

# NEW THEATRE

DRAMA

FILM

DANCE

APRIL

1935

15¢



ANTI-WAR ISSUE

George Grosz

THE GROUP THEATRE presents

# AWAKE AND SING

by CLIFFORD ODETS

*"Awake and Sing, ye that dwell in the dust" -- Isaiah - 26:19*

Now Playing at **BELASCO THEATRE** 155 WEST 44th ST.  
BRyant 9-6100

## "WAITING FOR LEFTY"

by CLIFFORD ODETS

and "TILL THE DAY I DIE"

**LONGACRE THEATRE** 48th STREET WEST OF BROADWAY

PRICES: \$1.65 - \$1.10 - 83c - 66c - and 40c

### AN EXPLANATION

NEW THEATRE appears late this month due to a last minute change in the cover. The original cover, a "black face" Al Jolson superimposed upon a background of a skull and marching men, was designed to expose how actors were used to ballyhoo war in 1917. At the last moment, we decided that this cover might be misunderstood as another "black face" caricature of the Negro people. Despite the cost, the issue was delayed until the present cover by William Gropper was ready. We trust our readers will approve this Anti-War issue.

THE EDITORS.

### NEW THEATRE and JOHN REED CLUB

*Take Pleasure in Presenting*

#### DR. FRIEDRICH WOLF

*Outstanding German Playwright, Author of SAILORS OF CATTARO*

*Dr. Wolf will speak on*

"THEATRE IN THE SOVIET UNION AND NAZI GERMANY"

(with slides by Piscator, Meyerhold & Wolf)

SOCIAL REPERTORY THEATRE in Scenes from F. Wolf's Play "Florisdorf"

THEATRE OF ACTION — "Free Thaelmann"

NEUE THEATRE GRUPPE—"Agit Prop Troupes at Work in Nazi Germany"

**SATURDAY, APRIL 6 - 8:30 P. M. Sharp**

**FIFTH AVE. THEATRE,**

**BROADWAY AT 28th STREET**

Tickets for sale at New Theatre, 114 W. 14 St., CH. 2-9523—Bookstore, 50 E. 13 St...  
Box Office BO. 4-9608—New Masses, 31 E. 27 St. **ADMISSIONS 30c to \$1.00**

## THE NEW ACADEMY OF NEW YORK

*JULIAN FREEDMAN, Director*

MUSIC

— DANCE —

DRAMA

### HAROLD KREUTZBERG

*American dance seminar now in session*

**Special courses in music for students and workers**

**602 CARNEGIE HALL - Circle 7-3156**

APRIL 1935

Editorials  
3

Entertaining the Army  
EMANUEL EISENBERG 5

Stars and Stripes on Broadway  
HIRAM MOTHERWELL  
and HELEN REYNOLDS 6

Drama on the Western Front  
H. W. L. DANA 10

Dance of Death  
PAUL LOVE 11

The Movies in Wartime  
TOM LANGLEY 16

Did You Hear Their Voices?  
PHILIP STERLING 18

Black Pit  
HERBERT KLINE 29

New Found Land  
STEPHEN FOSTER 21

Consider the Red Octopus  
JULIAN LEE 22

An Editorial Appeal  
23

Films, Current and Coming  
LOUIS NORDEN 24

The Lay Dance  
RUTH ALLERHAND 26

Dance Reviews  
27

The New Dance League  
28

Writers' Congress  
29

Shifting Scenes  
30

EDITORIAL BOARD

Herbert Kline, editor.  
Molly Day Thacher, drama.  
Louis Norden, film  
Edna Ocko, dance.  
William Entin, art.

ASSOCIATES

Lionel Berman, Ben Blake, S. Foster, Leo T. Hurwitz, Muriel Rukeyser, R. Ludlow, R. Steck, David Crystal, Manfred Ettinger.

Published by the New Theatre League and New Dance League, 114 West 14th St., N. Y. C. Illustrations and text cannot be reproduced without permission.

Entry as Second Class Matter Pending.

# NEW THEATRE

WAR may break any minute. The bombshell of Germany's open rearming proves that Hitler, with the excitement of a losing gambler, is prepared to stake his power in a new world war in hope of imperialist gains that will consolidate his shaky rule. This should come as no surprise to England whose policy encouraged the Nazis, and whose Sir Henry Deterding loaned Hitler 800,000,000 marks only two weeks prior to the public mobilizing of Germany's millions! The Fascist states are torn by internal troubles. Seeking to turn the minds of the people from their real distress by involving them in patriotic wars of conquest, Hitler and Mussolini are now ready to send millions of workers to their death. The contradictions of capitalism make it impossible to predict the alliances. But this much is known. Germany negotiated an oil agreement under which part of Deterding's loan went to Roumania, thus cementing an alliance. Germany backed the winning side in the Greek Fascist revolt, Italy backed the losers. Hungary's hope for revision of the treaty that was to end war lies with Germany. Yugo-Slavia, resentful of the French-Italian *rapprochement* and bitter against Czechoslovakia, is being driven by General Zikobich into a Fascist dictatorship that aims to conclude a military alliance with Germany. Poland, Germany and Japan can put 1,500,000 armed men into action on a day's notice. Can any sane person doubt that their objective is the destruction of the Soviets? At the same time Germany and Japan announce their "peaceful intentions," they are preparing for a concerted attack on the U.S.S.R. Europe is doomed for another terrible war. Johannes Steel, foreign editor of the *New York Post*, predicts that ten million men will be under arms in Europe before the year 1935 is ended. *Ten million men to preserve peace?* And all the Roosevelt machine has offered to disguise American preparations for participation in the next world war is the same "watchful, waiting, policy that led to Wilson's declaration of war in 1917. The only way to prevent war is to fight against it now. This anti-war issue of NEW THEATRE and the wide activities of the New Theatre League are dedicated to that fight.

OFTEN a title subtly masks a play's real content, but seldom does it hint so unwittingly and even suggest to class-conscious audiences a slogan for action as in the case of *Meet the Enemy*, a poisonous little pro-war drama now being run by the PWA Dramatic Project in and around New York City. One has only to take in a showing of this government-sponsored military propaganda piece and notice its effect upon thousands of prospective

soldiers to arise and shout "Workers, we must not only 'meet' this enemy, but expose and smash it."

For the past three months local audiences, mainly proletarian and especially youth, have been exposed to this technically crude but insidiously effective stage piece. Produced as a work relief project with a cast of unemployed actors, many of whom must resent such a transparent glorification of war, it has been shown in several military camps, to highschool students and before many susceptible petty bourgeois or working-class groups. This sugar-coated venom of pulpy romance on the front line has been fed to thousands and it is evident that this play and the circumstances of its presentation to the public is a small though important part of the government's quiet but thorough war-mobilization plans.

First of all, who is "Frank J. Collins," the purported author of *Meet the Enemy*? He is pretty generally known to be none other than Colonel Earle Boothe, czar of the PWA Dramatic Project in New York City. This same militarist had charge of "entertainment work," that is, spreading the war fever, during the World War. Articles such as *Stars and Stripes on Broadway*, *Entertaining the Army*, *The Movies and War*, and others, in this Anti-War Issue of NEW THEATRE expose the parts played by such Military Impresarios as Colonel Boothe in whipping up war-hysteria during the last war. Today he hides behind a pseudonym and performs the very same service for the would-be war-makers. Incidentally he has taken advantage of having the production on the boards to bring Broadway producers to performances of *Meet the Enemy* in hope of a commercial sale.

Only a few lines need be quoted to prove the pro-war nature and imperialistic slant of the play:

"The Spanish-American War was certainly a better one than the World War," says General Doolittle, "we fought Spain to free the Filipinos and then we had to fight the Filipinos to convince them they were free. It was a real war . . . we didn't have to git holes in the ground; we met the enemy face to face."

Or this:

"What is chemical warfare?"

"Gas, sir."

"Good God, do we have to give the enemy an anaesthetic before we kill 'em?"

There is much more than can be mentioned here. The script carries the rank odor of anti-Semitism through one whole part. Space permits only passing mention of another provocative feature; the worn-out yet still effective scene of a YMCA girl prodding her doughboy lover to the front.

