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T H E A T R E
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C O N T E N T S :

| | |
|--|----|
| To all Dramatic Groups | 1 |
| Workers Theatre, a Report (continued) | 3 |
| Organ. Structure of Prolet-Buehne | 5 |
| Artistic Life of Prolet-Buehne | 8 |
| Relationship between Content and Form | 10 |
| Experience in Collective Playwriting | 13 |
| ELECTION PLAY | |
| "I'll tell you how to vote" | 15 |
| WORKERS CHILDREN'S THEATRE | |
| Children's Theatre and the Pittsburgh Strike | 24 |
| Beginning of a Meeting | 28 |
| News | 29 |
| Milk for Miners' Children, a Play | 30 |
| REVIEWS | 34 |
| CORRESPONDENCE | 37 |
| NEWS | 41 |
| RED SPOTLIGHT | 42 |

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TO ALL DRAMATIC GROUPS !

In the last year the Workers Theatre movement in the U.S.A. has grown tremendously. The number of groups is increasing rapidly. The fact that the Workers Theatre is a mighty weapon in the struggles of the working class is being recognized more and more. Now groups are constantly being drawn in for participation in political activities.

But this numerical growth was not accompanied by a proportionate increase in the quality of the work. While some groups have already done work of a standard not inferior to that of the best groups in other countries, other groups are lacking in ideology, organization, technique, and suitable material.

In various countries - like France, Germany, Japan, and Soviet Russia - the Workers Theatres are united in powerful national organizations which provide the opportunity for an exchange of experiences, material, and ideas. However, in the U.S.A. the groups are still isolated.

Many groups have realized this shortcoming and voiced the urgent need

to organize and unite

all Workers Theatres in the U.S.A.

The first step in this direction was taken by the Workers Cultural Convention, on June 14th in New York, by building the Workers Cul-

ral Federation, of which

the Dramatic Bureau

section, composed of members active in different dramatic groups.

The main task of the Dramatic Bureau is to prepare the ground for the formation of a Workers Dramatic Union of U.S.A. We therefore call upon all dramatic groups to plan and build this organization and to form local

Dramatic Councils

to carry out this work.

Comrades!

Time is short. We must make every effort to complete all this preparatory work!

Arrange discussions in your groups!

Elect the most capable comrades to the local Dramatic Councils!

Work systematically toward the formation of our

WORKERS DRAMATIC UNION OF U. S. A.

The Dramatic Bureau
of the Workers Cultural Federation.

WORKERS' THEATRE

by John E. Bonn (Prolet-Buehne, New York)

Report, given at the Workers' Cultural Convention
in New York, June 14th 1931

(continued from last issue)

V. Workers' Theatres in U.S.A.

The number of Workers' Theatres in U.S.A. - though increasing from month to month - is far from covering the need of propaganda, nor is the quality of most of them satisfactory for the present political situation.

The shortcomings vary in the different groups. In principle we find three types:

- 1) The bourgeois-type, neglecting the task of propaganda, only repeating some style of the existing bourgeois theatre (lay-theatre, art-theatre, entertainment-theatre), the audience being workers, the performing forces consisting of proletarians and of bourgeois elements (specialists, talents), and plays, acting and staging either influenced by the art for art idea or just done for entertainment.

This type has no propaganda value at all. It may answer the demand for entertainment of the broad masses and keeping them away from the propaganda influence of bourgeois theatres. But it is doubtful if this relatively small value justifies the large amount of time, money and energy invested.

- 2) The compromise-type, realizing agitation and propaganda as the purpose of the workers' theatre, but accomplishing this purpose by the means of the old bourgeois theatre, showing in style and method of working deviations towards type 1).

This type has some propaganda value. But all possibilities and means at disposal are not yet utilized as propaganda power.

- 3) The Agitprop-type, aiming to utilize the elements of theatrical production for only one purpose: agitation and propaganda, will appropriate style and method of work for this purpose. Thus creating new forms of plays, acting; settings etc.

This type is the lowest type from the standpoint of art, because it is at an early stage of development. It, there-

fore, shows all failures, errors, crudities of a primitive stage of development. From the standpoint of the class-struggle it is the highest type; because it utilizes all possible means in order to agitate for and promote the class-struggle. For, participating in the class-struggle is the highest and most important task of every worker.

In order to become an effective force in the struggle of the working class, the different groups (no matter what type they are nearest to) have to realize the tasks confronting them and the ways to accomplish them.

These tasks are:

- 1) To find the way to the masses
method: organization of new groups
improving existing groups (enlarging the field of action)
- 2) To get closer contact with workers whom we approach
method: including audience in performance
challenging the criticism of the audience
(questionnaires or discussions)
cooperating with revolutionary unions or with shops
- 3) To activize the groups
method: political information and instruction
- 4) To activize the audience
method: same as in 2)
- 5) To find a proper style and method of work
method: experiments in collective playwriting;
building up a technical apparatus, which can be used at any place
becoming independent of a stage
clear, elementary plays, omitting all superfluous matter

What does the Workers' Cultural Federation mean for the groups?

- 1) It gives more efficiency to the whole movement by unifying the single groups for united activities in important tasks.
- 2) It promotes the development of the groups by the following means
 - a) Exchange of experiences and material
 - b) Socialist competitions
 - c) Concentration of educational work by arranging courses (playwriting, staging etc.), discussions, lectures
 - d) Publication of a magazine as open forum of all groups

The Workers' Cultural Conference started the movement and now it is up to the groups to leave their isolation, in order to unite in a powerful front as it has been built already by the workers' theatres in Soviet Russia, Germany, Japan, France. The first step towards this goal is the organization of a

WORKERS' DRAMATIC UNION OF U. S. A.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
OF THE PROLET-BUEHNE,
GERMAN AGITPROP TROUP, N. Y.

by Marg. Haller, Prolet-Buehne, N.Y.

The Prolet-Buehne, the only German Workers' Theatre Group in New York, was started about 5 years ago as a section of the German Workers' Club ("Arbeiterbund"). It soon separated from the club and became an independent organization. Since then it has gone through years of experimenting, ideologically as well as organizationally. This report will deal with some of the results, so that other groups may benefit from our experiences.

The sharp turn from the old type of Workers' Theatre to Agitprop work, made in the beginning of 1930, was not only accompanied by a change of the methods and aims in our artistic and technical work but required also a reformation of the organizational structure of our group, for the apparatus must be suited to the task in order to carry it out effectively.

An Agitprop Troup has to work quickly, efficiently, and must be able to do the best work with the smallest amount of energy. It must constantly activate, develop and train all its forces. The best basis for this is the method of collective work. The organizational form that enables us to carry out collective work, is the committee. Until 1930 individual comrades were assigned to all parts of the work. From this time on we did our work collectively. So we threw over the only formal division of functions and found new organizational forms.

Important change was made in the composition of the Executive Committee. Until then it followed the scheme of the average mass organization, consisting of organizer, speaker and org. secretary. Now we divided the work of that committee according to its three distinct functions, which are, to direct the organizational, the artistic and the political activities of the group. Thus our present Executive Committee has three members: one organizational, one artistic and one political director. Not the single director is re-

sponsible to the membership but the entire committee. The Ex. Com. must prepare and control the work. Each of its resolutions must be approved by the membership before they pass as final decisions of the group.

The group also has a repertory and a propaganda committee, with the following duties:

The Repertory Com. has to select plays and programs
to write and review plays
to build up a library
to keep in contact and exchange material with other groups.

The Propaganda Com. has the following tasks:

to prepare certain campaigns of the group
to take care of the publicity and of the organizational work of our own affairs
to keep records and files of our past activities
to draw new members into the group
to broaden the field of activity.

These two committees must also have their resolutions approved by the membership before they can carry them out.

The prerequisite for a well functioning Agitprop Troup is strong discipline. There were many discussions and changes, until this strong discipline was rooted in the membership. We found that we could work much better and faster with a smaller but well disciplined membership than when we had many members and very loose discipline. For new comrades we established a probation period of six weeks, to allow them to become acquainted with our method of work. Thus they will know and be willing to fulfill all duties when they become regular members. These comrades have all rights and duties, participate in all activities, but become regular members only after the six weeks are over and they agree to work with us. It is understood that the groups approval is also necessary.

We found out by experience, that we have to have a certain number of comrades, whom we can absolutely depend upon, who are always available. So we divided our membership into two groups:

Group I: The members of this group consider the work of the Prolet-Buehne as their main political activity, are always ready for work and take part in all activities of the group. Release from group work for these comrades is only Party- or League work.

Group II: The members of this group choose for their main political activity another organization. They take part in groupwork only when they are not engaged in other political work.

Of course, all members of both groups have the same rights.

