felt*, but not *communicated* their feeling. Talent on the stage may be defined as the ability to communicate, and the director must see that this is present to a considerable degree.

Whether this book, so completely convincing, so detailed and clear in its outlining of the spiritual and physical training that the actor must undergo before he steps onto the stage in any part whatsoever, will banish the clichés on which most acting is based at present, is doubtful. It will certainly influence all the actors who read it, but there are great difficulties in the way of the individual actor who tries to use the System when other actors in the same company are not using it, because so much of it is dependent on extremely subtle relationships between the actors. However, and although Stanislavski himself warns against using only *part* of the System, I still feel that the chapters on Action, Imagination, Muscular Relaxation, Concentration of Attention, Units and Objectives, Faith and a Sense of Truth, Emotion Memory, and Adaptation, contain immensely valuable material for any actor in any type of play. The book is likewise of particular value to dramatic schools, and to such theatres at the Cleveland Playhouse, Pasadena Community Playhouse, Hedgerow, etc., which are able, at least in some measure, to adopt the method outlined.

There is now, mostly among the younger members of the profession, a feeling of dissatisfaction with the place of the actor in our theatre. He

is engaged for one play and discarded when it closes; he has no place in which to learn even technical tricks; directorial methods stamp out all individuality by insisting on clichés of self-expression. *An Actor Prepares* completely justifies this dissatisfaction, and at the same time serves as an inspiration, because of Stanislavski's noble and ennobling conception of the actor and his work. GEORGE COULOURIS

**THE NEW TECHNIQUE OF SCREEN WRITING.** By Tamar Lane. New York, Whittlesey House. \$3.00.

**HOW TO WRITE A MOVIE.** By Arthur L. Gale. New York. \$2.00.

**SUCCESSFUL FILM WRITING.** By Seton Margrave. London, Methuen & Co. 6s.

Although film literature in the English language is relatively poor in quality it is distressingly rich in quantity. Books purporting to provide the amateur, the journalist and the amateur playwright with the secrets of successful screen writing make up the bulk of the film bibliography. During the flowering of the American cinema—the period approximated by the years 1918-1928—there was a flood of this type of book. They all stressed the comparative ease with which one can become a successful scenarist (commercially speaking). "Motion picture writing is as practical a profession as plumbing" say John Emerson and Anita Loos in their *How To Write Photoplays* (1920). "It does not take unusual genius," they continue, "but you *must* (their italics) learn bookkeeping or bricklaying or the making of champagne from a glass of cider and a raisin."

The current raid on Broadway by Hollywood and the growing number of colleges and universities giving courses (and not to mention the large number of amateur movie makers) has resulted in another

Renaissance of this type of literature.

Arthur L. Gale of the Amateur Cinema League informs the amateur of the secrets of photoplay construction, continuity and scenario. His point is that any-man, every-man can make a movie if he follows the directions given in *How to Write a Movie*. His method is supposed to be good for the dramatic film as well as the documentary.

*The New Technique Of Screen Writing—A Practical Guide to the Writing and Marketing of Photoplays*, is by Tamar Lane, who has been an editor, scenarist, executive with R.K.O., Universal, First National, Pathé, Paramount, Selznick, etc. It is a huge volume and is published by Whittlesey House (\$3.00) who also publish *Writing for Profit*, and *The Art of Conversation: And How To Apply Its Technique*. Although the author of *The New Technique of Screen Writing* claims that "no comprehensive treatise on the photoplay has been published since the advent of the talking picture" and that "the introduction of sound and dialogue into the cinema not only drastically altered the appeal of the motion picture . . . but brought about radical changes in the preparation and writing of the photoplay," this new book isn't very different from the Emerson-Loos opus. It may be more comprehensive in that it includes chapters on dialogue, tempo, rhythm and specimen scripts, but it is still a very unsatisfactory book. Its point of view is thoroughly commercial, which makes it as about effective as a correspondence course. In addition, the useful practical material such as copyright laws, censorship rules and the Hays code can be procured in many more desirable and cheaper ways.