Enough about the play itself. Recently a protest delegation from the Actors Emergency Association confronted Colonel Boothe only to be told by him that the play was not propaganda for imperialist war, but on the contrary a satire on war. The lie was given him by a remark of a ten-year old child after a performance. "Aw, this is just all about war again. Why don't we have something else for a change?" This attitude towards war propaganda is apparent all around us. Every day one reads of student, religious and cultural organizations who are militantly voicing their protest against Roosevelt's war preparations. When the next war breaks, the militarists will find actors and entertainers who will refuse either to swallow the patriotic ballyhoo fed them or to use their talents to further the interests of the war makers.

THE theatre in Germany is dead. Hans Otto, one of Germany's best actors, was brutally murdered by Goering's brown butchers for daring to stand up for his class. Piscator, Reinhardt, Toller, Hans Eisler and Friederich Wolf were forced to emigrate to save their lives. Other leading theatre artists have been entombed in concentration camps or forced into exile. Some, like the author of *The Weavers*, betrayed their class and sold out to the Nazis. Now a pall of death and inanition has descended over all the stages of the Reich. The same barbaric, dark forces are now coming out into the open here in America. Dr. Friederich Wolf, the author of *Sailors of Cattaro*, arrived in America March 19. This courageous revolutionary playwright is brilliantly equipped to tell us of the fight that is being waged against Fascism in the European theatre today. His first public appearance in New York will be under the joint auspices of the New Theatre League and the Partisan Review, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre in New York on April 6. Dr. Wolf will speak on the role of the underground workers theatres in Germany, and on the Soviet Theatre. The program will include a scene from Friederich Wolf's new play *Floridsdorf* by the Social Repertory Players, and short anti-fascist plays by the German-American New Theatre Group and the Theatre of Action. John Wexley will be chairman. As this promises to be one of the most thrilling New Theatre Nights of the year, our readers are urged not to miss this program in honor of Friederich Wolf.

THE Dancers' Union has had its first illuminating experience. Its persistent requests through interviews and letters for a Dance Project to be established by CWA authorities met with formal and evasive rebuffs. It was finally decided that a delegation actually meet with Miss Gosselin, head of the White Collar Works Division, and demand that, in line with Music, Drama, and Art projects created, immediate consideration be given the establishment of a Dance Project. A letter requesting an appointment with Miss Gosselin remained unanswered. In reply to telephone calls, the secretary said Miss Gosselin refused to make any appointments at all with anyone from the Dancers' Union. The

Union voted that a delegation appear anyway. On March 18th, at 12:30, about 30 young dancers appeared at the Port of Authority Building with placards bearing requests for the formation of a Dance Project, for relief jobs for dancers, for recognition of the Union, for endorsement of Unemployment Insurance Bill H.R. 2827. A committee of four went to see Miss Gosselin while the remainder marched in front of the entrance waiting for the return of their representatives.

Although Miss Gosselin was in her office, she flatly refused to confer with the dancers. On hearing, however, that a large representation awaited the report of their committee, she played her ace, or so she thought. The group downstairs was suddenly confronted with about twenty policemen, who charged into the line, rushed them off into the gutter, and arrested one young girl who happened to be at the head of the group. This then is the treatment accorded them by Relief Authorities.

The Dancers Union has not been intimidated by this display of duplicity and evasion. They demand recognition of their Union and of their economic needs. If dancers feel the necessity for a dance project, the necessity for organization to procure these demands, they are strongly urged to join the Dancers' Union (headquarters 118 West 21st Street) and work with them.

WITH the vigorous young Actors' Forum supplying the spark, the Actors' Equity Association held on March 1 in the Hotel Astor its most explosive session in sixteen years, and the old guard succeeded in downing the Forum only after tossing parliamentary rules aside and pressing sergeants-at-arms into service.

The meeting, which was called to elect six nominators to prepare the slate of candidates for the Equity Council, turned into a battle between the Forum—Equity's rank and file group—and the Administration forces. *Variety* has said that no meeting since 1919, the year of the actors' strike, compares with it.

The Forum supported six proposed nominators who had pledged themselves to such important causes as pay for rehearsals and unemployment insurance for actors. The six included Sylvia Field, Hugh Rennie, Margaret Wycherly, Clarence Derwent, Millard Mitchell and Alexander Kirkland. The Administration group nominated a slate of "regulars" including Granville Bates, Charles Dow Clark, Walter Connolly, Percy Moor, Nance O'Neil and Selena Royle, the six who were finally elected.

President Frank Gilmore (who still has almost three years more in office) revealed the Administration policy at the outset. As soon as he had opened nominations, he turned his back on the entire meeting. After that, during nominations, it was impossible for any member to receive recognition from the chair; nominations were shouted to the secretary, who wrote the names on a blackboard.

Later, his actions led to fireworks which nearly precipitated a riot. Frank Conlan, a member of the Forum group, asked permission to read a letter, signed by Osgood Perkins among others—a letter previously circulated among all Equity

members, and designed to create sentiment against the Forum. Conlan was finally permitted to talk, and Perkins rose immediately after with a prepared statement complaining that a split in Equity seemed likely because of the new group.

President Gilmore was shutting out Forum members who demanded the opportunity to speak. Robert Reed, for the Forum, called for a point of order, and was ruled out of order and instructed to sit down. The clash that followed on parliamentary procedure was met by President Gilmore, who adjourned the meeting for ten minutes. Mr. Reed, a member of the *Sailors of Cattaro* company, persisted until two sergeants-at-arms marched up to him on orders of President Gilmore, and Mr. Reed left under escort. Ballotting proceeded after the interval, and the Administration nominators were duly elected, without a chance given the Forum to defend itself against Mr. Perkins' attack. President Gilmore had closed the question with the declaration that he had conducted Equity for fifteen years, and that what he says, goes.

While the votes were being counted, the meeting was reconvened. The moment it opened, a vote was passed unanimously to invite Mr. Reed to return to the meeting.

Discussion was begun and hurriedly stopped by the chair on the following points: the Junior-Senior minimum, the representation of the Council, and a statement of the platforms of the two groups. Philip Loeb, following Albert Van Dekker in answering Peggy Wood (who spoke for the administration) read a letter of congratulation which Gilmore sent him a year ago, expressing pleasure in the new younger group in Equity. Gilmore blazed up at this, and objected to the Forum's "acting in a bloc" instead of as individuals.

AT this point, the general feeling of dismay at this autocracy was made plain. Miss Blanche Yurka, condemning the actions of both sides as "hoodlumism," said that she had attended a meeting of the Actors' Forum and had been impressed with the intelligence expressed there. Mr. Reed explained that the point of order on which he had been dismissed was a request to hold this discussion before the balloting instead of afterward. At this, the quarrel about procedure was re-opened. Gilmore tried to end it high-handedly by stating that years of precedent superseded parliamentary procedure. There were dissenting cries heard in the hall; and with a motion to have monthly meetings, this stormiest session of Equity was closed.

After the meeting, the Forum sent word to Equity and the nominating committee, asking them to consider four names as Council representatives, claiming its due for a membership of 400.

Despite the justice of this request, it was denied and the nominating committee was left as elected. Evidently Mr. Gilmore's objections to the Forum's "acting as a bloc" cloak his fears that the Forum endangers his future in Equity. It seems clear that these determined young actors are interested not in "making trouble" but to strengthen Equity in order to improve working conditions in the theatre.



Schumann-Heink during a Liberty Loan Drive, 1917

## Entertaining the Army

By EMANUEL EISENBERG

ACTORS who still like to think of themselves as Artists unsoiled by immersion in such dreary waters as Politics or Economics may find it illuminating to make a brief excursion to a period only eighteen years gone. For, during 1917 and 1918, a monstrous machinery was set into motion which involved the actor so intensively as participant in and fosterer of martial violence that favorable historians have no hesitation in referring to him in this connection as "one of the most powerful arms of the Government."

Before anybody dreamed of actually penetrating the American soldier's own grooves of asylum behind the fighting lines, such favorites as Mary Pickford, William S. Hart and Douglas Fairbanks were charging across the face of the United States, halting whenever they spotted anything resembling a platform from which they could hurl a dramatized sales talk for Liberty Loans, Red Cross drives and United War Work campaigns. A small band of such first-line performers is boastfully on record as responsible for the nest-egg of \$17,200,000.