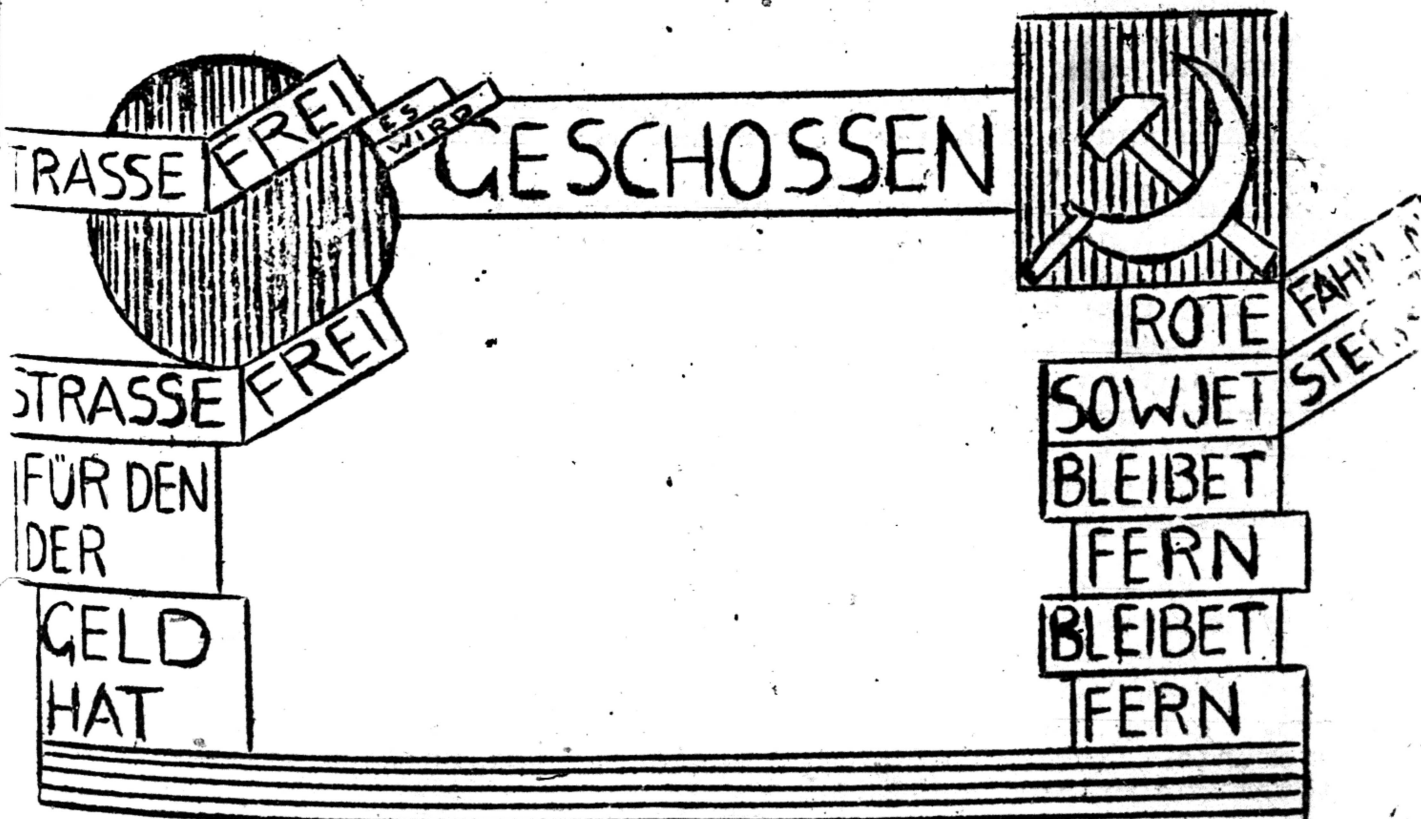
To give other groups the opportunity to benefit from our work, we are editing a series of publications: "Productions of the Prolet-Buehne"

The first issue contains the play "Work or Wages" ("Arbeit oder Lohn"). In the second issue, which is now coming out, we publish our Agitprop plays and mass recitations. Later issues will bring our two revues and the pantomimes.

By extending our field of activity not only to German speaking organizations out of New York (Philadelphia, Trenton, Newark and Chatham) but also to non-german speaking organizations, we increased the number of performances so that we reached in the first seven months of this year the same number as during the whole year 1930. The last event, a step forward in our Agitprop work, was the performance of a Scottsboro Mass recital before an A.F. of L. Union Local, without being invited.

The political activization of the members is an important part of our program. Monthly political reports and special discussions on outstanding events keep the members permanently informed. Besides that we participate in actual work, as signature drives, campaigns and demonstrations. Courses on Marxism and Leninism are also planned.

A better basis for cooperative and efficient work has been built by the formation of the United Workers Theatres of New York, including until now the Workers Laboratory Theatre and the Prolet-Buehne. A special report will deal with this new organizational step.



STAGE-FRAME CONSTRUCTION FOR THE SATYRICAL REVUE "STRASSE FREI! ES WIRD GESCHOSSEN!" (PROLET-BUEHNE, GERMAN AGITPROP TROUP, NEW YORK. No decoration. Construction carries the tone of the rhythm and the theme of the revue. Material: white and red cartons. Background: black curtain. * Minimum of expenses.

THE ARTISTIC LIFE OF THE PROLET-BUEHNE

GERMAN AGITPROP TROUP, NEW YORK.

by M. Thon, Prolet-Buehne, N.Y.

The Prolet-Buehne has not always been an Agitprop Troup. Until two years ago the Prolet-Buehne played to entertain workers at their affairs. There was, of course, always a general political tendency in the plays but not real propoganda for political action. According to this general political tendency the structure of the plays was still in the bourgeois style. But together with the political training of the members developed the artistic life of the Prolet-Buehne. Out of the intense class-struggle grew the agitprop style. We do not play anymore to entertain the workers but to do propoganda for the class-struggle, that is "Agitprop-work". To what extent did the Prolet-Buehne fulfill this task?

In the year 1930 we gave 31 performances, including revues, mass recitals, proletarian songs and poems. The first revue: "Strasse frei Es wird geschossen!" (Clear the streets, or else we'll shoot you!), consists of short satirical scenes and a pantomime. Some of the scenes are accompanied by music. The scenes can be played separately. The second revue: "Wenn wir wollen" ("It's up to us -") was given during the election campaign. This revue was of a more serious political tendency than the first revue. Some of the scenes were in Agitprop style. The music played a minor part this time, a gong gave the rhythm. The revue ended with a mass recital with rhythmic movements.

This year we gave so far 30 performances; including mass recitals, plays and pantomimes. - The mass recital is one of the most effective forms that we have tried out. It can easily be put up. It does not take much time to write and to rehearse it. Concrete events regarding the class-struggle can be dramatized in the shortest possible time. As for instance, the mass recital about the Scottsboro case was written, rehearsed and played in one week. Another advantage of the mass recital is that it can be played wherever workers are, as there is no scenery necessary. To make a mass recital more effective we use megaphones and posters with slogans.

As we were asked to perform before english and foreign language organizations, we had to find a way to make ourselves understood. We did this by means of the pantomime. The pantomime: "Divide and rule" was first played at a protest meeting against discrimination of the foreign born. A few posters marked the scenery, a drum gave the rhythm to the movements. Instead of a mass recital, posters with slogans were read at the end of the pantomime.

How do we write our plays?
Some are done collectively, some individually. In writing our last

play, we formed committees consisting each of two comrades. Ideas and contents of the play were formulated at the meeting. The plays, ~~pre-~~ sented by the committees were read, discussed and the best one chosen. This method seems to be very successful since all comrades of the group are stimulated to write.

The directing of the plays is done by one comrade. For each play a director is selected in order to give every comrade training in directing.

How do we put up our plays?

For mass recitals we do not need any settings at all. If there is a stage, we cover the background with a black curtain. Stairs connect the audience with the players. If we do need settings they are very simple. They can easily be put up and folded together, as for instance in our play "Work or Wages", we have the background of the set covered with drawings on gray paper. These drawings can be rolled up. Often posters are used for settings.

As to the music in our plays, it is very simple, too. Drum beats support the rhythm of the words and the movements. We have come to this simple rhythm out of necessity as we did not have any comrades who could compose.

One of the shortcomings of our group is the limited possibilities that we have to perform outside of German organizations. We try to overcome this by working together with the Workers Laboratory Theatre. As a result we gave joint performances; a collective report at the Workers Cultural Convention and a mass recital for the W.I.R. Furthermore we participated in the various mass pageants.

We have not as yet reached that point of agitprop work that they have in Germany. We have not had any performances on the streets, at demonstrations and open air meetings, except on August 1st, at Union S. under the direction of the Dram-Bureau of the Workers Cultural Federation.

Our work for the future has to be broadened to reach more workers, especially those that have never heard anything about the class-struggle.

Correction: - The editors note on page 6 of the August issue of the "Workers Theatre" reflects the individual opinion of a comrade and should not have appeared as an editor's note.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN

CONTENT AND FORM

-----BY A. PRENTIS

W.L.T. NEW YORK

What theatrical form and language should the Workers' Theatre adopt at the beginning to convey its message most effectively, to impress the audience deeply, to stir the masses to action with least waste of time and energy? Should it adopt realism or symbolism or mass recitation? The answer to this question lies in the aim of this theatre, the tools it has at its command, the audience it must act upon.

Every cycle in the history of the theatre, whether primitive, religious, etc., began with a period of creation, of upbuilding, of propaganda, and the theatre was used by the masses to help them in their struggle for existence. The present stage in the Workers' Theatre corresponds to those historical periods, and it must aim to help the masses in the struggle for existence by urging them to organize into militant class conscious organizations. That is the aim--now for the tools. Since the Workers' Theatre is a tool in the hands of the masses, to urge and inspire themselves to the fight, to train themselves for the struggle of the classes, a theatrical performance becomes a communal rite, not unlike the primitive dances or religious ceremonies during which solo actors appeared in their midst and, by means of enacted incidents in the struggle for existence, tried to arouse the spectators to express themselves, to participate in the rite, to take part in the struggle. Should that audience, for some reason, fail to participate in that rite the entire performance is incomplete, and the objective of the performance is voided, since the audience failed to respond to the very aim of the whole thing--that is they failed to train or arouse themselves for the struggle. That we may experience no failures therefore, we must train our primary tools--the solo actors, and the secondary tools--the audience, so as to have a perfect communal rite. We must train the actors to develop strong voices and supple bodies so as to make a lasting effect upon the audience. As training the audience is impractical, if not well nigh impossible, we must encourage them to participate in the performance in another way.