Since it is almost hopeless to expect anyone to become a scenarist on the basis of either Mr. Gale's or Mr. Lane's larger book the most satisfactory one of the series is Mr. Margrave's *Successful Film Writing*, published in London. The title is misleading and unfair to the author since the book is essentially a reprinting of Eric Keown's short story *Sir Tristram Goes West*, René Clair's analysis of the story into a "treat-

ment" and finally his complete scenario *The Ghost Goes West*. There is a small summary by Mr. Margrave on screen writing "from the point of view of the film audience."

The major fault with all of these books is that none of them discuss the most essential element of the cinema: the dramatic. Most of the authorities on screen writing divorce the movie from the theatre. Pudovkin has repeatedly pointed out that cinema is a step in the *development* of the theatre. That is a problem which should receive a detailed discussion in these pages. In the meantime it should be pointed out that the most valuable book for film workers and film writers is John Howard Lawson's *Theory and Technique of Playwriting*.

PETER ELLIS

*SCENERY THEN AND NOW*. By Donald Oenslager. New York: Norton & Co. \$5.

"He who is creatively endowed will occupy himself less with criticism than with his own urge for creative endeavor." So writes the Nazi Minister of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment in the course of his decree abolishing art criticism in Germany. Dr. Goebbels expresses himself with suitable restraint: he does not go much further than Brooks Atkinson, New York Times drama critic, who, in reviewing the settings of Robert Edmond Jones's *Othello*, asserts approvingly that Jones "has not plagued them with any arbitrary ideas." The notion that an artist should, if possible, be unconscious, is still widely held in the American theatre. This notion would be far more stultifying in its effects if theatre people accepted it in practice as much as they do in theory. But in practice even Brooks Atkinson does not maintain it consistently. Its adherents among scene designers—such as Gordon Craig and, in this country, Robert Edmond Jones—are always ready to discuss scenic theory. And now one of Jones's closest followers, Donald Oenslager, comes into print with a book proving that Oenslager, too, is not without conscious theory in support of his scenic practice.

Donald Oenslager finds time to be Associate Professor of Scenic Design at Yale while designing a record number of Broadway shows per season. Unfortunately he has not gone further into his theory than is necessary for lecturing to students at Yale University; the students at the New Theatre School would require more of him. *Scenery, Then and Now* is a handsome book containing 49 of the artist's drawings and a text which continues the very light discursive style of Gordon Craig. Its intention is stated in the introduction: "This book . . . views the theatre's peaks of action in the past through the long-range glasses of our theatre practice today. . . . To discover and restore their original purposes, and also to devise ways and means of putting them to work in our theatre, has been the constant aim of all my notes and projects."

This is certainly a practical objective for a designer who prefers to think of himself as a "craftsman." The scenic projects cover 13 historical productions from *Prometheus Bound* to *The Emperor Jones*. Yet it is difficult to see what data or vividness Oenslager has added to already existing popular accounts by Mantzius, Nicoll or Cheney, not to mention the profounder works of scholars like Dubeche, Gregor, Plekhanov, Chambers, Gvosdev or Derzhavin. Actually the book's most curious defect is that it contains almost nothing of its author's undoubted experience as a craftsman. It is enough to compare his gossipy treatment of *Shakespeare's Theatre* with the highly important, workmanlike article, *Shakespeare's Stage*, by John C. Adams, which appeared in Theatre Arts Monthly last October. Oenslager does attempt to link historical performances with their social backgrounds; but since he views the society of each period only as a kind of "atmosphere," we do not get very far in understanding the living purpose of these productions.

How does Oenslager propose to put these classic achievements to work on our own stage? By translating them into modern idiom. This designer's style reveals what Broadway accepts as modern—essentially the pre-War idealistic symbolism of Craig and

Appia, with an occasional echo of cubism. Historically, this idiom arose as a reaction against the simple materialism of Antoine's Théâtre Libre; it is itself only an attenuated naturalism, and its purpose is to induce a magical nostalgia in the spectator. It seems to me a very debatable question whether translating the classic works of the past into this subjective style clarifies either the past or the present. In 1929 the German critic, Herbert Jhering, wrote that the way to re-create classic dramas is "to cool them; to bring them closer by making them distant." This great bourgeois critic thus arrived at the same belief as Friedrich Engels, that past cultures must be critically "alienated" in order to be properly understood.

