

# United Council of Working Class Housewives Protests Fire-traps

By VERA BUCH

**M**OVED by the occurrence of a series of terrible fires in ancient New York tenement houses in which workers and their children have recently lost their lives, the Housewives Council of Harlem, Branch No. 1, called a protest meeting Wednesday evening, Dec. 1st, at 212 East 104th St. Workers and housewives of the neighborhood flocked in to the meeting which was very well attended. Those who were not yet familiar with the work of the United Council of Working Class Housewives, of which the Harlem Council is a branch, expressed great enthusiasm for this organization of housewives and working women which is everywhere fighting for the workers' rights.

Mrs. Fabricant, one of the members of the council, acting as chairman, expressed the purpose of the meeting. It was called to protest against the loss of workers' lives in fires, and to take action to force the city to erect better homes. The first speaker, Vera Buch, organizer of the Working Women's Councils in New Jersey and one of the workers in the Passaic strike, explained the significance of the bad housing conditions which make the lives of the workers miserable not only in big cities like New York, but as well in the smaller industrial cities like Passaic.

## The Contrast.

**W**HY is it that on one side of New York City we have splendid mansions and magnificent apartment houses, and a few blocks away, on the East Side, old tenement houses not fit for dogs, houses literally falling down, but in which the workers are forced to live? The explanation lies in the roots of the economic system under which we live. The capitalists own the shops and other means of production. The workers slave for them. The workers produce all wealth and get a miserable wage while the boss heaps up profits from their labor. Why is it that the city governments do not provide good houses for the workers? If the workers think either democrats or republicans will do this for them, let them try these parties. They will find by experience that these parties are supporting the bosses.

## Minimum of Safety.

**I**N the shops and mines, the workers are losing their lives daily because the bosses will not put in safety devices to protect them. In the same way, workers and their little children are burned to death in their homes, because they live in decayed old tenements with wooden stairs, with rusty fire-escapes and narrow halls such that they cannot escape from. The landlords are responsible just as the bosses are responsible for the deaths in the shops.

The second speaker, Bonchi Friedman of the Amalgamated Food Workers, gave a moving talk in Jewish along the same lines.

He told how only the day before, in Cherry St. on the lower East Side, a young worker named Samuel Weiner had been burned to death with his two young sons, leaving behind him a wife and one child. The brother of Samuel Weiner, who was present at the meeting, sitting there with his tragic, grief-stricken face,

brought home very forcibly to the audience the horror of this 'accident.' On that very day, in Brooklyn, three little colored children had met their death thru a fire in their tenement home. These are only a few of many such atrocities which are an every day thing in the lives of the workers.

The following resolution was then proposed to the meeting and unanimously adopted:

**"WHEREAS** the workers of New York City are forced to live in miserable tenements, most of which are so old that they do not conform to the present housing laws and are a menace to the lives and health of the families in them, and

**"WHEREAS** it is of frequent occurrence in this city that terrible fires break out in these tenements, burning the homes and injuring the families

of workers and in many cases which have happened recently, even causing the death of some members of the families, and

## Talk, Not Action.

**"WHEREAS** there has been a great deal of talk and many propositions brought forth on this subject on the part of the governor and other officials of the city and state, but no action has been forthcoming to relieve the situation, be it therefore

**"RESOLVED**, that the workers of New York and particularly the women of Harlem here assembled this first day of December, 1926, protest against the burning to death on Nov. 29th, 1926, of Samuel Weiner and his two young sons in a Cherry St. tenement, and against all other such atrocities which have happened recently in this city. Be it further

**"RESOLVED** that a delegation be elected from among the workers of all localities in New York and from among organizations of workers in the city, to visit the Mayor in City Hall on Dec. 13 at 2 p. m., to voice such protest and to demand that the city government take immediate action to remove all old-law tenements and to erect new tenements which shall be safe to live in and shall be rented without profit at such low prices that the workers can afford to live in them."

**I**N pursuance of this resolution, a committee was elected from the floor to form part of the delegation mentioned. Other mass meetings are to be held in different parts of the city, similar to this one, from which delegates will be elected for the visit to the City Hall on Dec. 13th.