Since one of the effects of a theatrical performance is the identification of the audience with the performers, we must try to produce our plays in such a manner as to help our audience towards that effect. We must give our performances in meeting locals so that the worker feels more at home than in the artificial theatres. We must tear down the curtain which separates the actor from the audience, and we must finally place the action itself in the audience.

But we must not only break down the physical barriers between the

audience and the solo actor, we must also break down the language barriers, the psychological barriers. Our plays must not only be written in the language or dialect the audience itself speaks, but must also deal with situations each particular audience is familiar with. Thus the audience will associate itself with the performers instantaneously. This merging will make the performance part of the audience's experience, to be re-used whenever a situation similar to the one portrayed presents itself. Should the identification of the audience with the performers be incomplete, as when it does not understand what is going on, or when it feels it is only watching theatre, the performance does not become part of its experience effectively and will promptly be forgotten. Hence the necessity of realism in the Workers' Theatre.

There are other reasons why the Workers' Theatre must use realism, at present at any rate. Because of the lack of trained actors the Workers' Theatre must use "type" casting, that is, choosing a worker that nearly approximates, physically, the part required. Sometimes this worker has to take the part on short notice, sometimes he has to change the part to suit him by acting it out extemporaneously. Were the Workers' Theatre non-realistic such a thing could not be done.

Then again, the aim of a theatrical performance is to act upon as many of our senses as possible in order to impress upon our memory a certain experience. We try to affect the audience visually by realistic action or gestures, we affect their sense of hearing by having the actors speak. Sometimes the sense of smell is used, as in "The Spring" by George Cran Cook, produced at the Provincetown, where they placed pine needles in the audience. A non-realistic performance, say, a mass recitation, by its very nature affects primarily one sense, and is weaker to that extent. It is also not efficient, since every one in the audience must hear every word clearly to understand the performance, whereas in a realistic play it is possible to understand the performance by merely watching the actions of the actors. At the same time, realism should try to utilize mass recitations or rhythm whenever it can do so effectively.

For practical, for economical reasons, however, our realism should not be the realism of Belasco, who when producing "The Merchant of Venice," sent artists to that city to copy and reproduce the exact architectural styles of the period in the play. Since our memory is based on continuous experience, we can, by showing a part of the setting evoke in our mind, in our imagination, the remainder of the setting. By showing a table and a chair we imagine the interior of a room, by showing a fence corner and a street sign we feel we are in a city street, by eliminating all light on the stage we may be in a mine shaft or in a prison cell.

And now what about symbolism? Since a theatrical performance is an arrangement of symbols, each a reproduction of reality, in greater

or lesser continuity in time; both a realistic and a symbolic performance are simply different arrangements of the same thing, to be used however under different circumstances. The latter can be presented only to audiences familiar with the meaning of the symbols. For instance, O'Neill's "Great God Brown", presented before an audience of workers would be a wasted performance, the workers not knowing the Dionysiac symbols would not understand a word of it. Yet to the Greeks Dionysus was realistic. A policeman presented before a class conscious audience will stand for one symbol, when presented before a non class conscious audience will mean something else.

At the present stage of our theatre each character must display his characteristics in a realistic manner. As we become acquainted with our stock characters, we will know at once by the mere mention of their name, by their mere appearance, what they are symbols of. When we will see a reverend, when we will see a policeman, we will recognize them at once for what they are. Thus the realism of to-day will merge into the symbolism of to-morrow.

Editors Note: We are introducing the above article as part of a discussion on the relationship between Content and Form in the Workers Theatre, Readers are invited to contribute articles on the above subject.

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EXPERIENCE IN

COLLECTIVE PLAYWRITING

BY H. ELION

W. L. T. NEW YORK

In order to evaluate the collective method of playwriting it is necessary to sum up our experiences in the past and to distinguish clearly between those features which were done collectively and those done individually. It must be stated here that although we produced no play wholly on the collective basis there are enough indications that the method is to some extent very successful. There are also failures in some phases of the work. However, we cannot say that these failures are due to inherent fallacies in this method. The failures are due largely to the wrong application of the method to the details of writing a play.

Our experience in the W. L. T. in writing the Scottsboro play "Lynch Law" teach us that it is not advisable to insist upon one form exclusively. The mistake we made was that the form adopted by the majority of the playwrights committee was to be adhered to by every member. As a result some comrades were not satisfied with the majority decision and hence did very little to make the writing of the play successful. Since there is a disagreement as to form of playwriting and since we cannot as yet, say which form is most desirable for our purposes we can make use of these disagreements by forming smaller groups to try their preferred forms in concrete work. We found that this method was most successful in the writing of the play on the miners strike. In this case two plays were produced differing to a considerable degree in form and composition, and hence an organizational gain.

However, it would be incorrect to say that these plays were entirely products of the collective method. Let us see how much was done collectively and how much individually.

The executive committee suggested the subject for the play to the playwrighting committee in either case. The broad ideological requirements were outlined by the executive committee. These suggestions were thoroughly discussed by the playwrights and the scope of the material to be used in these plays was outlined. Comrades were assigned to collect the material which was discussed at the next meeting and the form was decided upon. Up to this point all of the work was done collectively.

The actual writing of the play was left, in the case of "Lynch Law" to one group and in the case of the miners play to two groups. No instructions were given to these groups as to how they should work. It was reported later that in either case the plays were written either partially by individuals as in the case of the Scottsboro play, or wholly by individuals as in the case of the miners

plays. However, these individuals modified their plays in accordance with suggestions made by the group. In this sense even there collective effort was used. The preparation of the factual material, of the ideological lines used by the writers was done wholly collectively. To this extent collective playwriting is successful.

Why do we prefer the collective method? The answer lies in the difference in the fundamental approach toward playwriting by bourgeois theatre depends upon the individual inspiration of the author for his ideas. The workers theatre uses the day to day events of the class struggle for its material. The ideas used are the ideas created by the forces of the class struggle. For this reason the scientific approach to playwriting is most essential. We must become thoroughly acquainted with the material conditions of the working-class in every situation we use. Once we have all the facts before us and after we discuss the ideological implications of the particular situation, it becomes the task of the group to shape the concrete events into an appropriate form.

All this work cannot be left wholly to the individual. It would take too much time and labour to produce results, and, then, it is doubtful whether the play could be used successfully. The workers theatre must impose its limitations upon the author so that he may write plays that can be used. All this work can best be done in a group. In the future we may discover better ways of working and extend our method to the actual writing as well as the planning of a play.

EVERY THEATRE GROUP IN GREATER NEW YORK

must send a
delegate to the

WORKERS DRAMATIC COUNCIL

at the Workers Center
35 East 12th St. N.Y.C.
8.30 pm sharp - Wednesday,

→ **SEPT. 16TH 1931**

I'll tell you how to vote.

by H. Elion.

Introduction.

This material should be produced in review form. The various sketches, songs, and the mass recital should be produced as one program. One worker can serve as a master of ceremonies. His task should be to link up the individual members and give the necessary unity to the whole program. He can introduce day to day news items in an interesting manner in speech or any other form.

Suitable music can be adopted to the songs. If there is no such music the songs can be recited. Music is, at present, being prepared for this program. We may include it in the next issue of the Workers Theatre.

Groups who have to deal with local issues, different from those suggested by the review, can use the material as an example form for review purposes, or they can whenever possible change the characters to suit the situation.

Characters: Worker I, Thomas, Brown, Walker, Hilquit,
Worker 2.

SCENE I

(2 signs at each end of stage "Vote Democrat" and "Vote Republican". Worker I walks from one sign to the other looks at it, walks over to the middle of the stage and looks perplexed. Worker 2 walks in, meets Worker I. They exchange greetings.)

Worker 2: Say, what are you worrying about? you look terribly worried. What's the matter?

Worker I: Election time is drawing near, I have to vote and I'll be damned if I know whom to vote for.

Worker 2: Which party did you vote for last year?

Worker I: Republican. But I got fooled. I used to vote Democrat but I got fooled when Wilson promised to keep us out of war, so I changed to Republican. I was always for a full dinner pail.

Worker 2: Are you working?

Worker I: No. That's just it. Didn't I tell you I got fooled. There is no prosperity. I'm unemployed ever since I voted for prosperity.

Worker 2: What are you going to vote for now? Both parties promise prosperity.

Worker 1: I think I'll change.

Worker 2: Change to what?

Worker 1: Democratic party.

Worker 2: What's the difference?

Worker 1: Hm. (Thinks) You got me there. Give us a chance to think it over.
Hm. What is the difference?

SCENE 2

Thomas, Broun, Walke

Thomas: Gee, the Mayor's late again. Two hours of my precious time wasted.

Broun: Ah, he'll be here any minute. Here he comes now. You can always tell when the Mayor's coming by the laughter that precedes him.
(Loud guffawing heard in the hallway outside)

(The mayor enters, all exchange greetings)

Jimney: You see Norman, even though I am a bit late now and then, the mob seems to like it. Give'em what they want all the time is my motto. The best dressed mayor in the world must also be the cleverest, and the sportiest, and (raises the finger of his left hand, winks, and gently runs the thumb of his right hand across his lower lip) the very latest. (They all laugh)

Broun: You put that over swell, Jimney. There's nothing like having a mayor with a sense of humor. I'll wager you could get a million dollars a year in the movies. That's what I call self sacrifice.