Donald Oenslager has written a book with a good deal less content than Lee Simonson's volume of five years ago, *The Stage Is Set*. But at least he has not attempted to "debunk" the work of the scenic artist as Simonson set out to do, in the days when "debunking" was the mode . . . The recent tradition of the American theatre, which has been overwhelmingly literary (for commercial reasons) has been dangerously weak in its approach to production. If production is the general province of the director, it is the special province of the designer; in the previous decade American scene design made valuable contributions to production, now it is again being turned into "stage decoration." Any designer who at least speaks up for the vital importance of his work ought to be heard; and therefore, despite all the criticisms that can be made of it, *Scenery, Then and Now* has value.

We need more, not less, constructive critical thought on the part of theatre workers if our theatre is not to sink still deeper in a whirlpool of corrupt technique. If we do not maintain a forward-looking, critical attitude toward our own technique, we are not "free"; instead we are likely to become the victims of the most shabby platitudes of artistic theory. I hope Mr. Oenslager will continue to write, and that his creative experience will enter more and more deeply into his writings.

MORDECAI GORELIK

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## Gorki on the Films, 1896

(Continued from page 11)

monde. "Piquant" here means debauched, and nothing else.

In addition to the pictures mentioned above, there are two others. Lyons: women workers leave a factory. A crowd of lively, moving, gay, laughing women leave the wide gates, run across the screen and vanish. All of them are so nice, with such modest, lively faces, ennobled by toil. And in the dark room they are gazed at by their fellow-countrywomen, intensively gay, unnaturally noisy, extravagantly dressed, with some make-up on their faces, and incapable of understanding their Lyons compatriots.

The other picture is *The Family Breakfast*. A modest couple with a chubby first-born, "baby", is sitting at the table.

"She" is making coffee over an alcohol lamp, and with a loving smile looks on while her handsome young husband feeds his son with a spoon, feeds and smiles with the laughter of a happy man. Outside the window the leaves flutter, noiselessly flutter; the baby smiles at his father with all his chubby chin; everything bears the stamp of such a healthy, hearty, simple atmosphere.

And this picture is looked at by women deprived of the happiness of having a husband and children, the

gay women "from Aumond's," stirred by the astonishment and envy of respectable women for their knowing how to dress, and the contempt, the disgusted feeling produced by their profession. They look on and laugh . . . but it is quite possible that their hearts ache with anguish. And it is possible that this gray picture of happiness, this soundless picture of the life of shadows is for them the shadow of the past, the shadow of their past thoughts and dreams of the possibility of such a life as this, but a life with bright, sounding laughter, a colorful life. And possibly many of them, looking at this picture, would like to cry, but cannot; they must laugh, for that is their sorrowful profession. . . .

At Aumond's these two pictures are something in the nature of hard, biting irony for the women of his hall, and will doubtless be removed. I am convinced that they will soon, very soon, be replaced by pictures in a genre more suited to the "Concert Parisien" and the demands of the fair. And the cinematograph, the scientific importance of which is as yet incomprehensible to me, will cater to the tastes of the fair and the debauchery of its hangers-on.

It will show illustrations to the works of De Sade and to the adventures of the Chevalier Fauxblas; it can provide the fair with pictures of the countless falls of Mlle. Nana, the

protegée of the Parisian bourgeoisie, the beloved child of Emile Zola. Rather than serve science and aid in the perfection of man, it will serve the Nizhni-Novgorod Fair and help to popularize debauchery. Lumiere borrowed the idea of moving photography from Edison, borrowed, developed and completed it, and probably did not foresee where and for whom his invention would be demonstrated.

It is surprising that the fair has not examined the possibilities of X-rays, and why Aumond, Toulon, Lomache and Co. have not yet utilized them for amusement and diversion. And this omission is a very serious one!

Besides. Possibly tomorrow X-rays will also appear on the screen at Aumond's, used in some way or other for "belly dances".

There is nothing in the world so great and beautiful but that man can vulgarize and dishonor it. And even in the clouds, where formerly ideals and dreams dwelt, they now want to print advertisements—for improved toilets, I suppose.

Hasn't this been mentioned in print yet?

Never mind—you'll soon see it.