But raising funds and keeping hysteria at the proper pitch at home was soon discovered to be a painfully limited way of continuing the World War. Sizable financial contributions and wholesale endorsement of the munitions racket were good beginnings, but they scarcely helped to persuade Uncle Sam's Doughboys to go on destroying and being destroyed for no perceptible reason, once they had been exposed to organized warfare.

For there were bad days of surcease from shooting when the boys had a chance to mope and reflect and wonder what in the hell all this

bloody mess was about. That would never do. We must take the boys' minds off all that. We must give them Fun and Distraction. It would be too awful if their morale and spirit were suddenly to go . . . if they were to throw down arms, for example, or go raving crazy.

So the Entertainment Department of the American Expeditionary Forces rented two rooms on the fifth floor at 31 Avenue Montaigne in Paris and got to work. They had an overwhelming success and immediately moved to larger quarters at 10 Rue de l'Elysee, where they occupied the entire third floor and poured over into the stables in the courtyard.

The first performer actually to appear behind the trenches was one Jack Barker. This vaudevillian had originally gone from America to England for a tour. America's sudden entrance into the war sent him to France. Barker's singing in camps was apparently so delightful to the homesick soldiers that he was quickly followed by a raft of pianologists, magicians, grand opera contraltos and lecturers, all panting to bring Good Cheer to the doughboy.

It was the impressive team of Walter Damrosch and Mrs. John Philip Sousa that set the machinery into motion by making a nationwide appeal for volunteer entertainers and contributions of musical instruments. No less impressive a team than Winthrop Ames and E. H. Sothorn ran screaming for the next transatlantic steamer, the one to make speeches wherever he went, the other to declaim and tell stories.

Ames and Sothorn returned in a fine patriotic sweat; a large, a giant, a monster meeting was called for the aggrandizement of overseas entertainment. The stage of the Palace Theatre, then in its real heyday, was taken over and the persons of E. F. Albee, George M. Cohan, Rachel Crothers, Walter Damrosch, C. B. Dilling-

ham, John Drew, Daniel Frohman, Marc Klaw, Willard Mack, Lee Shubert, Augustus Thomas and Frances Wilson were crowded onto a platform which amazingly remained intact under a barrage of such idiotic rah-rah hysteria as could hardly be reproduced today.

THE result of all this was the formation of a little thing called the Over There Theatre League (possibly by way of tribute to the ditty dashed off by George Cohan). This was a real booking agency, with a contract and everything. The contract was entered upon with the Y.M.C.A.: you received a uniform, your living expenses were paid, you abided by all the dictates of the military authorities—and, by God, sir, they paid you \$2 a day besides for the pleasure of doing your duty to your country. Actors everywhere fainted with excitement and signed contracts with feverishly moist hands.

For the greater part these were entertainers with individual vaudeville acts. The soldiers were reported to be relishing them tremendously—but they were only watching; and it was important for them to be active, to Keep Their Minds Off Things. It was with this idea that one Thomas Wood Stevens, a professor of drama at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, returned from a brief visit abroad and convinced Dean Bossange at his college of the value of opening a three-week course in play direction for soldier-coaches.

The course was established; graduates went abroad; and soldiers began to put on their own musical comedies and plays under the guidance of these mock-professionals. These full-length entertainments proved so popular that John Craig and Mary Young of Boston were encouraged to go to France with a stock company of modern repertory. Other such companies followed them, giving Broadway hits and remaining to appear long after the Armistice in gambling casinos and theatres in Marseilles, Paris, Antwerp, Brest and St. Malo.

Of the moving pictures shown, of Elsie Janis' famous tour through the trenches, it would be too lengthy to speak. The proudly recorded statistics are more eloquent than anything else at this point. 1,964 entertainers were sent over from America, 300 French were used. There were 4,000 soldier-actors, who in turn coached 11,000 more; 200 trained song-leaders and 1,000 recruits; 1,500 in the motion picture service, 200 lecturers and 500 recruits and volunteers for lecturing. Costumers and managers numbered 3,000 more. The 1,064 from America gave 109,794 performances to audiences of 87,000,000. There were 157,000 movie shows before audiences of more than 94,000,000 at 5,261 places. 23,000 costumes and accessories, 18,000 musical instruments and 450,000 pieces of sheet music were sent abroad. This is a simple outline of the incredible, racket of war entertainment.

Meantime, things were far from quiet at home. Training camps were in action and the boys here, also, had fits of depression, all too possibly caused

(Continued on Page 33)



Schumann-Heink during a Liberty Loan Drive, 1917

# Stars and Stripes on Broadway

By HIRAM MOTHERWELL  
and HELEN REYNOLDS

spirit  
t, and  
artists  
Play-  
nucleus  
d pro-  
tifying


appear  
need  
ickets  
has  
Since  
rs of  
eause  
re-act-  
alone  
worthily  
he best  
of the

re-  
tinctive  
Tyrone  
Keight-  
Kruger  
o excep-  
ne com-  
cludes  
n-Avon  
mpany,  
een as  
an pro-  
Mans-

ans to  
and  
an-  
of

**"THANK GOD"**

—Little old New York has finally got up nerve enough to publicly call the Kaiser just what he is—the beast of Berlin!—Burr McIntosh.



**The Kaiser**

The Beast of Berlin

If you're a red-blooded American, with a real fighting spirit, you'll cheer like mad over this startlingly daring expose of the real Kaiser. If you're pro-German stay away and gnash your teeth in wild but impotent rage.

**BROADWAY THEATRE**

2 war at 41st St. THREE TIMES  
Daily 2:30, 4:30 & 8:30 P. M.  
Matinees 25c, 50c & 75c  
Evenings 25c-50c-75c-\$1.00

THE  
F  
in  
REV  
by W  
AL  
A  
"SON  
Entire  
Picture  
Mat. 15  
PLA  
Today  
ANTO  
LAKE  
and Tu  
tacle  
GLE  
Fifteen  
Thurs  
"THO  
come  
KNE  
Hil  
wit  
L  
G  
Per  
daily  
L  
L  
LO  
Co

WAR enthusiasm on the part of the great majority of the population is a conditioned reflex. It is an automatic, unthinking, response to flag-waving, horror stories, and mass example. Active hate can be engendered by the simple device of creating fear. Compulsion and the threat of public shame and ostracism completes the process of regimentation.

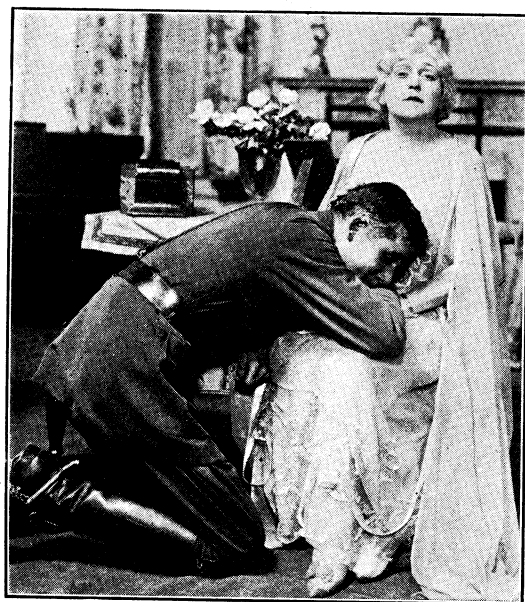
The theatre was at once a carrier and a victim of the war poison, but its chief function in New York in the World War years came to be that of a refuge (or variation) from regimentation. There was no sudden popular demand for war plays and dramas stimulating patriotism. Theatre fare, by and large, was a proof that the war fever was a deliberately conditioned reflex. True, there was a good deal more of war in the American theatre than in that of Europe, but, in the memory of one who lived most of that time in New York, it was an artificial and minor part of the show. Such as it was, it can be explained by two factors: For a long time, after as before the declaration of hostilities, the war was relatively remote from civilian lives, and had for millions something of the fascination of a World Series; and the government, at first, attempted to use the drama as part of its machinery of regimentation. When the war began to be just a little bit serious to middle class civilians (they wouldn't even let us have all the sugar we wanted in our coffee), the theatre went mostly non-combatant.

The most positive way in which the war fever affected the theatre was in the suppression of

plays of protest. It was not that there were not groups of active protesters, but any production which was flagrantly out of key with the Star Spangled Banner was sure to be suppressed and it was impossible to raise the money for certain failure.