Jimney: Sure thing. It's a pleasure to be with you fellows, even though you are socialists. I used to think socialists was awful eggs. But I guess the new socialism like the new Tammany aint so bad after all. Now let's get through with the business.

Thomas: Say Jimney. I spoke in behalf of the people riding in aeroplanes. The smoke in the air above New York City is something awful. If you want to see justice done in this fair city of ours, you must do something about the smoke.

Jimney: Now, now, Thomas, don't get so violent. I'll attend to that as soon as I can. (Slogans of the unemployed are heard from outside)
What's that noise?

Attendans: An unemployed demonstration. They want their committee to see the mayor.

Jimney: The reds again. Let that committee in, let's get over with it.
(workers walk in)

Worker: In the name of the unemployed I demand that the city appropriate for unemployment relief.

Jimney: Demand, the insulance of these people. What do you mean demand? Where are we going to get the money?

Worker: You can save on the graft, you Tammany politicians get and help the unemployed.

Jimney: (Furious) You call me a grafter.

Worker: You all are. Its common knowledge. The papers are full of it.

Thomas: How rude.

Jimney: If it weren't for my respect of these people (pointing at Thomas and Broun) I would come down and thrash you. (to policeman) Take him out. (policeman knocks worker over the head and drags him out.)

SCENE 3

Worker 2: Well? What do you think of your honest democrats?

Worker 1: It's a damn shame. That unemployed worker was right. We must live somehow, and this socialist was sitting right there and didn't say a word. They are all crooks.

SCENE 4

SONG

You often wonder why there's nothing to eat
No shoes, no clothing, no milk or meat.
I'll tell you the reason, just stay in your seat
It's 'cause there's too much goods and too much wheat.

Workers are starving, nothing to eat.
'Cause there's too much goods and too much wheat.
They tell the farmer to stop growing more
and better get ready for another big war.

Wheat going up. There's joy in Wall street.
Locust is destroying the farmers grain.
Farmers are starving, nothing to eat
While locusts and bosses profit in the main.

Miners are striking and ask for bread,
They call the militia and shoot them dead.
"You have got some nerve, to want to eat
When there's too much goods and too much wheat!"

The bosses cut wages and speed you up
In the mine and in the shop,
And when you kick, you're thrown on the street
'Cause there's too much goods and too much wheat.

Evictions take place from day to day
You can't pay rent when you get no pay.
You can't pay rent you stay on the street
'Cause there's too much goods and too much wheat.

Workers and farmers are getting to realize
That they must get together and organize
Against the bosses and their tools
Democrats, republicans, and socialist fools
Who do not labor and always eat
While we make the goods and grow the wheat.

The miners are striking, the workers protest.
They want to get rid of the awful pest
That leaves the workers with nothing to eat,
'Cause there's too much goods and too much wheat.
HERE'S YOUR CHANCE, RAISE YOUR FIST.
SHOW YOUR STRENGTH. V O T E C O M M U N I S T.

SCENE 5

Capitalist and 2 marionettes, one bears sign "Herbie Republican Party", the other "Al Democratic Party". Capitalist carries a yellow sack with Dollar sign in one hand and in the other he holds the strings which manipulate the motions of the marionettes. No actual marionettes are necessary. Sharp and distinct movements will do the trick. Capitalist is placed higher than the marionettes. Also worker present.

Capitalist: (pulls strings, both marionettes get up and bow)
No idiots, that's no good. That gives you away immediately.
How can two different parties act the same way. (Pulls one string first, Republican gets up, bows, sits down. Repeats the motions with the other marionette)

Capitalist: Still no good. It's hard to make these two perform their tricks in different ways. (thinks) Yet it must be done. You must appear different. (thinks again) Hah, I have it. How about some real fighting. Show the public you are real mad at each other, real scre. Get me?

Marionettes: (nod) Yes sir.

Capitalist: (Pulls the string, Republican gets up) Now Herbie, smack Al on the chin and tell him what you think about unemployment.

Herbie: (Smacks Al on the chin and begins to speak)
The depression, ladies and gentlemen, is an act of god. The government cannot afford to interfere in such cases. Individual effort is the only successful remedy for unemployment. We carried through successfully last winter and we will do the same next winter. (Sits down)

Capitalist: Bravo, very good. Just do your slapping a little more often. Now, Al, do your stuff. (Al gets up, bows, grins mechanically, slaps Herbie on the chin and begins to speak)

Al: Ladies and gentlemen, it is true the depression is an act of god. My opponent stated that correctly. However to say that we dealt with unemployment successfully last winter is wrong. We must not blind ourselves. We must give the unemployed more soup lines, more and better bread lines. If we get elected we promise to place a bread line in every block. Here, that for you. (Slaps Herbie, while saying the last sentence and repeats) a bread line in every block.

Capitalist: (In ecstasy) Great, I think you're much better than Herbie. You'll go swell with the public. Now for some good issues. Real issues. Issues, that don't matter. Ha, ha, ha...

Herbie and Al: Ha, ha, ha,...

Capitalist: Shut up.

Herbie and Al: Shut up.

Capitalist: Damn it. I've been pulling the wrong string. That may give me away. How about trying prohibition as an issue boys? Let's go.

Herbie: Prohibition will put thousands of people to work, (slaps Al) You hear, thousands of people. It's the only solution for unemployment. Your party brought this state of affairs about.

Al: You're all wrong, Herbie, and you know it. Your party brought this prohibition about. We were always against it and now see what you done (smack) you brought about a crisis. We'll fix it. We'll abolish prohibition immediately. Vote for us.

Worker: (who was present during the speeches, to audience)
It's funny as hell. They fight each other. They are sore and yet I see no difference.

Capitalist: It works alright. It worked that way a long time. (Thinks)
Yet I wonder whether I can afford to take a chance. I should really include the socialists in my game. That's something real new. And it would make a hit. It would sure make a hit.

SCENE 6

Song sung by Broun, Thomas, and Hilquit.

The singing should be combined with socialist dancing and republican hooliganism; any simple tune can be adapted to fit.

All three:

Well here are we
The jolly three
Election time is drawing near,
We come to you in awe and fear,
To tell you how to vote-- tra la
To tell you how to vote.

Broun: Well here am I
Simple and shy
I am Heywood, give a job till June.
In "Shoot the work" I'm leading Broun.
I'm Babe Ruth's greatest baseball fan
And now I'm running for Alderman.
I'll tell you how to vote-- tra la
I'll tell you how to vote.

Thomas: It's my next
I'm perplexed.
I'm Walker's greatest enemy
He defiles the name of liberty.
The city's air is full of smoke,
Jimmy thinks it is a joke.
I stand for cleaner government
Until we control the money spent.
I'll tell you how to vote -- tra la
I'll tell you how to vote.

Hilquit: Near and far
And at the bar
I'm one of the greatest legal sharks
I advise my party on Karl Marx.
Nobody dares to question me
I always get my legal fee
I'm rich and clever I know the game
I rob the workers without shame
I'll tell you how to vote -- tra la
I'll tell you how to vote.

The czarist bosses
Had their losses
Through the Soviet revolution
which is against our constitution
The workers' case cannot spoil
My chance to get some dough on oil
I'll prove that workers have no right
To beat the bosses in a fight,
I'll tell you how to vote -- tra la
I'll tell you how to vote.

All three: You are free
To vote for me
If you want to save the capitalists
You ought to vote for the socialists
We'll tell you how to vote -- tra la
We'll tell you how to vote.

Workers: (to audience)
Three big fakers
You've seen at a glance
Fellow workers
Here's your chance, raise your fists,
Show your strength
V O T E C O M M U N I S T .

SCENE 7

Mass Recitation.

Friends
Fellow workers
Comrades

Arise from your slumber
Shake off your indifference.

Workingmen

Will you let yourselves forever be exploited?
By Wall street
For Wall street
For Wall street of the whole world?

No - Unite and fight.

Working women

Will you forever have your rights denied
By the Exploiters
For the exploiters
For the exploiters of the whole world?

No - Unite and fight.

Workers children

Will you forever let yourselves be enslaved
By the rich
For the rich
For the rich of the whole world?

No - Unite and fight.