## Marching Song

(Continued from page 13)

to treat of all things not by statement but through the human tragedy and aspiration of living people and of sensitive flesh—that is an artist's task and a hard task and that is what Lawson had done.

In the mythical town of Brimmerton, in the setting, at once symbolic and highly dramatic, of an abandoned factory left to rust, left for a hideout for broken men, Lawson has created the whole flow and beat and struggle of a town and its people. It is the play of a town, of the automobile industry, of a sit-down strike,—yet it is not a play about any one of these things but rather of the varied people and groups of a community who have been captured from a real world to live more fiercely, more vividly, in the two-hour world of a stage play.

John Howard Lawson and the Theatre Union are presenting Brimmerton, U. S. A.



Martin Wolfson and Rex Ingram at a rehearsal of *Marching Song*

Martin Harris



## Film Checklist

(Continued from page 46)

behind her intentions. The fateful march of the workers to the Winter Palace where death awaited them, rakes you through and through with blasts of emotion; but the scenes on the barricades show little creative grip. The Siberian episodes, similarly, betray a faltering hand. At its best *Revolutionists* equals in warmth and conviction *The Youth of Maxim* which covers somewhat the same period in Russian history. On the whole it falls short of *Maxim's* amplitude and universal pertinence. The acting is of the high order one has come to expect of Soviet films—blends of verisimilitude and inner richness.

**THE WOMAN ALONE** (Gaumont British—directed by Alfred Hitchcock—with Sylvia Sidney, Oscar Homolka, John Loder and Desmond Tester—from the novel *The Secret Agent* by Joseph Conrad):

Unlike Hollywood which has been known to throw anything at a director from *Dracula* to *Dostoyevsky* and all within the same week, the English seemed determined to keep Alfred Hitchcock within the galling confines of the spy drama. *The Woman Alone*, (in England called *Sabotage*) is Hitchcock's latest and one of his best. Yet with all the brilliance his genius gives off, you cannot get over the feeling that here a wrong's been done. At that we're afraid not many will agree with us. The chorus of dissent grows louder and louder. "Let well enough alone. You should thank your stars that at least one man of great intelligence takes the trouble to make the movie thriller really exciting and at the same time adult." *The Woman Alone* does accomplish almost all that you can ask of it—a terrific suppressed excitement, ingenious twists, good characterizations and in addition, completely avoids the virulent anti-revolutionary bias of the original novel—but we feel we can ask more of Hitchcock. We can ask him to forget Scotland Yard just once and bring his gifts to a script worthy of himself. If we're proven wrong, there will be time to return to spies, bombs, detectives disguised as grocery clerks,

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**RECENT CONTRIBUTORS**—Vincente Lombardo Toledano, General Secretary of the Mexican Workers' Confederation, on "Trotsky in Mexico"; Anna Louise Strong, author of "I Change Worlds," on what she saw in Spain; Bernard Harden, organizer in the transportation unions, on "Whither the Railroad Unions?"; Charmion von Wiegand, well known art critic, on "Chirico and Picasso"; Theodore Draper, foreign editor of **New Masses**, on "The Chinese Chessboard."

**CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS**—John Mackey, Art Young, Rockwell Kent, Theodore Scheel, Herb Kruckman, Soriano, Gardner Rea, William Gropper, Darryl Frederick, Louis Lozowick, Lynd Ward, Maurice Becker, Jacob Burck, and many others.

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time to put the false mustache back on the British lion.

**BLACK LEGION** (Warner Brothers—directed by Archie Mayo—with Humphrey Bogart, Dick Foran, Erin O'Brien-Moore):

Far better than Columbia's *Legion of Terror* and similarly based on the activities of the Black Legion as revealed by the trial in Detroit. Regardless of the motives of the producers, congratulations are definitely in order. *Black Legion* will undoubtedly have a salutary social effect wherever shown. Most important is the plea for understanding and acceptance of the immigrant as an American entitled to all the privileges of the country he helps to enrich with his labors. It is regrettable that greater pains were not taken to provide the film with more credible writing and better production values. A stronger "marquee" drag and *Black Legion* would be in the position where it could influence many more millions of people. At that, it possesses more value than nine-tenths of its gaudier brothers in the class "A" films.