August, 1914, was much like other Augusts in one respect: it was a dull month on Broadway. The *Times* carried advertisements of *Twin Beds*, *Peg o' My Heart*, *Potash and Permutter*; the news that Willie Zimmerman would offer his impersonations of all the monarchs concerned in the war; and a report that the new Hippodrome production, *Wars of the World* had changed its closing tableau to conform to the President's request for neutrality. At the Palace, whose vaudeville acts were almost as topical as the newsreels of today, a "war game" curtain was installed, showing the operations of the foreign armies in a graphic manner. War was a game.

During the neutrality period, when it was an amusing diversion to study the maps and bulletins in the morning papers, count up how many "Huns" and "Frogs" had been killed to date, and work out a flanking strategy to help Papa Joffre, the theatre producers tried frequently to exploit the public's supposed enthusiasm for war. Every few weeks there would be "another war play." More likely than not it would be pro-Ally, for the raped nuns of Belgium and the babies whose hands the Germans cut off for the fun of it had begun to make the front page. There were melodramas like *Under Fire*—ad-



Photos—Courtesy Culver Co., N. Y. C.

RIGHT: *Under Orders* with Effie Shannon and Shelley Hull, 1918

ABOVE: Laurette Taylor in *Out There*



*Photos—Courtesy Culver Co., N. Y. C.*

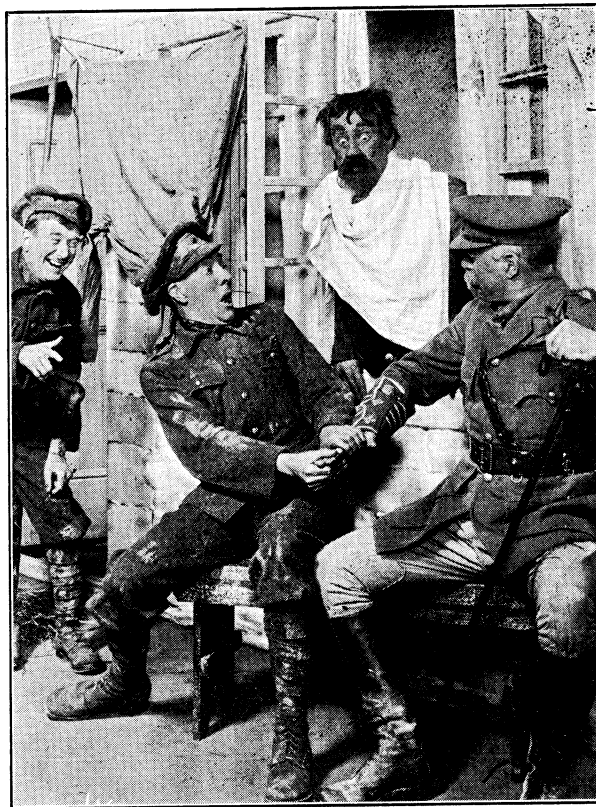
**RIGHT: Under Orders with Effie Shannon and Shelley Hull, 1918**  
**ABOVE: Loretta Taylor in Out There**







Lilac Time with Jane Cowl



The Better Ole with Colin Campbell, Chas. McNaughton, C. Coburn and Henry Warniik

advertised as "The Victor of All War Plays: see the Germans coming through Belgium . . . the ruined church 'somewhere in France' . . . the English trenches." But it was still possible to choose sides in the game at this period. With public opinion not yet under control, and finance capital not yet in agreement as to its war policy, German theatres were still allowed to operate, and "Hun" *lieder* were still sung in Aeolian Hall. The German company in Irving Place could dramatize episodes on the Hindenburg Front and be commended for freedom "from all harsh partisanship." And there was actually a playlet called *War Brides*, at the Palace which was hailed as a sermon against war. Typical of the confusion and helplessness of the pacifist efforts, it dealt sentimentally with the women whom the army left behind—and even at this date, it was the Huns who were blamed for their plight.

MANY anti-war plays were written in this period. Most of them were bad. The authors merely scolded the wicked men in Europe without really objecting to war at all, or analyzing its causes. But there is no doubt that the mood of the masses was solidly in opposition to war. Irving Berlin, who prided himself on sensing the inner emotions of the nation, wrote *I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier* (to which Roosevelt the First—nearly twenty years before Hitler—replied, "You might as well sing, I Didn't Raise my Girl to be a Mother.") A less known but still more naively revealing song by Berlin out of Tin Pan Alley, pictured the Devil's son asking Papa if he might go upstairs and see what the world was like; the Devil answers:

"Stay down here where you belong.  
The folks who live above us don't know right from wrong.

To please their kings they all go out to war,  
And not a one of them knows what he's fighting for.  
The folks all say that I'm a devil, and I'm mad.  
Kings up there are bigger devils than your dad—  
Breaking the hearts of mothers, making butchers  
out of brothers,

They raise more hell up there than there is here  
below."

And what were the radicals doing in the theatre in these days? Nothing that one could notice. Jack Reed, in the Spring of 1914, had planned and staged a gigantic pageant in Paterson, dramatizing the textile workers' strike and materially contributed to the morale that brought victory. But the adventurer in Jack sent him pronto to Europe when war broke out, and he, with Boardman Robinson who drew sketches, did the best war reporting done in any language. But war was still a game to Jack, though a grim one.

The only real radicalism in the theatre in those days was technical or aesthetic. Europe (principally Germany and Russia) had recently achieved a kind of Golden Age in the theatre, and dozens of bright youngsters in this country were spilling ideas about cycs and screens and stylization. The Washington Square Players were organized in 1914-15. Nearly every one of them was a bit of a Socialist and objected to war. But to them, denouncing war was like denouncing the weather, and when war became a reality over here it was too late. The Neighborhood Playhouse had much the same sentimental slant, and did nothing about it for the same reasons. The Provincetown Players were busy with grim realism and new dirty words, and even Jig Cook, out-and-out pacifist and radical though he was, did not think of using his organizations to buck the war fever. None of these theatres touched workers audiences or had even an elementary understanding of class issues in war. There were no workers theatres and the

class-conscious proletariat had no theatric weapon. Anti-war productions were left to the Women's Peace Party, who favored miniature pageants . . . Doubtless memory has let slip some other productions, but if there were any they did not make much of a nick in the public consciousness.

One indirect benefit of the war to the American theatre came with the European actors and theatrical companies which visited these shores—since one thing which a belligerent nation has no use for is good drama. Granville Barker brought over his company, doing Shakespeare, besides modern plays, with Norman Wilkinson's cute scenery and costumes. Jacques Copeau (sponsored by the French government who released his actors from trench service, and by Otto Kahn, who paid the bills) came to prove the validity of French culture (and thereby to quicken sympathy for fighting France). Sir Herbert Tree, fleeing war-ridden England, and believing "It is wrong to kill, and there's an end of it," demonstrated the futility of bewildered pacifism. He interpolated a toast in Colonel Newcombe "To our friends across the sea!" He privately meant it to include those on the other side of the trenches, but the audience cheered it as meaning the Allies, and he never disillusioned them. Sarah Bernhardt had no such mental conflicts. She came, like Copeau, to popularize France, and sandwiched into her classic repertory a piece about the devastated churches of France, in which she was the Voice of the Cathedral of Strasbourg.

Emanuel Reicher, the German director, came to stay; founded the People's Theatre, gave Strindberg and Ibsen, and in 1916, *The Weavers*. Militant strikes were widespread, and the production assumed immediate social importance. Workers were drawn into the audience and labor leaders presented their case from the stage. Reicher put the company on a profit-sharing basis and a tour through leading manufacturing cities was projected.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1917.