Unite and fight

Against wage cuts
Against speed up
Against Deportation
Against police terror
Against hunger and starvation

Unite and fight

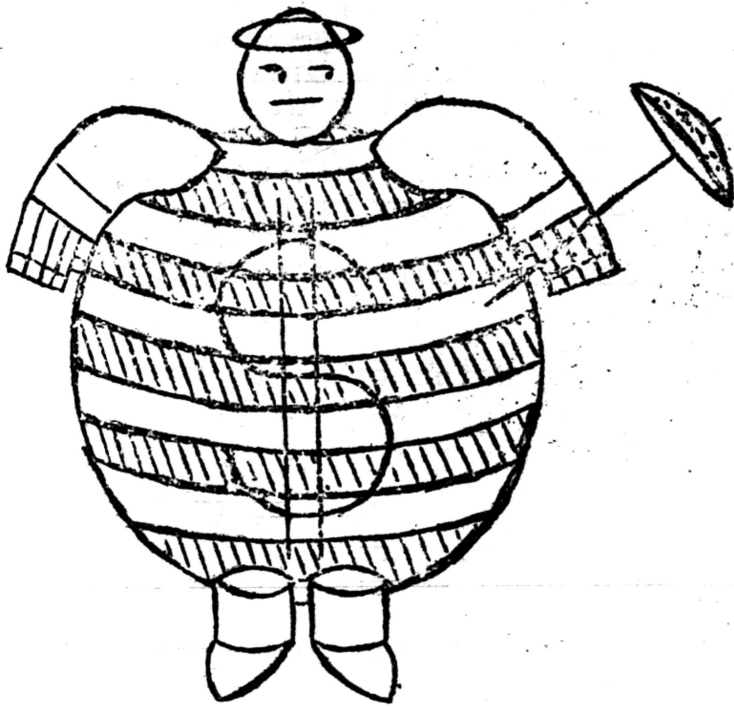
For unenployment insurance
For shorter hours
For higher wages
For right to strike
For right to strike against starvation

Proletarians

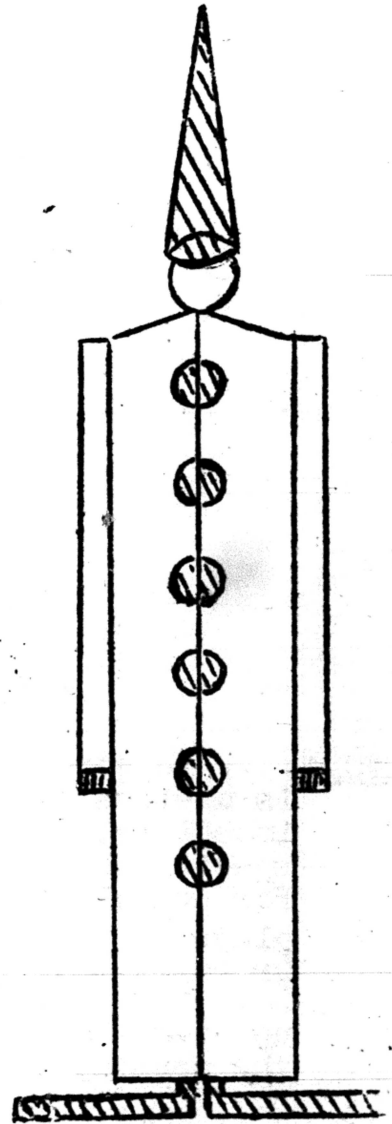
The choice is in your hands - will you choose for
Slavery or freedom
Hunger or bread
Exploitation or free labor
Unemployment misery or unemployment insurance
Old age misery or old age pension
Profit production or planned production
The rule of money or the rule of labor
They or you
Capitalist class or working class
CLASS AGAINST CLASS
CLASS AGAINST CLASS

Fellow workers
You must vote
It's your chance
Raise your fist
Show your strength
V O T E C O M M U N I S T .

(Singing of the International)



CAPITALIST CLOWN



SOCIALIST CLOWN

COSTUME SKETCHES for the "POLITICAL CIRCUS 1930",
an open air production of the Prolet-Buene, N.Y.
Capitalist Clown: Blue-white striped costume, black hat, umbrella
' showing the colors and stars of the U.S.-flag.
Socialist Clown: Yellow frock; hat, buttons and shoes black.

WORKERS CHILDREN'S THEATRE

CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND THE PITTSBURGH STRIKE.
METHODS OF ORGANIZATION.

by Al Saks, W.L.T., N.Y.

Editors Note: The first attempt to organize Agitprop Troups during a strike has been made, (in the U.S.A.) in the present struggle of fotty thousand miners striking against starvation. The W.L.T. sent an organizer into the field for this work with the result that at present there are two groups at work. One in Meadowlands, Penn., the other in Brownsville, Penn. The organizer found that the most accessible element for this type of work were the children. He immediately began work with the children. Below he has summed up very briefly some of the lessons that may be of value in the organizing of Childrens' Agitprop Troups.

MATERIAL.... Be sure to have material with which to begin work. It is useless to attempt work without the material with which to immediately activize the children. Are you dealing with a special phase of the struggle? Make your material potent. For example, you are working in the mine strike; build your plays around the immediate demands and incidents of the strike. Or build your plays around some local working class issue. Look for special problems of the children that can be linked up with the broader issues; material of immediate interest of the masses.

METHOD OF APPROACH.... The quickest approach is through a Pioneer Group if there is such. You will have no trouble introducing dramatics into the Pioneer Groups. Otherwise work through the adult revolutionary organizations such as the "Unemployed Council", "Young Communist League", etc. Approach the fathers and mothers in these organizations, talk to them of the importance of the children taking part in this struggle for bread. If there is no organization then it is your task to go from house to house and make contacts in sympathetic households. In case of a strike, go to the local strike committee. Present your problem linking up the Workers Theatre with the strike, pointing out how these groups of children through the plays can aid in relief and help to keep up the spirit of the

strikers. Do not expect the strike committee or whatever organization you are working through to take the initiative after you have explained your work. Circulate among the men and women of the strike committee and ask them to assist you in gathering up the children. Get three or four of them to promise to send the children from their neighborhood to the first meeting.

FIRST MEETING.... My experiences in the strike area have taught me that the difficulties of gathering the children will be negligible. They are eager to work and learn. Their spirit is very much alive. Here you are at your first meeting. You will in the simplest of terms explain to them what a Workers Theatre is. You will talk on the movies and the different forms of bourgeois entertainment pointing out their failure to assist the worker and his children in their problems. Draw the children into the talk. Ask them questions about their homelife. **BE CAREFUL NOT TO TALK TOO LONG!** Ask them whether they have ever taken part in plays before and let them tell their experiences. Keep an eye out for those children who show a quickness in answering and an eagerness to demonstrate their talents. These children you will utilize for your future leadership.

PATIENCE.... Above all you must remember that you are working with children and not grownups. Be patient! If you have no patience you had best not begin. Children are excellent material to work with, but they are subject to whims and moods, and are much more sensitive than older people. Children very easily fight with each other over petty matters. You must therefore be cautious. **GO SLOW!** If you find the members of your troupe in tears, (as happened quite often), trace back to the root of the matter, — point out the necessity of the solidarity of all workers children; how much more effective it would be to fight with the bosses, their sons and daughters. (Always keep the class issues in front of them). Watch out for individualism. Here is something that will break up any group if allowed to develop. In most of these groups there are three or four children who are more garrulous, glib and ambitious than the others. Find out the basis for this individualism and if it has a sound basis and can be turned into a correct guidance for the other children, foster it. But if it has no basis but ego shows a tendency toward capitalistic individualism, you must slowly teach the child otherwise. Do not be afraid to rebuke such a child before the others. Remember that wonders can be accomplished in a short while if we but apply the correct method and exercise patience. Remember you are here to train them in the fundamentals of Theatre from the class angle, — rhythm, movement, voice. You must have yourself well under control. In other words, your motto must be patience, patience and once more patience.

COMPOSITION.... How many children were present at the first meeting? If you had more than twelve children it would be best to form another group with separate meetings. Groups of ten are perhaps the best to work with. You will find generally that most of the children will be girls. It becomes then a most important and immediate problem, to draw young boys into the groups. Another thing: find out if there are any negro families in town. Go their homes and speak to the parents. You will have a well balanced group if you have colored and white of both sexes. This work of drawing the colored children into the group must be one of your principles right from the first meeting. If you impress this point on the children in the early stage of the game they will assist you and your problem will be much more easily solved. Once you begin forming your troupe with the elements on hand neglecting colored children and white boys you will find it much more difficult, and tremendous loss of time to try to make changes later.

DISCIPLINE.... Here is one of the most important phases of troupe work. You must establish an immediate control. Get them to understand the seriousness of the work. Handle them as you would adults and they will respond likewise. If you find that you have trouble keeping them quiet, as you no doubt will have, then it would be best to have one of the mothers or a responsible comrade from the strike committee attend the meetings until you have the necessary discipline. This can be done without making it unpleasant for them. A good method of keeping them in order is to pick out some of the older children in the group and let them take charge of three or four of the younger children. Thus the responsibility will rest with the children themselves. During rehearsals you must train them to be alert and ready. Keep them constantly aware of the necessity of discipline if they are to develop into an effective theatre. At this age of the game you will find it is much easier to develop discipline than when they grow up. Therefore discipline them. In a few weeks time you will note results.

LEADERSHIP.... In organizing any group the organizer must see to it that someone will be ready to continue the work in case he must leave. Working with children is no exception. You may find it more difficult to locate a potential leader among the children but if you find no one, - go to the youth department if there is a youth organization. If there are no organizations you can turn to, scout around among the class conscious workers and keep your eyes open for someone who shows an interest in the work. Try to get him to take over the work. If you are not going to leave a permanent organization your work will be wasted. You will find at least one of the youngsters who is a bit more serious than the others. Talk to him or her. Let him conduct one or two of the rehearsals. Show the children that you have confidence in these leaders. **DEVELOP LEADERSHIP!**

PARENTS....Keep in touch with the parents of the children. Find out what the conditions are at home. How class conscious are the parents, how active he or she is in furthering working class propoganda and organization. You will find the traits of the children developed from the influence of the father and mother. You must be sure that the members of your troupe will not be taken away from you the day before they are scheduled to play. This will happen for instance during a strike, if you do not keep close tab on the parents. If the father is dissatisfied with the relief committee, etc. his first tendency is to prohibit the children from doing anything. If you are in touch with the home and have established friendly relations you can easily convince the parents to let the child continue. If children drop out, always make it a point to find out why and show the children that you are interested enough in them to want to talk it over with their fathers and mothers. **KEEP CLOSE CONTACTSWITH THE PARENTS.**

IDEA.... Supposing then you already have a troupe in rehearsal. You are almost ready to play. Where are you going to play? In time of strikes there are affairs for the relief of the strikers. There are mass meetings. These are always excellent places to perform. It is a good idea to elect a committee of the children to get in touch with various organizations who show the slightest sympathy with the strikers. Let the children go along with some responsible party, either yourself, or one of the older children, and present their plan to the organization. It is also possible to scout around town and locate a truck that will be donated for the use of the children. Then at noon time descend on one of the factories or mills in the neighborhood with a mass recitation or a playlet followed by a collection by the children. Are there any vacation resorts in the vicinity; let the children's committee approach them and suggest putting on a few plays by the children's theatre of the striking miners. If there is a sympathetic, humanitarian minister in town, get in touch with him and suggest playing in church. Approach the schools, the elks, the moose, all organizations if workers through sympathetic individuals in that organization will take to the idea of a childrens theatre. If there is no strike, you always have a basis for relief for the ten million unemployed workers in this country. Relief through solidarity of the working class, relief and the building of the working class relief organization, the Workers International Relief. Relief for political prisoners through the International Labor Defense, The problem of agitation I do not mention at all in this short article. This requires separate space.

to about your experiences in organizing Workers Childrens Theatres!
and in your plays and other material to the "WORKERS THEATRE"!!!!!!!