**CAMILLE** (MGM—directed by George Cukor—with Greta Garbo, Robert Taylor, Lionel Barrymore, Henry Daniell, Laura Hope Crews, Jessie Ralph, Lenore Ulric):

Time was when to perform *The Lady with the Camelias* was like serenading the Cabots and Lodges with the *International*. That was many years ago. The Verdi opera occasioned as



Garbo in *Camille*

much shock and protest as Strauss' *Salome* did, somewhat later. Very correctly Dumas' play was interpreted as an appeal against bourgeois morality. This element of protest and struggle accounts very largely for its continued appearance. Even such lesser specimens of the social play as *Way Down East* and *The Great Divide* owe their longevity to the same cause. Judging from the politely diluted version directed by Cukor you'd never realize the above. Every now and then, Lionel Barrymore babbles something into his beard about his son's career (Robert Taylor, incidentally, looks incapable of anything except buying sweetmeats) and there's an end to it. Garbo, however, achieves her finest performance. Now we can better understand Basil Rathbone's remark, "I learned all I know about movie acting from watching Miss Garbo." Her ability to scale mimetics to cinema size is simply phenomenal. Henry Daniell performs in a manner only second to Garbo. We can think of no one who would do as well as the Baron if it weren't Basil Rathbone himself.

**GREAT GUY** (Grand National—directed by John G. Blystone—with James Cagney, Mae Clark, Edward Brophy, Edward J. McNamara):

It's an old story by now—the business of fine artists saddled with mediocre material. Anybody who's heard Toscanini conduct the modern Italian school will know what I mean. The audiences that flocked to the Criterion Theatre are a personal tribute to the unique qualities Cagney brings to the screen. The film proper doesn't rate high—the usual rough-and-tumble stuff only partially atoned for by the documentation showing the methods food racketeers use to cheat the public. But Cagney emerges with authenticity and genuine charm. He must be seen.

**GOLDDIGGERS OF 1937** (Warner Brothers—directed by Lloyd Bacon—musical numbers by Busby Berkeley—with Dick Powell, Joan Blondell, Victor Moore, Glenda Farrell, Osgood Perkins):

The first time Victor Moore has been permitted to project the pathetic harassed quality that is his chief stock-in-trade. Needless to say he heightens



James Cagney in *Great Guy*

the interest of the entire play—a murderous yarn in which the spacious Moore is made the battleground of two warring camps, one attempting to kill him for the insurance, the other to keep him alive and collect the premiums. Moore not only lives but contrives to produce a musical comedy for Busby Berkeley to amuse and contracts a slightly amazing marriage with Glenda Farrell.

**AFTER THE THIN MAN** (MGM—directed by W. S. Van Dyke—with William Powell, Myrna Loy, James Stewart, Elissa Landi, Sam Levene):

At one point in the film "Nicky" Charles is comparing the signature of two checks. He tells Nora that if they match perfectly one of them is a phony. Which is as good a way of summarizing *After the Thin Man* as any. Phony and not as good! More callous—someone takes a breakneck fall down a flight of steps and Charles remarks, "My, what large confetti they throw around here." In bad taste—what they make the poor terrier go through is on the level of a "Dogville" short. Less satisfying from a plot point of view. The cast is still expert enough and the direction sleek enough however to provide above-average entertainment value.

## Teatro Espanol

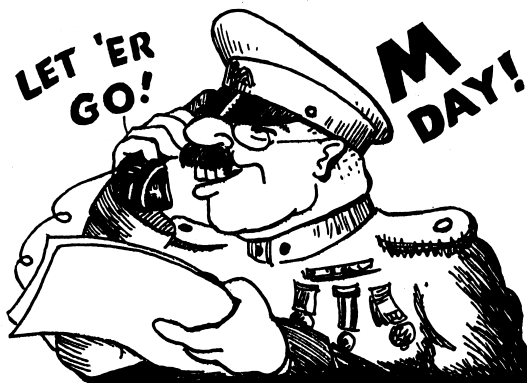
(Continued from page 14)

dwarf oaks upon it when we heard about this show, organized by the Anarcho-Syndicalist Theater Workers' Trade Union in Barcelona. I have never despised the violent impure crudities and sexual libertinism of the Barcelona music hall, as my early novel, *Lean Men*, will show, but I wondered what kind of a vaudeville we should see there behind our lines. I knew that the Anarchists had cleaned up the Barcelona music halls, imposed regular hours and pay, and had asked actresses not to make de-praved gestures, forbidden the public to demand or applaud them, and had closed down those music halls where these habits proved incorrigible.