Our Country Is Talking of Only  
Two Things Today  
Liberty Bonds  
AND  
Chu Chin Chow

COMPANY OF 300. NOW IN ITS 2ND YEAR IN LONDON  
IN THE STORM YESTERDAY THOUSANDS  
WERE TURNED AWAY FROM THE

MANHATTAN

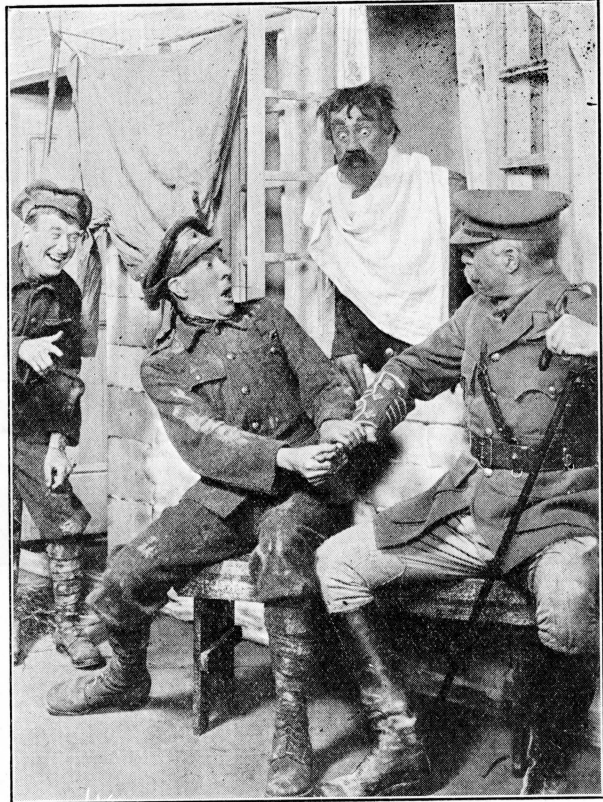
ALL RECORDS IN THE HISTORY OF  
THE AMERICAN STAGE BROKEN

BUY SEATS IN ADVANCE  
BARGAIN MATINEE WEDNESDAY, 25c to \$1.00  
Even. & Sat. Mat. 25c to \$2. Always 300 Seats in the Orchestra \$1.50.  
TICKETS ON SALE 8 WEEKS AHEAD.

INFORMA  
TONIGHT AT 8:30  
METROPOLITAN



Lilac Time with Jane Cowl



The Better Ole with Colin Campbell, Chas. McNaughton, C. Coburn and Henry Warniik

THEN at this precise moment of promise, when distinguished representatives of the European stage were stimulating a vast and exciting creative surge in the American theatre, when social drama was simultaneously finding a voice and an audience, when cooperative organization was proving both feasible and desirable—at this moment—the war really entered into the theatre to cut short every promise of culture.

German U-boats were sinking American ships. America was on the point of entering the war—and the “game” was changing for Broadway proper. The Hippodrome, which in the field of spectacular shows cashed in on current events much as the Palace did in vaudeville, gave an indication of the deluge to come. It staged an all-American Preparedness Program in conjunction with its show *Stars and Stripes Forever*; there was a Ballet of the States; an American flag and a souvenir copy of Wilson’s address to Congress went to each patron; Senator Reed of Missouri obliged with a patriotic address. At the Ball of the Ten Allies many theatrical stars took part in a Pageant of the Nations. A French star finished the performance of *Pierrot the Prodigal* with the recitation of the Marseillaise.

The Stage Society, formerly a favorite of the critics, was harshly panned by them in January, 1917, for presenting an “unrelieved and tactless picture of war.” Arturo Giovanetti poet and labor leader, “was best known to most people in connection with the I.W.W.,” and the critics were bitterly repelled by “his all too evident relish for the physical, his disposition to expose the entrails of existence.” This play (called, ironically, *As It Was in the Beginning*) marks the end of the theatrical renaissance in New York.

A week later, relations with Germany were broken off. A month later all references to the Modern Stage, the Washington Square Players, the Stage Society, and the rest, had vanished from the drama pages. Hysteria seized the American people. Theatre workers were a particularly susceptible section of the public, and a fertile channel for transmitting the government point of view. Any theatre that clung to sanity or even to artistic integrity was swamped by the flood of patriotic emotion. The theatres



Photo by Byron Co.

Minnie Dupre, Helen Ware, Mrs. Henry B. Harris, Louise Drew, Chrystal Herne, and Frances Starr.

that remained played hectic and footless piffle or aided and abetted the frenzy by giving the public what the newspapers had taught them to want. (If the art theatres were able to revive after the war and continue their work, it was because America had not experienced the full devastation of the war. The English, French, and German theatres never recovered.)

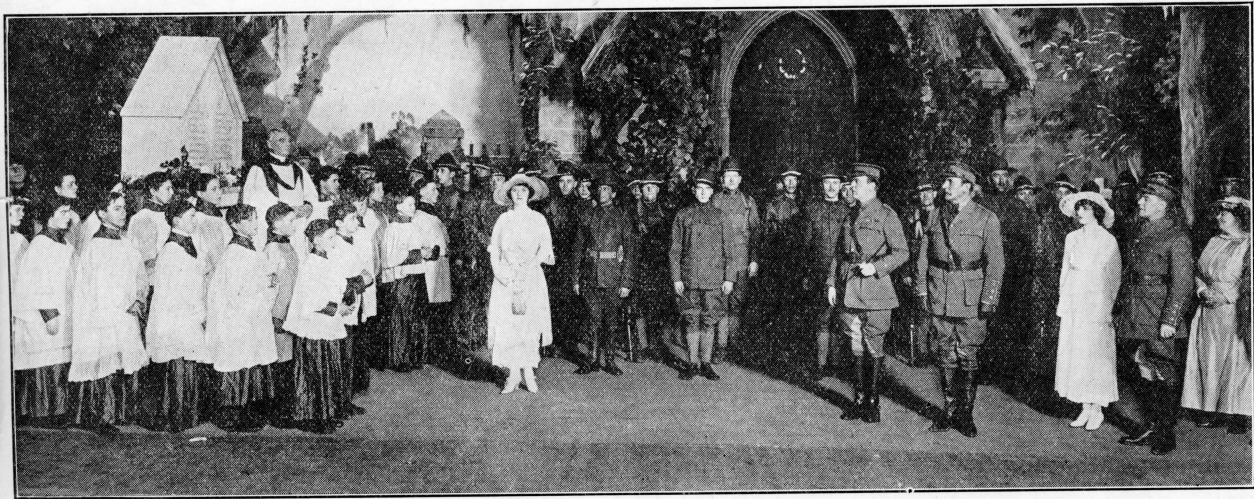
*The Star Spangled Banner* became the song hit of the day. The Hippodrome and the Century Roof were the first to close their performances with a “spontaneous” rendition of the anthem. The more exclusive houses followed. Opera subscribers stood and sang it in the first act intermission of *Tristan*. Wrapped in the flag, Geraldine Farrar trilled it—then pledged herself, her parents and her husband to America! Five thousand high school boys attended a Winter Garden playlet in which the workings of submersible war craft were demonstrated, while school officers made patriotic speeches. After each performance a monster American flag was lowered on the stage and the boys rose and pledged allegiance to it and sang the national anthem. It was the curtain number of the *Follies of 1917*. A prominent after-dinner speaker summed up the technique, “From now on, no audience should ever disperse without a dedication to the nation which makes life worth while.”

It was open season for tableaux. “Our battleships” steamed up to the footlights in practically all the revues of the day. Girls danced about as zeppelins while searchlights played on them. The Goddess of Liberty walked down the runway, at the Winter Garden. Victor Herbert wrote “Can’t You Hear Your Country Calling?” for a new Follies finale. The Schubert’s revue, *Over the Top*, was applauded for its “novel and striking” scene in which a swarm of airplanes bombed a German trench. *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* was conceded by the *Times* to be “the most stirring finale of this generation . . . One of those rousing patriotic tableaux without which no musical show is complete these throbbing days. From out the well of a gun-filled fortress marched squads of soldiers of our Allies, each with their flag.”

MUSICALS were best suited to stirring pulses and camouflaging the distant torture of war behind the feverish gaiety of flags and drums. Vaudeville came next in usefulness. Its conventions, too, are artificial, and its short acts can be turned out fast to suit the changing needs of propaganda. The Palace went in for playlets—many of which were repeated all over the country by clubs, schools, churches, and community gatherings. Plump peasant girls seduced enemy spies at the moment when they were scheduled to blow up bridges. There were Kill-the-Kaiser shockers. (By this time, the German companies in Irving Place and Yorkville had closed. The Metropolitan banned German operas and singers. Even Weber and Fields had abandoned their German dialect!) There was *Liberty Aflame*, with Julia Arthur as Liberty atop a column which became luminous and revealed Washington, Lincoln, Wilson, and the sinking of the *Lusitania*. Bernhardt appeared as a wounded French officer who dies with the tricolor clasped to his bosom. The author of the would-be pacifist *War Brides* of 1915 turned out a shrieking piece of jingoism called *The Bonfire of Old Empires*. There were spy melodramas, and a gruesome succession of comedies to show the “funny side” of trench life. The Dolly Sisters danced to *Over There* “looking



Seven Days Leave at the Hippodrome 1917





*Photo by Byron Co.*

Minnie Dupre, Helen Ware, Mrs. Henry B. Harris, Louise Drew, Chrystal Herne, and Frances Starr.

particularly cunning in white frocks with blue girdles topped with red hats."