## TO FIND "BIGGEST BOOB" SEE PLAY AT WORKERS' THEATER IN NEW YORK

By HELEN BLACK.

(Special to The Daily Worker)

**NEW YORK, Dec. 8.**—If you have not learned who the biggest boob in the world is, you ought to see the play by that name which was given its first production in this country Saturday night by the Workers' Drama League of New York.

It is to be repeated on Wednesday, Dec. 8, and Friday, Dec. 10, at the Church of All Nations (2nd avenue near Houston Street) and every worker will certainly enjoy seeing it.

The play is about a group of weavers, who foolishly allow all the profits of their hard labor to be stolen by a scoundrel and used for his own pleasure. The play was written in German, by the Communist playwright, Karl Wittfogel, and it has been translated by Rudolph Liebig and adapted by Michael Gold.

## Local Touches Added.

In the adaptation, many local touches have been introduced which were greatly appreciated by Saturday night's audience. The action of the two prologues takes place in Passaic, New Jersey, and every time the weavers mentioned their home town there was loud applause. Another touch that met with enthusiasm and hearty laughter was the "Fierce Bull Dog" whose name was Gompers and who helped guard the apples belonging to the wicked capitalist.

## Hunt Biggest Boob.

The fact that the story is about Passaic weavers does not limit the action to that city, for two of the weavers go traveling to hunt the biggest boob in the world, and their journey takes them to Africa "among real cannibals," and to China to a Buddhist temple.

## Actors Are Workers.

The actors were all workers, many of them members of the Young Workers League, and they proved themselves just as capable of appearing before the footlights as of other more serious tasks. A few of those who took leading parts had had a good deal of experience which was evident in their excellent performance. But after the cast recovered from a bit of nervousness when the curtain first opened not only the leads, but every single weaver, cannibal and Chinaman played his part well. It would not be fair to pick out the four or five principals for special praise, for there was no one



**KARL WITTFOGEL**  
Communist Playwright, Author of  
"The Biggest Boob"

in the production who marred it by a bad performance.

This is the first production given by the Workers' Drama League, and as Michael Gold announced during the intermission, it is the beginning of an attempt to build up a real workers' theater movement in this country.

Those who took part in this first production were William Lenson, Adele Kaminer, Ann Chazick, John Vogel, Charles Yuro, Michael Lenson, I. Cohen, Jacob Wasserman Max Geldman, Max Gelman, Manuel Granich, Simon Rady, Kopel Koplowitz, S. Auerbach Edwin Stanley, J. Palchik, Evans Winner, Adolph Bassen, Betty Wolfe, Claire Swartz, Phillip Wolfe, Sonya Winet, Madeleine Michaelson.

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## Books for the Worker's Shelf

**NEW TACTICS IN SOCIAL CONFLICT.** A symposium. Edited by Harry W. Laidler and Norman Thomas. 230 pages. New York: Vanguard Press and League for Industrial Democracy, 1926. 50 cents.

To the student of the labor and industrial situation and to all anxious to keep in touch with the latest developments of American capitalism, "New Tactics in Social Conflict" will prove a source of keen satisfaction, for within this volume may be found the opinions, pithily expressed, of more than a score of students of labor and active leaders in the movement presented by many of them, from diametrically opposed points of view.

The subjects presented group themselves in general under the headings, "Changing Relations Between Property Ownership and Control," "Trade Unions Enter Business," "Changing Tactics of Employers Toward the Workers," "The Sweep of Industrial Combination," "American Economic Imperialism," "The New Propaganda" and "Power, Coal and Forests." But these titles give little idea of the immensely informative and stimulating symposium by thinkers and doers in the world of labor contained within the covers of this book.

## Newspapers Can Print Lawsuit News Without Libel, Is Court Rule

**NEW YORK, Dec. 8.**—The appellate division court here has reversed the decision of the supreme court that publication of lawsuit news by the press, which charges are not proved, constitutes libel. The case involved the Evening Post, that was sued for libel damages when it published the charges against a christian science practitioner as filed. The charges were later dropped. The supreme court held the publication was libelous.

The appellate court declared that when a suit is filed the charges are public property and can be examined by anyone, thus it is not improper for a newspaper to publish the story.

The case establishes an important precedent in libel cases.