That evening, beneath the bronzed sky, on the outskirts of a shattered village, I saw what I had seen in that Dredos village years ago. The strain of habit wrestling against ideals and better ambition, both in the artists and the audience. In the crowd of tired, war-worn and sex-starved men, longing for the strong fare of the old days of the Paralelo music hall, habit was checked by a new dignity and self-respect. The same was true of the artists. It was a moving experience.

There were good things in that show, both real wit and a robust Rabelaisian and proletarian humor. At one point a comedian came forward and with a sad shake of the head and a finely graduated sigh, began, "Comrade Perez of the Barcelona Supplies Committee recently discovered that he was supposed to be engaged in feeding the troops. . . ." A laugh greeted the sally and a few good-humored jeers at the Barcelona comrades were heard. Then, with a melancholy spread of the hands, the comedian went on, "In despair because of this astonishing discovery, Comrade Perez blew out his brains." Groans and lamentations from the audience, one or two crossed themselves in mock piety. The comedian waited, and with another slow shake of his head, continued, "Three weeks later Comrade Perez was told to stay away from his office because of untidy appearance." A pause. And then a

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fierce yell of delight as the sorrowing comedian covered his eyes with an eloquent hand.

There were other satires on the bureaucracy. The Jota is the folk dance song of Aragon, and Jotas were sung that night. I shall not attempt a strict translation of one of them, but it ran this way: "No, brother, you cannot go to the field latrine, you haven't the stamp of the Army Medical Corps. Button up your trousers, comrade, the Military Committee hasn't given you its stamp, its lovely brand-new stamp, nor have you the stamp of the Committee of Control," and so on, all accompanied with Twelfth Night frankness of mime by a natural clown of the people.

Now and again there came a fugitive moment of poetry. "Lucen dos estrellas en mi cielo," a song began. "Two stars glitter in my sky." A dozen hands were lifted to point over the gaping roof to a star that shone almost too brightly for planetary reality, seeming more like the back cloth of a stage. "Who will point out the other?" a voice said, and was hissed into silence. At the end of the song, we heard the dull grinding roar of an armored tractor out beyond the hill where our comrades faced the fascist lines.

Already the poets and writers are turning to their true work, and Piscator has come to help, but I wonder still what Garcia Lorca would have made of that opportunity. But Garcia Lorca is dead. The fascists do not mourn Lorca; they have no relations with the people. They would not have understood that poor struggling effort at a new theater behind the lines in shattered Aragon.

Lillian Hellman

(Continued from page 16)

out of her?" These lines, utterly out of place under the circumstances, offer a key to the author's intention. It is as if she were saying: "I won't romanticise; I won't blur reality." This desire for reality is eloquently expressed: "Murder is worse than lost love. Murder is worse than a broken heart."

But the sum-total of the play is a passive ethical statement: "All the things we know," says Andrew, "were there to know a long time ago. But we were polite. We were doing our best to live happily. Well there's no need for being polite any more." The phrasing of this is important: if everything was "there to know a long time ago," the events of the play have had no real value. Cora, the half-insane aunt, is the symbol of the moral decay which has undermined the Rodman family. The final lines show Andrew ordering her out of the room: "Take your breakfast out of here . . . get out . . . get out." This is an attempt at a positive statement. But it is merely a recognition of the rottenness of an outworn moral code.