In the legitimate theatre conventional comedies which pretended to forget the war, sprouted "patriotic after-pieces," like *A Trench Fantasy* by Percival Knight. This "slice of war life" revealed a Poilu, a "Tommy" and an American in a dugout on Christmas Eve. To them appeared Santa Claus and Death, "and in the manner of the visitors' reception the author conveyed, simply and effectively, something of the spirit of the armies."

When one looks at the longer "realistic" war plays, one sees why even an hysterical audience could not stand more of them. *Out There*—which was immensely popular—was the most theatrically effective of them all. Written by J. Hartley Manners with James M. Barrie kind of whimsey, it was the most subtly vicious of the whole sickening lot. It preached the ending of class differences in a common love for the British Empire, and showed a little Cockney girl from the London slums who found her happiness by going up and down the city shaming men into enlisting, and by following them to a hospital in France—where the sole worry of the picturesquely wounded creatures is whether they'll be able to get back to the front. The whole thing ends with a recruiting speech directed at the audience. Alexander Woolcott "could imagine nothing more inspiring . . . than the sight of her (Laurette Taylor) standing with her hands clasped, her cheeks flushed, her eyes big as saucers, while she whispers again and again 'We're goin' to win, ain't we, Doctor? We gotta win! Bli' me.'" Having "inspired" Broadway for months, *Out There* was sent on a country-wide tour for the Red Cross Drive. Among those donating their services: Miss Taylor, George Arliss, Mrs. Fiske, George M. Cohan, Beryl Mercer, James T. Powers, H. B. Warner.

This was one of the few commercial successes among war plays. The record shows a vast majority of comedies and melodramas which steered clear of war subjects. There was some indirect pressure from the government to use the dramatic stage for patriotic coercion, but even that wore off as the authorities saw the use of the theatre as a place of escape.

On the other hand, the government used the theatre to the limit (like every other gathering of crowds) as a machine for recruiting and Liberty Bond selling. In March, 1917, before war was declared, a Navy recruiting station was opened in the lobby of the Casino; members of the *You're in Love* company were put in charge of registration. Later the recruiting and bond-selling speeches by the Minute Men became a regular entre-acte feature. Actors were pressed into service. Next to the politicians they held the most exposed front-line position. One careless word and they were virtually boycotted from the stage. So, they managed to persuade themselves in about the same way as other "conscientious" citizens did.

EVERY pressure was put on the actors. First, being conspicuous figures, there was the pressure to enlist, and the press agent's favorite

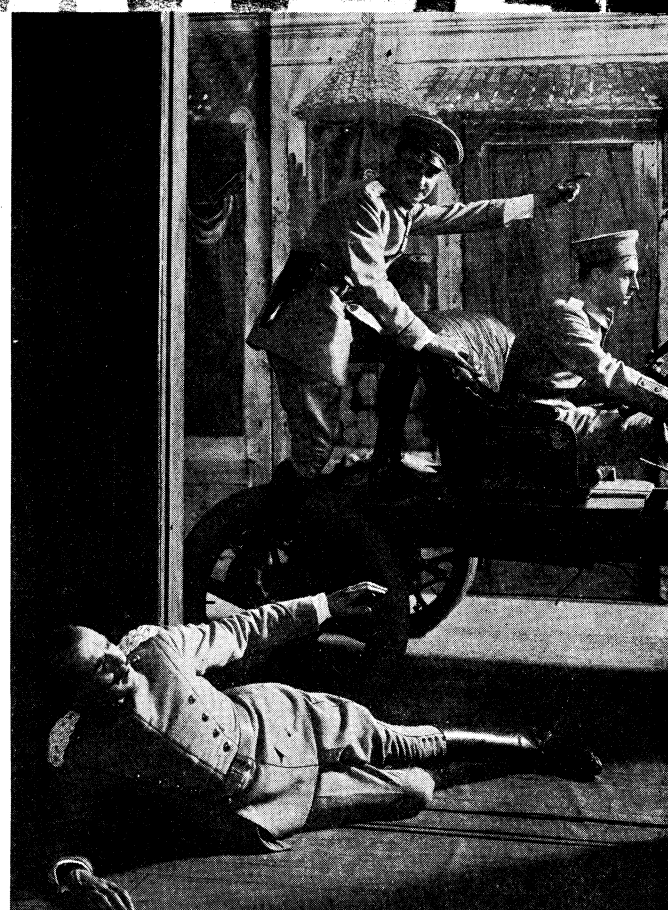
notice was that Philip Merivale or Earl Carrol had signed up. The Hippodrome hung out a service flag. The Actors Fund Fair of 1917 was one long orgy of patriotic fervor. President Wilson opened it by pressing a button in the White House completing a current that unfurled the flags of all the Allies . . . Julia Marlowe recited the Star Spangled Banner and the Battle Hymn of the Republic . . . Stars of the Dillingham companies were put in charge of the U. S. Navy booth, where there was an exhibit of torpedoes . . . The finale of the Lamb's Gambol included the singing of Wilson's words "Fall into Line for Your Motherland." . . .

Second, there was the practically forced donation of services for benefit after benefit, and free entertainment to every branch of the war machine. Managers and stars reaped rewards in publicity, but the minor actors had to go along with them. Ethel Barrymore was honored by the Stage Women's War Relief Society for acting in Frohman's War Fund plays without pay—but lesser actors had been doing this right along as part of their managers' grand gestures. When they *were* paid, cuts were made for further glory of the managers: thus, with the opening of the Liberty Bond Campaign, producers (including Cohan and Harris) announced that they would "assist actors and actresses in their companies to subscribe to bonds on a weekly payment basis" (by nicking each pay check).

Now upon the actors remaining on Broadway—those "beyond the age limit" or "rejected as unfit," and the actresses wearing themselves out in the gruelling succession of patriotic rallies, pageants, and benefits—fell a new burden. Business was terrible—lightless Thursdays, no Tuesday performances by order of the Fuel Administration, war tax on tickets, a falling off of attendance at plays. The panicky managers found just one solution: to cut salaries. From the bottom, of course. It was actually a news story that while usually only minor performers were treated to this, "some prominent actors did not escape."

The White Rats, the vaudeville union, mobilized for a strike, with a show of solidarity and force, but the wartime gag was used on them: the strike was called off as unpatriotic, and the managers then patriotically killed and buried the organization. There was no possibility of fighting for salaries, or limited hours, or reasonable contracts, while the war lasted. But the mounting grievances of exploitation did draw the actors together and when the military control ended with the war, they closed ranks for the big Equity strike of 1919.

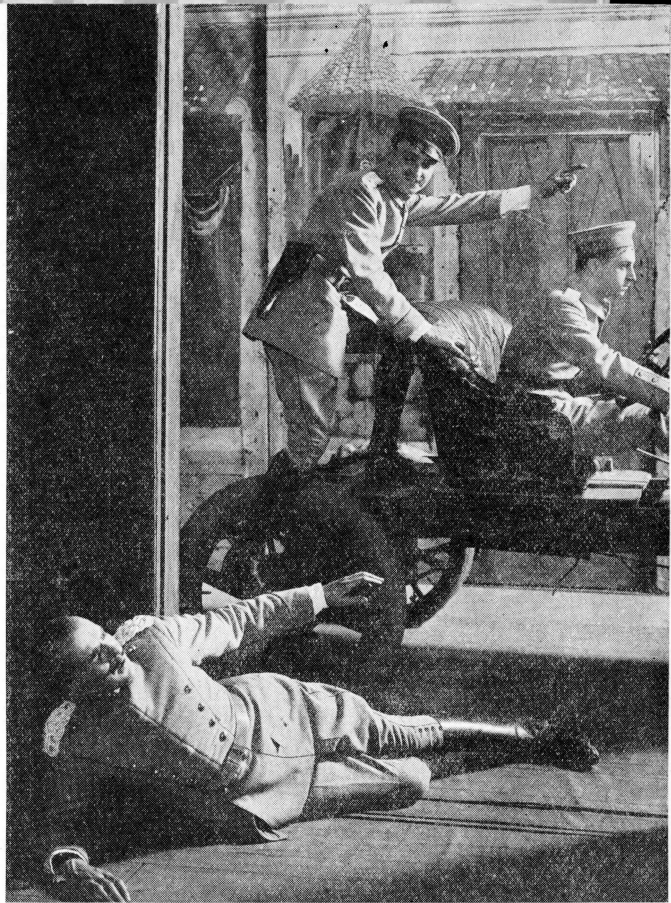
But the ultimate ignominy put on the theatre and its public was the rubbish in which actors had to appear. "People," it was discovered after war had failed, "will seek amusement and diversion in the theatre, and will avoid anything calculated to heighten gloom. They will have enough of that, and those whose kin are in service or have sacrificed their lives may go to the theatre for mental relaxation, but never to have their emotions harried. So the comedy