A BEGINNING OF A CHILDRENS THEATRE
GROUP'S MEETING IN THE STRIKE AREA.

by Al Saks, W.L.T., New York.

This for instance is one of the daily incidents that
confront an organizer.

(All of the group gather for rehearsal and soon I hear the
continuation of an argument that seems to have been gather-
ing storm for the last few hours.)

Anne: Hello, Comrade Al. (Quickly) Say, Mary can't be in the play, her
father is a scab.

Mary: I can be in the play. Can't I, Comrade Al?

Anne: Well, my mother says, your father went to the Diamond mine this
morning and I'm not gonna play with a scab.

Al : Now just a minut, Anne. Did your father go back to work, Mary?

Mary: Yes.

Anne: Yes, and my mother says.....

Mary: Well, I don't care, I'm not a scab.

Anne: Yes, you are.

Al v: Wait a minute, Anne. Do you think its right for him to go back
to work while the rest of us are out on strike?

Mary: No. I don't. I told him not to go. But he told me to shut up.

Anne: You see, she's a scab.

Mary: I'm not a scab.

(by this time they are both in tears)

Anne: You are, and I'm

Al: : Look here, Anne. She's not to blame for what her father does.
If she's with the strikers and she wants to help, we should take
her in the play. If you call her a scab when she wants to help,
and don't let her in the play, you won't teach her anything but
just make her angry. And when you and she grow up and go to
and then you go on strike, she will be a scab. But if we make
one of us, one of the club, then when she grows up, she will
be a scab. Isn't that so.

Mary: (slowly, still in tears) Yes, that's so.
: But Mary, if your father is scabbing, he probably won't let you take a part in the play with us.

Mary: (still sobbing) I don't know. I don't think so.

: Well, comrades, what are we going to do about this?
(Silence)

: I think, all of us kids should go down together to-night, and tell her father that we don't think it's right for him to scab, and that we want him to stop scabbing, so that we can win the strike and have milk on the table, and so that Mary can be in the play with the rest of us. What do you think?

Everybody:
Yah, gee, that's right. Sure, we'll do it. To-night we'll meet at the relief station.

FROM FRANCE. - An incident throwing light on the excellent work of Pioneer Dramatic Groups took place during the Miners' strike here in April. - The local groups were asked to perform a Collective Report calling the mine workers to struggle. They refused to perform on the grounds that they did not have sufficient preparation. The children learned the recitation in five days and gave a very successful performance. It went off so well that they were asked to play a second time before a much larger audience. - On the same trip the children performed before hundreds of railwaymen. - Experiences like these prove the value of the Childrens Theatre in the revolutionary movement.

FROM GERMANY - The work of the Pioneer Dramatic groups is perhaps further developed in this country than in any other capitalist country. Here special stress is laid to the problems of the children by their own Dramatic Groups, linking up the struggle closely with the exploitation of the children. This must become one of the major principles of the groups in the United States.

UNITED STATES - The Pioneer Dramatic Group in Paterson, organized by a member of the W.L.T. is doing fine work in the present Textile workers' strike. On Aug. 20th the group performed the play "Milk for Miners Children", published in this issue of the magazine but of course changed to the situation in the Paterson-strike, before a large audience of strikers.

SEND YOUR PLAYS, SEND NEWS, REPORTS TO THE MAGAZINE, 799 BROADWAY, N.Y.C

MILK FOR MINERS' CHILDREN.

A childrens' play-

written by H. Taylor, Brighton Beach Grand

Characters: Crowd of children
Pete, Dave, Maryy
Myrill, leader of the boys.

Scene: A small shabby room with signs all over, indicating names of clubs such as : Orioles, Scouts, etc.

(Group of children come walking in, listening intently to two boys speaking.)

Pete: You'r a big fool, Dave. Do you think a fellow my age would drink milk? I'm 14 already. Only Babies, infants drink milk.

Dave: I'm not a fool first of all, and I still say you'd drink milk with pleasure if you could get some. I had some real milk once. Let's see, it must have been 3, 4, 7 months, 3 weeks and 6 days ago. Gee, it sure tasted swell, too. But what's the use, I still say if you had milk, you'd drink it with pleasure.

Pete: Like fun. Say, do you know my father ain't drank a glass of milk since he was 8 years old and now he's 43. Boy, he's strong, lemme tell you. Say, how did you get that milk that time 7 months ago anyway?

Dave: I can't tell ya here but mabe I'll tell ya later.

Pete: Bah! You never drank milk anyway, you'r using excuses already. Why don't you tell us how you got the milk? Huh.

Mary: Aw shut up, will ya? We want to start the club meeting. You fools are arguing for the last 10 minutes over milk when you know you'll never get any, unless somebody that feels good accidentally, gives us some. Lot's forget it and start the meeting. I've got good news for you all.

Small boy: Sure, lot's start.

(Everybody sits down, Dave gets up and opens the meeting.)

Dave: We will open the meeting with the salute to the flag. Everybody stand up!

(They all stand up, but Mary raises Hand)

Mary: Listen, kids, why should we salute to the flag anyway, we never get any good out of it.

Dave: Sit down, what do ya mean not salute the flag? Don't we always do that in school? Anyway what would Myrill say if he heard you act like this?

Mary: I'm fed up on Myrill and his company. Does he come from the mines? He's a stockholder in Million Incorporated. He's only a pansy faced fool and kids us along. What we need is a club to help the strike. If we listen to him we'll soon be going home and tell our fathers that they ought to scab. Last week when he came, he brought us some lollypops and while we were eating them, he was hoping that we wouldn't finish them so fast, so he could save the rest for the next time. What we need is a club to help us out. When he comes in, don't anybody take his lollypops; just kick him out. We'll tell him that he's a rich kid and don't belong here. He gets plenty to eat and I noticed, he always has a clean shirt on when he comes. We wear dirty dresses and clothes, because we've got to work and have no time to clean up. Well, are you kids going to stand it? Are you going to make friends with a rich guy that's making us starve?

All: NO ----NO!

girl: Sh, here comes Myrill.

(Myrill enters, is well dressed with nice white knickers and a sport sweater. He has a tennis racket with him. He takes out a comb and combs his hair.)

Myrill: Hallo kids! (snobby voice) I was just playing tennis with Governor Pinchot's niece. You know, she's my fiancée.

Dave: Aw go, blow your nose. Who wants to know about you and your snobby friends. Sram! We don't want any parasites here. Beat it!

Myrill: (surprised) Why? I'm astounded at your language, David. What excuse have you for this ingratitude? My stars, you seem terribly perplexed about something. What is it?

Dave: We don't want you here, pansy. This club is for workers' children and we don't want any parasites who never did a bit of work in their lives. Fiancée, tennis, money---- Bah, sram!

Myrill: Why? David, you are speaking like a bolshewik. How many times have I told you not to associate with reds. Who incited you? This is preposterous. Your language simply mortifies me. (sniff sniff)

Mary: Say, stop sniffing! And take a hint. We don't want any of your kind around here. Now, follow your nose and stop acting. Hurry up, we don't want you here.

All: Come on, beat it, stone him!!

(Myrill runs out, leaving tennis racket.)

Mary: No, have pity on the stones, they may get soiled if they hit him. Now let's start the meeting. The meeting is now called to order. Election for chairmen. Nominations are now opened.

Small boy: I nominate Dave.

Small girl: Peto.

Mary: Come on, let's take it to a vote. All in favor of Dave (3 raise hands) all in favor of Peto (8 raise hands) O.K. Peto is chairman.

(Peto takes the place at head of table.)

Peto: I suggest that we make a plan of action for the week and name the club.

Mary: I second the motion.

Peto: Any objections? No. Then the floor is open for suggestions. Who wants the floor?

Mary: I do. Listen you kids: we've got to change the name of the club and do some real work this week. The new name should be "The Young Pioneers of America".

Small boy: Gee, that's a swell name.

Mary: Sure it is. But we got to live up to the name. Yesterday a man came over to my mother, and he saw that she was a smart lady, so he told her that he came from New York. He said that workers back East wanted to help the miners' strike, and also that they had a club, called the I.L.D. that would take our dads out of jail when they get arrested. He said that they were communists. Then he told me about a club back East called the Young Pioneers of America. He said

that when there was a strike in Passaic in 1926 the Pioneers helped, too. Here's what they did: they went on the picket line and rode on the backs of trolley cars, called the scabs names, stoned them and booed them until they quit work. Now we're going to try the same system here. Tomorrow we go on the picket line and sing songs and cheer. Then we will stone the scabs and give 'em hell. How is that? (lowering voice) Anyone who objects, gets a kick in the pants. Who objects? (Silence) Well, that's that

Pete: I think that Mary has included nearly everything. Anybody else wants the floor?