How could Miss Hellman have attained a positive statement of her theme? Surely not by a mechanical emphasis on the economic factors which underlie the action. The author is interested in the personal lives of her characters, and she properly selects an environment which tests them under maximum social pressure. Julie's emotional difficulties are interwoven in the questions of social function and social morality raised by the strike. Julie's life is

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futile for the same reason that her husband's life is futile. The dilemma facing the middle class man or woman is the acceptance or rejection of a sterile way of life. Such a dilemma can be genuinely tragic only if it offers a genuine possibility of choice. Andrew and Julie seem forced to accept the presence of the gangsters: but if this situation is accepted as *final*, then its dramatic possibilities cannot be explored. A dramatic conflict must contain within itself the seed of its own solution. In order to attain the dignity of tragedy, the conflict must be of such a nature that there can be no compromise: life or death hang upon the issue, because life without a solution would have no further dignity or worth. Othello must solve the riddle of his jealousy or die. Othello is entangled psychologically, but the objective possibility of a solution is present. The futile atmosphere of the last act of *Days to Come* springs from the assumption that no choice is possible.

This assumption can only lead the dramatist into the fog which enshrouds Ibsen's last plays.

Miss Hellman's career as a playwright also depends upon a choice which is reflected in her plays. The choice requires courage and rigorous discipline. Art cannot be created out of shreds and patches of beliefs and sentiments. One cannot interpret a living social process without a living social philosophy.

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## The Diluted Theatre

(Continued from page 32)

*Wife*. Some five years before he wrote *The Country Wife* Wycherly had gritted his teeth in a devastating satire, *The Plain Dealer* (founded on *The Misanthrope*), but even the comparatively milder farce of a country wife and the smart seventeenth century society that enlightened her is snuff with a difference.

I do not hold with those apologists who removed Congreve's and Wycherly's rogues'-gallery of society to the land of faëry where their characters, like the society itself, are immaculate because non-existent. Neither did their contemporaries hold this to be so. The theory that *The Country Wife* is mere bawdy is also untrue. There are two themes in the play—the rottenness of Restoration society in its upper brackets, and the ingenuity of a young wife whose innocence becomes a snare for her and a delusion for her husband. The latter, and more attenuated, element overshadows the former in the present production partly because Ruth Gordon dominates the cast, partly because our time does not readily see Wycherly's poltroons and rake-hells as portraits of their age. Nor has Mr. Miller chosen to focus attention on this fact. (It is possible to envisage a production in which Wycherly's critique would be underscored for contemporary audiences by the presence of sober, possibly disapproving, middle-class citizens, as well as beggars, in the streets frequented by the gallants.) As a result, *The Country Wife* at Henry Miller's Theatre runs thin. Fortunately, however, the dynamite in Wycherly's old snuff-box spills over in at least segments of the production. One finds in Wycherly and Congreve a far greater accumulation of satiric material undiluted by sentiment than is generally the case with contemporary comedy of manners.

The wind—that would be the carriage trade—is more favorable to comedy of sentiment. Mr. Kaufman, who was more sparkling when he entered the White House last season with *First Lady*, appears in a more softened mood when passing through a stage door. *Stage Door*, written with Edna Ferber, recites the trials

of Margaret Sullivan who wants to be an actress which does not mean a profile. Hence her rejection of flattering offers from the film capital, her separation from her lover whom Mammon has corrupted, her resolute starvation in the Foot-Lights Club of the West Fifties. Fortunately her constancy is rewarded before our heart is broken. Granting that the playwright's blast against Hollywood acting has partial justification, that the satirization of fly-by-night idealists possesses point, the idealism of *Stage Door* seems faintly spurious. There is much shoddy in the glorified theatre, too, while progressive playwrights have returned from the Coast not much worse for wear.

The acme of sentimental comedy is of course the premier success of the season, Jacques Deval's *Tovarich*, adapted by Robert E. Sherwood. Interpreted by the fine directorial hand of Gilbert Miller, it shows us how far hokum will serve if dished out with nice elegance. A vast amount of credit also goes to Marta Abba, trained in Pirandello's school to the subtlest nuances of her craft, and to John Halliday. Prince Ouratieff and the Grand-Duchess Tatiana Petrovna, exiles in Paris, starve as long as they can and finally take service as butler and maid in a wealthy home rather than touch a centime of the fortune left in their care by the late Tsar. But when the Soviets are negotiating the transfer of valuable oil fields in exchange for badly needed French capital, the noble couple, loyal to the memory of the Tsar who loved his people like a father, turn the fund over to the hated Russian government that made beggars of them.