William Courtney and Felix Crembs in *Under Fire*

and the farce will flourish." The few exceptions to this policy in the later months of the war were "high comedies of war" like *Billeted* in which Margaret Anglin was advertised to "make you forget the meatless, wheatless, coalless, drinkless, days"; or like *General Post*, that treated satirically the social shake-up which was supposed to be turning tailors into colonels and the elite into privates. The most successful of these plays was the English importation *The Better 'Ole* which presented "the funny side of war." Jane Cowl smothered realism with *Lilac Time*, a syrupy tear-jerker of love behind the lines. Edward Childs Carpenter was an apt spokesman for the practicing playwrights through the remainder of the war. "This war cannot be won without hope and faith. I have laid some such emphasis on my two plays of the season: *The Three Bears* and *The Pipes of Pan*—both suggest that, in these times of dark clouds, the old silver linings are still there. If I have made some brave souls forget their anxiety for a brief hour, I am repaid and fortunate."

What was left of the theatre was a desert of risqué bedroom farces, pathetic comedies, and love-and-springtime musicals. Copeau, who had been plodding on with his safe and sane repertory, could not have chosen a worse time to present a midly social play. *The Bad Sheperds* by Octave Mirabeau, enraged the critics. The *Times* review stated feverishly that it "brought home to the audience how completely the war has put into the background" such "extreme views on both sides of the question of the rights of capital and labor." All that was changed—workers and employers were friends, now, fighting side by side in a greater struggle—for freedom and equality—to end all wars.



William Courtney and Felix Crembs in **Under Fire**

# Drama on the Western Front

By H. W. L. DANA

The great drama of the World War warped and distorted the little drama of the stage and screen, which were used only to spread lies, inflame hatred, and militarize the masses.



**D**URING the opening months of the World War I was in Germany, in France, and in England. In all three countries I saw the drama that was going on in the streets and the drama that was being acted in the theatres and could trace the effect of the one upon the other.

In Berlin, at the end of July, 1914, I felt the drama of suspense among the crowd in the streets, I witnessed the theatrical moment when the Kaiser came out on to the balcony of his Palace and declared war, and I saw the grim tragedy of the German workers in gray uniforms herded like dumb driven cattle into the War.

In Paris I watched the exciting drama of the French populace in the streets while the sound of guns came nearer and nearer during the Battle of the Marne and German aeroplanes were flying over our heads.

In London I saw the tragi-comedy that was being enacted in Hyde Park where the stolid British laboring men were being goaded into war hatred against their fellow workers in Germany by war-crazed platform orators, some of whom were clergymen, some drunk, and some both.

The drama in the streets of these three cities had striking differences, but there was one great resemblance. I was convinced that at the beginning of the War the common people in all these cities did not want war. It was only gradually, through the power and propaganda of press and

pulpit, of theatre and movies, that the reluctant masses were converted into cannon fodder. But this "Tale of Three Cities" is another story and must be told elsewhere.

It is the drama in the theatres of these cities that I want to discuss here—the way in which the great drama of the World War warped and distorted the little drama of the stage and screen and how the stage and screen in turn were used to carry on the war propaganda. Here again there were striking differences between the methods used in Germany, in France, and in England. Yet in all three countries I found the same general tendency: the use of the theatres and moving picture houses to spread lies, inflame hatred, and militarize the masses. In each country there was, of course, a movement of protest which tried to make itself felt in the theatres as well as in politics, but it was not sufficiently organized, sufficiently international, sufficiently revolutionary to be effective in stopping the War. Would this revolutionary struggle of workers and intellectuals against war be suppressed with equal ease today?

## GERMANY

In Berlin, in August, 1914, I found that the playbills for the theatres were immediately changed. No liberal plays, no pacifist plays, no foreign plays were allowed. Only 100% German patriotic plays were permitted and the theatrical performances were turned into military demonstrations. Goethe was too international-minded. Lessing was too liberal. The spirit of brotherhood in his *Nathan the Wise* was as impossible then as it is, of course, in the anti-cultural Germany of Hitler today. Even Schiller had to be carefully hand-picked. Now that they were fighting the French his play about Joan of Arc, of course, would not do. But in the early days of August I did see a performance of *William Tell* in which all the stress was laid not on liberty but on national unity. The actors shouted to the audience: "Be United, Be United! . . . We are a united folk of brothers . . . Even the most pious cannot remain at peace when wicked neighbors do not permit." The blame for war was all on the "wicked neighbors"—the Allies. The bourgeois audience applauded this allusion with venomous approval. On August 19 I saw another audience fanned to flame and fury by the militaristic bombast of Kleist's *Prince of Homburg*. Max Reinhardt, the famous director of the German Theatre in Berlin, was forced to

change his program when he opened his season in September, 1914, and to produce the most militaristic of all Schiller's plays, *Wallenstein's Camp* and a war play written for the occasion by Schmidtbonn called *1914*.

**A**S soon as Germany made war on Belgium and France I found the German dramatists making war on the Belgian and French dramatists. The two outstanding German playwrights of the period, Hauptmann and Sudermann, were among the 93 German intellectuals who signed the famous manifesto defending German militarism and attacking the "lies" of the Allies. So was Max Reinhardt.

When the Belgian dramatist, Maeterlinck, hurled the charge of barbarism against Germany, Hauptmann returned the charge of barbarism against Belgium. He cried: "I assure Monsieur Maeterlinck that no one in Germany thinks of imitating his 'civilized' nation." The Germans are "for a noble and rich natural treasure, for . . . the progress and ascent of humanity." And then Hauptmann added with a noble dramatic gesture: "I myself have sent out two of my sons."

When Romain Rolland tried to intervene and intercede with pacifist pleas, Hauptmann retorted: "War is War! It is apparent that you are afraid of our brave soldiers."

In *Christmas, 1914* Hauptmann gave a German counterpart of Paul Claudel's *Christmas Night, 1914*. Hauptmann's *Song of the Fatherland* was a paean of national glory. The author of *The Weavers* and *The Sunken Bell*, now staying comfortably at home, exhorted his own sons and the sons of his contemporaries to go forth to war, crying to them: "Mow down the harvest dripping with blood!"

Even the "naughty" German dramatist, Wedekind, who died during the World War, became "good" before his death and supported the War on the ground that it was a war against Russian militarism, just as I found French and English dramatists supporting it as a war against Prussian militarism.

The younger generation of German dramatists in that faithful Summer of 1914 went forth into the field, in Hauptmann's words, to "mow down the harvest, dripping with blood." They went to the front filled with the same war madness as the older generation that stayed at home, but in their actual contact with war, the war madness gradually disappeared. Revolted with what they saw, they turned against the generation that had willed the War. About this revolt of the younger generation of Germany, the youth in the allied countries were of course not told. It is only now that we are beginning to realize the courage of the struggle of the young Germans against the all-powerful Prussian military machine.