Dave: Yes, I do. Do you remember, when we were in school last September, the teacher was talking about the depression? She said that it was going to be over when the leaves fall off the trees. Well, maybe she meant the pine trees, they never lose their leaves. Well, to get to the point, we're all starving, yet, and now in addition our dads are striking. Now listen, we kids are going to get food and all from the workers' International Relief. My dad told me. And he also said, we would get clothes, so no need of worrying about the red cross not helping us. It's the W.I.R., a workers' organization, and we can depend on them, too. Now, as Mary said, we got to get out on the picket lines in the morning. In addition to that don't forget to bring your dads along, and don't forget, we're with the National Miners' Union not with the UMW. Anybody who objects to this also gets a kick in the pants. (Silence) No objections? Fine. Now don't forget to be on the picket line in the morning. That's all, now everybody scam home with the good news. So long, kids.

(Everybody goes out except Pete, Dave and Mary)
Pete: This is going to be swell, now I can throw a stone at a scab and holler bitch, without Myrill sayin that my language is to autratious. How do you like it?

Dave and Mary: Swell!

Mary: (leaving) So long.

Dave and Pete: So long.

Pete: By the way, Dave, how did you get that milk 7 months ago?

Dave: Promise, ya won't tell?

Pete: I won't tell.

Dave: Well, that day the circus was in town and one of the fair cows got loose. My brother Gil helped me corall her and we got some milk.

REVIEWS

REVIEWS AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR!

The first revolutionary mass performance
on a public square in U.S.A. (August 1st 1931)

Produced by the Dram Bureau of the
Workers' Cultural Federation.

Reviewed by A. Prentis.

Union Square in New York. 15000 workers demonstrating against imperialist war. Signs, cheers, revolutionary songs, Enthusiastic speeches, Enthusiastic applause on part of the listeners. Suddenly the pennants are lowered, one Capitalist walks jauntily onto the stage followed by another. - A thrill of recognition passes thru the audience - murmurs of interest and laughter - and the audience begins to participate in the first revolutionary pageant staged on a public square in U.S.A.

In pantomimic manner the capitalists begin to speed up production of commodities so as to make more profits. Increased production forces them to compete in and glut foreign markets until a point is reached when all production is stopped, and the unemployed, walking the streets, become restless. The capitalists must find a solution to the critical situation, and they find it by deciding to attack Soviet Russia, busily engaged in building a workers' government. The capitalists don trench coats and begin to train the workers and lead them in the attack. But the Soviet workers appeal to the workers of the capitalist countries who, recognizing their real enemy, turn the guns on the capitalists. The audience, following every move on the platform with breathless interest and with periodic exclamations of approval, rewards the performance with a thunderous applause.

As mentioned above, the effect of the performance on the audience was electric, bearing witness to the fact that it gripped them more, far more than done speeches, and altho not a word was uttered tens of thousands of workers speaking different languages were able to understand all that was going on on the platform. But there were some shortcomings and we must learn our lessons from them.

Since a pageant of this nature depends for its effects mainly upon the sense of sight, and since it is supposed to carry its message to non-classconscious workers as well as to classconscious ones, to workers who do not read English as well as to those who do, also, since the actors are not acting for one side only but are acting in the "round" (their action will be followed and must be understood by everyone all around the platform) we must direct and stage our future pageants accordingly.

That everyone may understand the action clearly we must supplement our placards and signs with pictures and these should be printed on both sides. Also the action must be made more obvious. Then while the platform should be made a little higher and larger, the action of the solo actors should take place on an elevated platform in the centre of the main platform, leaving this for the masses to act on. This main platform should be cleared of signs or posters which could be framed on the outside of the platform and which should be of cardboard, hung by two nails on frame and easily be removable. Lastly, masses on the platform must avoid forming a solid wall -- this prevents the audience near that side of platform from seeing what is going on on the rest of the platform.

Since the audience does not have to listen to slow spoken dialogue, its mind, its imagination, travels fast. This necessitates more speed in the action, (witness the silent movies). Also the action must be definite, positive, incisive, not lagging behind the imagination. And finally every part of the action should be accompanied by sounds, drums, whistles, sirens, etc., - emphasizing, so to speak, the meaning of every move that takes place.

TEMPO! TEMPO!

An Agitprop play in verse form.

Produced by the Prolet-Buchne, New York.

Reviewed by H. Elion.

Tempo! Tempo! is one of the most effective agitprop plays produced by the Prolet-Buchne. It combines its contents with a form which lends to the performance a vigour and effectiveness rarely achieved by a production. The success of this play is largely due to this happy combination of content and form.

The play deals with the speed up, unemployment and exploitation of the workers in capitalist countries, contrasted with the rapid industrialization of the Soviet-Union and the improvement of the conditions of the working masses. Speed is the tone in both, Soviet-Union and other countries. However, while in the capitalist countries the workers are driven by the bosses to the point of exhaustion, while their living-conditions become intolerable, in the Soviet-Union the workers are happy and full of vigour and joy. Nothing can stop them. They are moving forward, head-up and steady pace,

The whole play is in couplet form of trochaic quadrameters. This form lends to the play a rhythm which expresses a speed more than any description could accomplish. One gets caught in the swing of the quickly moving lines and the whole body reacts to the "speed and speed" of the industrial capitalist world.

The capitalist recites the lines while workers move up and down the stage performing various work motions. The same capitalist who drives the workers in the capitalist countries tries to slow down the "tempo" of the Soviet-construction. The enthusiasm of the Soviet masses destroys his intervention attempts.

Although it is not difficult to produce the play as a whole it requires some expert directing to work in the motions to fit the words.

The question of the relationship of contents to form is of great importance. This short play can serve as an example as to what can be done in this direction.

THE POT

Produced by Boro Park Dram Section

Reviewed by A. Prentis.

Watching the Jewish Dram Sections performing their repertory, one is moved to wonder, whether they are aware that they are living in the second year of depression by the grace of Capital, and not in Soviet Russia of to-day or in Czarist Russia of 25 years ago. If they are aware of this, the plays do not show it.

The latest sinner is the Boro Park Dram Section performing "The Pot" by Sholem Aleichem - a play about an old woman who comes to the rabbi to ask a question about the law, and talks till he faints. - And many in the audience nearly fainted, too.-

While the acting is not bad, why aren't the energies of these actors utilized to tell the workers that they must organize, instead of performing this sketch that has been discarded time and again, and whose theme is as obsolete as the Russian Czar? If they need comedy, how about mentioning some of the schemes with which the capitalists hope to solve the unemployment situation? Or dramatize some of the incidents when the comrades go out to get signatures? They have no play rights? Why not sit down and write the plays themselves? Why not translate some of the german or english agitprop scenes and mass recitations? No group is forced anymore to produce old-time plays, when every day creates so much material that we have to work much faster to catch up with the daily events.

CORRESPONDENCE

From a reader:

In your August issue of the "Workers Theatre" we find on Page 1 a report which was given at the Convention of the WORKERS CULTURAL FEDERATION held in New York on June 14th 1931.

It is my opinion that reports of such an importance should not be taken by the reader as a mere report but as something to clarify things or questions. In other words: if the reader should get something out of such a report, it must not be given as condensed milk.

To most of the theatre groups the content of this report is a more or less new problem and for this reason such reports have to be made clear entirely. By that I mean a plainer, clearer and better proletarian language should be used.

As the writer of the given report states very well "that we cannot learn anything from the bourgeois theatre" I want to say that we don't want to take the least bit of the "word acrobatics", which the bourgeois writers have so very well developed, and adopt it.

Therefore either an explanatory editorial should have been given with that report or (for the future) the Editorial Committee should have seen to it that the report could be digested by any proletarian whose stomach is not yet accustomed to fancy food. (For real proletarian reports see the magazines "Film & Buehne" and "Rotes Sprachrohr".)

E.W. Mareg
Prolet-Buehne, N.Y.

We publish the above letter, not because we think it is a very good specimen of clear proletarian constructive criticism, but because it is the first letter of criticism we received so far. This magazine is not the concern of the Editorial Committee, nor of the publishing organizations. It is the concern of every Workers Theatre Group, of the whole Workers Theatre movement in the U.S. It is, therefore, not only a privilege but also the duty of every reader to contribute his share toward the building up of the magazine. Let us know your criticism and your suggestions. The Editorial Committee will do its best to overcome all shortcomings as far as it is possible under the given circumstances.

Concerning comrade Bonn's report The Editorial Committee saw very well to it that it "could be digested by any proletarian whose stomach is not accustomed to fancy food." To explain the situation and the tasks of the Workers Theatre as completely as possible in a 10 minutes report or a 4 page article can only be done in a condensed form. A theoretical article must not and cannot always be written so that it can be read as easily as a news item or a short story. And workers are very well able to digest an article that requires from them some thinking of their own.

But as a Theatre Magazine we cannot afford to start a discussion on the style of articles. It will help better "to clarify things and questions" if the readers write their criticism and their opinion on the contents of comr. Bonn's report, rather than on the form of his language.

From a member of the "Uj Eleere Dram Group" we received the following report:

WHAT ABOUT THE HUNGARIANS...?