What matters is not the main course but the *hors d'oeuvres*. There is rich by-play in those fortunately numerous moments when the playwright gets down to comic business. The antics of the aristocratic couple as servants who fascinate their employers furnish the season's most captivating merriment. There is, moreover, a neat irony in the fact that their training at court has prepared them to be excellent servants. The difference between a butler and a courtier or a court lady and a housemaid is only a matter of degree,—the professional temperament is the same.

## Sweet Land

Conrad Seiler's *Sweet Land*, given by the Negro Youth Unit of the Federal Theatre, strongly affirms the southern sharecroppers' right to live. It touches upon two things not often dealt with hitherto in plays of this type: what the Negro was led to expect after his participation in the World War, and the suspicion and hostility of some of them to the idea of unity with white workers.

Although the content is so varied and comprehensive, it is the actors who give *Sweet Land* conviction. They play with such fine spirit and sincerity that we are hardly aware of shortcomings in the script. Especially good is Doe Doe Green—he was Gabriel in *Green Pastures*—whose performance has so much ease and vitality that he is a delight to watch every moment he is on stage. A great deal of credit must go to Venzella Jones' skilful direction. The movement and groupings seem natural, unforced. Spirituals sung by a choir, between scenes, heighten

the play's emotional effect. Only the two outdoor sets designed in mid-Victorian fashion, mar an otherwise successful production.

IRWIN SHAPIRO.

## Dr. Faustus

In *Dr. Faustus*, presented by Project '891' at the Maxine Elliott Theatre, the New York Federal Theatre Project has scored one of its most impressive artistic triumphs. In a sense it is a one-man affair, since the role of Faustus is played by Orson Welles, who also conceived and directed the production. But since it was the Federal Theatre which gave him the opportunity of carrying out his ideas, and since the finished product is one of the most exciting contributions to the theatrical season, the Project must receive due credit.

Welles has made a truly extraordinary use of lighting, which takes the place of any scenery, or of the lowering of a curtain to denote passage of time or change of place, and also plays a dynamic role in projecting

the dramatic values of the play. His performance in the role of Faustus is somber and moving; the rest of the cast gives him excellent support, and handles the Elizabethan blank verse with more ease and conviction than some of the performers in the Gielgud-McClintic *Hamlet!* E. F.

## Steel

Labor Stage's first venture, produced by the I.L.G.W.U. Players, is John Wexley's *Steel*, brought up to date with references to company unions and the present drive for industrial unionization. The play concerns a conflict between two steel workers in the same family, with a third act conversion to unionism and a bang-up movie thriller finish. The best scenes are those in which the workers of various nationalities sit around, talking and kidding each other; one of the most commendable things Labor Stage can do is to bring to union members not only a depiction of their problems, but a realization of the texture of their own lives. I. S.

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## Artist and Audience

(Continued from page 49)

to *Action* a strong protest against further carnage! But the realization in choreographic terms of these intentions fell far short of their goal, and the question arises as to what can this limitation be attributed.

In fear, perhaps, of succumbing to literalism, even realism, the director traversed to the other extreme. An icebound formalism constricted each number to a hard, frightening severity. Such dances as *Masque* and *Prelude to Action*, the one purporting to be war, the other protest, indulged in such obliquity of statement that impact with the audience could scarcely be achieved—or if achieved, could hardly be sustained. *Steps in the Street*, too, sacrificed the clarity of its brooding portrayal for prolonged elaboration of its technical counterpoint.

This passionate devotion to the technique of form, and this preoccupation with pure, non-correlative symbolism destroyed all hope for any semblance of social realism, without which a concept of war is a futile and unrecognizable abstraction.

It was no wonder then that at the first performance, *Tragic Holiday—In Memoriam* provoked the most applause. The use of shifting tableaux to suggest war-memorials, the use of a black standard as symbol of mourning, the use of small broken groups to suggest both compliant and protesting mass elements, gave this dance realistic verisimilitude, and the audience clutched at it with grateful enthusiasm.

The failure of the first-night audience to respond to a work which should have struck at their very marrow, must be laid squarely at the door of a choreographic approach unable, or unwilling to embrace the humanity and passion of its theme in human and passionate terms.

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OF NEW THEATRE, published monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1936.

State of New York SS.  
County of New York

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared David Crystal, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the New THEATRE and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

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