The Hungarian Dramatic Clubs in N.Y.C. are preparing for the new season. Three groups exist around the city, one in Bronx, one in Yorkville and one in Astoria. The Bronx and Yorkville groups turned rapidly to the left during last year, Astoria was left behind. These clubs produce almost every month a one act play and every three months a 3-4 act play. Last year they put on the stage plays like the "SINGING JAILBIRDS" and "TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD" and had a THEATRICAL OLYMPIAD. The Uj Eleere Dramatic Club goes also out of town as far as Bethlohem and around New York City and New Jersey.

In the new season besides the various one act plays which will be shown, the three combined dramatic clubs will put on the stage "Rear China" in the Hungarian version by Martin Stone, one of its players. It will be shown once in the city, once in Astoria and various other towns.

The question came up lately, should not the Hungarian Dramatic Clubs turn their attention to agitprop plays as the Prolet-Buchno does and abandon the old-fashioned one and three act plays, even if they are revolutionary... Well; the main objection against this is that we have no such plays and as the Hungarians see these plays performed by the Prolet-Buchno, it does not pay to go over again in the Hungarian version. That we did once with "Work or Wages" and made a good show of it. Another thing: the "star system" is still deeply rooted among the Hungarians, but we are abandoning it, slowly it is breaking away, the workers feel interested in massplays and chorus' and the turn to an agitprop group will come here, too.

The third question, which comes up, is the amalgamation with the Prolet-Buchne and the Workers Laboratory Theatre. Well, this is a hard one, as our work must be done yet among the Hungarians; we have to be so near to the "UJ ELOERE", Hung. revolutionary paper, and especially the Bronx Club has to finance a heavy rent, which makes them bind among themselves and work for their "own" interest. But a change here must come, too, and the sooner it will come, the better for the Hungarians and for the American working class.

Comradely yours
W. Weinberg.

The Hungarian comrades have reason to be thankful to comr. Weinberg for this first step out of their little splendid isolation. The above letter is a good piece of helpful self-criticism. The writer recognizes well the shortcomings of the Hungarian groups and the new method they must turn to. But he does not leave the hope in us that this turn will be made very soon, unless something more than criticism will be undertaken.

Different questions came up (the writer does not say, where!) The groups do not seem to realize at all their deviation from the correct line of the Workers Theatres. And the poor excuses for all their shortcomings give the impression that they rather resist than want to work toward a change.

~~To waste the time of three groups by translating, adopting and rehearsing 5 act plays, while the masses must be mobilized to prevent the murder of the nine Scottsboro boys, while their is an urgent need to agitate relief for the starving miners, cannot be excused at all. It is bad enough that a language group which has three Theatre organizations, depends for real agitprop work on the one Theatre group of the Germans. But to conclude from this shortcoming that the Hungarians do not have to produce their own agitprop plays is - not convincing. Did the Hungarian group ever use one of the many plays published in the Magazine? Did they ever ask the Workers Laboratory Theatre or the Dram Bureau of the Federation or any language group (except Prolet-Buchne) for material? And why don't they start to write their own plays as other groups do?~~

The arguments against joining the United Workers Theatre of N.Y. are partly based on a wrong conception of the purpose of this organization, partly on mere opportunism. The United Theatres have been formed with the sole purpose of keeping the various groups in close contact for better cooperation and for useful exchange of ideas and material. The Theatre units do not lose their independence at all. Therefore, the groups joining the U.Th. take only one chance - the chance to benefit. Why do not the Hungarians want to take this chance?

"The Bronx Club has to finance a heavy rent, which makes them bind among themselves and work for their "own" interest". This sentence speaks so much against itself that the best way to expose it is to quote it. Or must we raise the question, whether the purpose of a Workers Theatre is to make money for rent or to be a weapon in the class-struggle?

"What about the Hungarians?" Comrade Weinberg and other comrades who know the answer to this question, should get busy immediately. Something has got to be done!

As we are not acquainted with the internal situation in the Hungarian Dramatic Clubs and we, therefore, do not know, whether the resistance comes from the leadership or the membership, we are not in the position to make any detailed recommendations. But there is no doubt, it is easy to convince workers of the revolutionary duties of revolutionary theatres. And if a few individuals want to stick to the bourgeois star or business system, don't be afraid to throw them over board!

And at last: the Dram Bureau of the Workers Cultural Federation is always ready to give information, advice and help.

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OUTLINES AND MATERIAL FOR ACTIVITIES OF WORKERS DRAM GROUPS
IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND ANOTHER ELECTION PLAY

DON'T MISS IT!!!

NEWS

DRAM BUREAU OF THE WORKERS CULTURAL FEDERATION - The Bureau has its regular meetings every Monday, from 8 to 10 pm at 799 Broadway, Room 330, N.Y.C. Representatives of organizations requiring any information are invited to call during these hours. Letters are to be sent to the same address.

Two sub-committees have been built: the Repertory committee with the task to collect, translate and distribute plays, and the Contact committee, which takes care of the correspondence. The demands for plays increase from day to day. We ask therefore all groups to help their comrade-groups by sending in all plays available, in English or any foreign language.

WORKERS DRAMATIC COUNCIL OF N. Y.

The first meeting will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 16th in the Workers Center, 35 East 12th Str., N.Y.C., 8.30 sharp. The order of business will include a report of comrade E. Segal, delegate to the International Workers Theatre Conference at Moscow, and a discussion on this report. Each dramatic group is urged to send a delegate.

THE "NATURE FRIENDS", MILWAUKEE

are giving performances of proletarian plays, though they have as yet no regular dramatic group. We hope that they will succeed very soon in forming a permanent dramatic section. This magazine, the Dram Bureau of the Cultural Federation and especially the Prolet-Buehne N.Y. will gladly assist the Milwaukee Comrades giving advice and supplying material.

W.I.R. CONFERENCE resolves to expend Cultural Work. - An enthusiastic national conference of W.I.R. delegates was held Aug. 29th and 30th at Pittsburgh, Pa. Among the various tasks set forth by the resolution adopted at the conference the cultural work of the W.I.R. occupies a prominent place. The resolution states that the W.I.R. faces the task

"To aid and strengthen then the struggles of the working class by developing a popular working class cultural movement, through dramatic groups, workers theatres, film and foto leagues and other cultural activities to extend the idea of working class Solidarity" The Workers Laboratory Theatre of the W.I.R. is already engaged in such work. September 18th the W.L.T. plans a program for the election ratification meeting of the C.P. The same program will be performed for section 5 of the C.P. Sept. 19th. Other activities are in progress in the spirit of the above resolution.

JEWISH DRAM SECTIONS

City Convention In connection with the opening of the convention on Sept. 25th at Manhattan Lyceum several dram sections will present anti-religious plays. Musical and sport groups will also participate.
Coney Island Section This group presented on Aug. 22nd a Russian anti-religious play. (A review of this performance will appear in the next issue of the magazine.)
The Boro Park Section (English speaking) organized three weeks ago by the Workers Laboratory Theatre, gave an anti-militarist play at its first performance on Aug.

HUNGARIAN DRAMATIC CLUBS - A general report on the activities appears in the Correspondence section of this issue.

IN THE RED SPOTLIGHT

THE JOHN REED CLUB

has quite a number of capable members who can write splendid articles and draw interesting cartoons for the "New Masses"; whose names appear, on a national and international scale, under revolutionary manifestoes, appeals, protests, on committees and bureaus; whose photographs, with short biographies, are regular features of the "New Masses". What are these fine working, drawing and composing people doing for the Workers Theatre Movement in the U.S., while their fellow-intellectuals in Germany, in the Soviet Union, in France are working in close cooperation with the Agit-prop groups: writing plays, directing performances, drawing costumes and settings, participating as actors in performances?

Comrades from the John Reed Club! You know how to write, we know how to fight; we could learn from each other and do some fine work cooperatively for the benefit of the revolutionary movement. The general staff of the Cultural Movement is overcrowded. Soldiers in the front line are wanted. You are welcome!

THREE REAL SEWING MACHINES,

two real irons and real presser's tables were used - not by a trade schools for pressers, - but by the Coney Island Jewish Dram Section in producing the one act play "Pressers." I just want to ask the Coney Island Comrades two curious questions concerning the technique of directing: Do you think it is easier to explain the fellow

workers how exploited they are, and how they can fight successfully against the oppressors when you show them a genuine workshop equipment? And do you think an Agitprop group moves quicker from one place to another when carrying along a lot of heavy and clumpy things?

The financial statement of the same performance included \$60.- for the landlord, \$30.- for the orchestra, \$15.- for the "talent" and a total deficit of \$20.-. It is time that such articles from the bourgeois stage as "talents" disappear definitely from the revolutionary theatre. But we wouldn't mind the deficit at all, if it was made up by an overwhelming asset of propagandistic success.

"THE WORLD IS BADLY IN NEED -

of humor!" says Jimmy Walker. Not in a satirical play of a Workers Theatre Group, but in a real speech before his fellow capitalists in Prague, as reported by the 100% "New York American".-

This shows plainly to the starving unemployed what "their" Magazine will feed them next winter, and what the big capitalist newspaper offer to their readers without comment. Fine material for Agit-prop groups! There is plenty of it. Just take a look around. The problem of playwriting is partly solved: the capitalist write their own satires against themselves. Proletarian Playwrights, don't be afraid to exaggerate. You can't beat reality anyway!

The "SOLIDARITY PLAYERS", Boston and the "NATURE FRIENDS", Milwaukee responded splendidly to our "Bundle-order Drive". So do the other groups: "It's your turn now!"