Let us take as a striking instance the young German dramatist, Fritz von Unruh. Unruh, whose very name suggests the unrest of this younger generation, was the son of an aristocratic Prussian general, received a thoroughly military training, and was at the age of 18 appointed



Adjutant to one of the Kaiser's sons. When the War came, Fritz von Unruh rode to the front in the vanguard of the invading German army as an Uhlan lieutenant on horseback with lance in hand, crying enthusiastically: "Paris, Paris is our goal!" Yet as the Uhlans overran Belgium, Unruh's restless, sensitive artistic soul was troubled by the slaughter they left in their wake. His own mental suffering he dramatized during the Autumn of 1914 into a play called *Before the Decision*. Here he depicts the tortured conscience of a Uhlan officer like himself in a series of 13 short expressionistic scenes in which we are shown through eyes full of pity the persecution of the Belgian civilians, soldiers dying in the trenches like beasts in a slaughter house, and in sudden contrast officers laughing and singing and getting drunk on champagne, a vision in which the spirit of Shakespeare appears extolling the arts of peace in place of the arts of war, and finally a scene in which the Uhlan officer falls on his knees crying to God: "Do not the cries of the dying reach Thee? Are they lost in space? God, give us back our dead!" Needless to say this crude but powerful play of the opening months of the War was not permitted to be acted or printed until after the German Revolution at the end of the War.

In the following year, 1915, Fritz von Unruh produced a still greater sensation with a still more powerful play called *A Generation*—a terrific panorama of the whole maimed and bleeding generation caught in the trammels of war. The younger generation, four sons, one brave, one wild, one a coward, one a rebel, all turn against their father, accusing him of sacrificing

them on the altar of the Fatherland crying: "I only wish I had more sons to sacrifice." The younger generation no longer believe their mother, but say to her: "You led us astray, making us believe there was a Heaven with choirs of angels. But today crowns and crests, churches and crosses are as nothing. Let us be free from these bonds!" Needless to say this play too was suppressed and the author arrested and imprisoned as a pacifist.

ANOTHER of the young German dramatists, Walter Hasenclever carried the conflict of the two generations still farther and in his play called *The Son* shocked all Germany by having the son obsessed with the desire to kill his own father, crying "Death to the Dead!" In another play called *The Savior*, a young poet, clearly Hasenclever himself, pleads with the ruler for peace: whereupon the bellicose Field Marshal demands the life of the poet. Of this play Hasenclever managed to print secretly fifteen copies and sent one to the German Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg. The German police soon got busy and destroyed the plates from which the play was being printed.

Seeing that he would not be allowed to attack war openly in any play of his own, Hasenclever tried to publish his version of *Antigone* the old Greek tragedy by Sophocles. Here Hasenclever has the heroine, Antigone, stir up the people of Thebes in opposition to war and to the war lord Creon, who clearly represented the German Kaiser. The rising tide of revolt which swept this tyrant from his throne was a prophesy of the German Revolution which broke out only a

year or two later. It was this revolutionary version of *Antigone* which was acted in the Soviet Union after the Russian Revolution.

Somewhat similarly, the Austrian dramatist Franz Werfel wrote an adaptation of *The Trojan Women* of Euripides with a preface pointing out its application to the World War and saying: "The duty of mankind is not to kill, not to die—but to live." Another Austrian, Stefan Zweig turned back not to Greek tragedy but to the Old Testament and wrote a powerful pacifist play, *Jeremiah*. Still another Austrian, Karl Kraus, did not return to the past but struck boldly at the impending doom in his play, *The Last Days of Humanity*.

Naval warfare was dramatized by Reinhard Goering (not to be confused with the Nazi premier). In his *Battle at Sea*, a dramatic poem in free verse, he represents the souls of the sailors blown to bits at the Battle of Skagerack as crying: "Blood, Blood, our blood will turn the fishes red!" It was only long afterwards that mutiny in the navy could be dramatized by Friederich Wolf in *The Sailors of Cattaro* and acted around the world from Moscow to 14th Street.

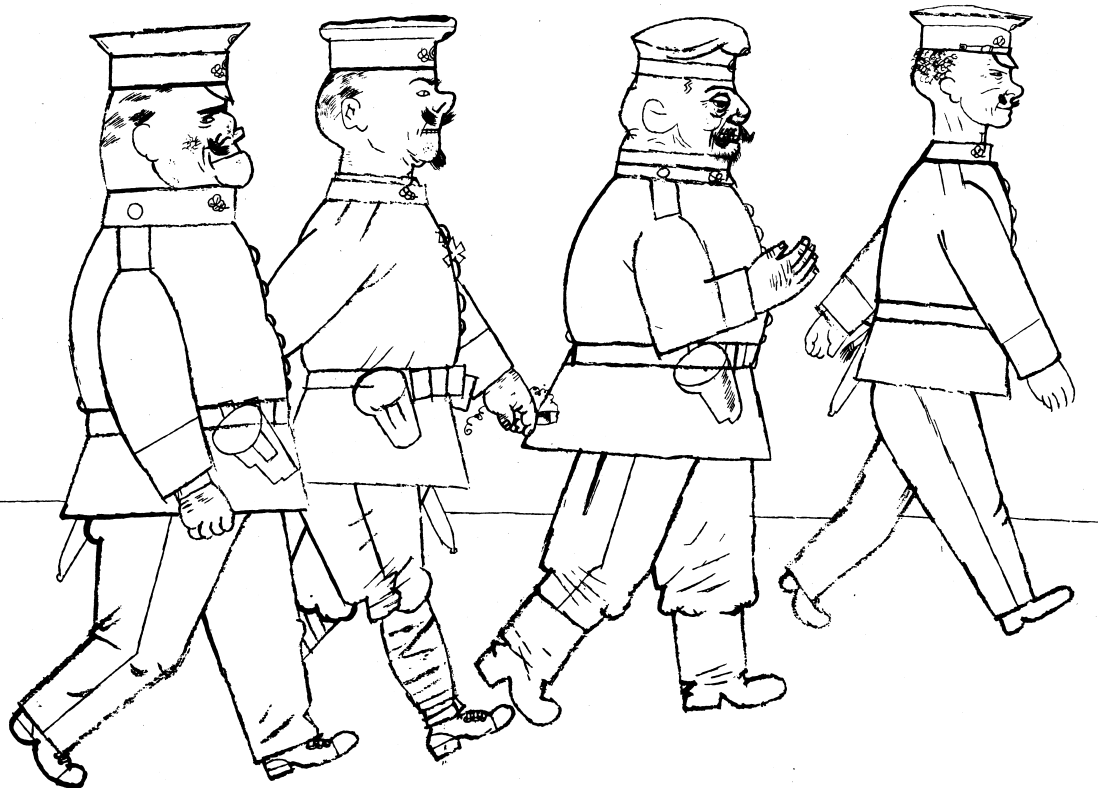
The transformation which all these German and Austrian dramas represent from an acceptance of war into a bitter rebellion against it is perhaps best of all represented in Ernst Toller and in his play called *Transformation*. Toller himself at the beginning of the war had enthusiastically enlisted to defend the "attacked Fatherland," but in the battlefield where German and French corpses were entangled together in the barbed wire and frozen stiff, he underwent a terrible revulsion and, conquering his despair, became a revolutionist, helped organize strikes of munition workers, and was thrown into prison for "treason." In his expressionistic play, *Transformation*, written while he was in prison, Toller symbolized the transformation of himself and his whole generation in the drama of a sculptor who is carving his masterpiece, a statue of National Glory, goes enthusiastically to the front only to become disgusted, and returns to destroy his statue of National Glory and to join in the uprising of the workers, crying: "Revolution, Revolution!"

It was a similar revolutionary fervor that was to be found in the play of a still younger revolutionary German dramatist, Bert Brecht, called *Drums in the Night*. Indeed it was this revolutionary movement in Germany under the inspiration of the Russian Revolution that caused the German empire to crumble from within, the Kaiser to abdicate, and the War to end.

## FRANCE

WHEN I passed from Germany to France, I found that the French dramatists were even more filled with war bitterness than the German and that there were fewer revolutionary plays against war in France than there were in Germany. This, of course, is at variance with the beautiful Allied Myth of Germany as the One Guilty Nation and of France as altogether innocent, unprepared, and taken by sur-

"Gott Mit Uns"—Drawing by George Grosz





Mabel DW - 1934

Courtesy Weyhe Galleries

**DANSE MACABRE** by Mabel Dwight

prise in 1914. As a matter of fact I had found the French stage before the war already full of plays stirring up hatred against the Germans. In 1913, Lavedan, who had just been made one of the 40 immortals of the French Academy, wrote his famous play *Service*, in which he depicted an old colonel, whose two sons have been killed in war, but whose youngest son is a pacifist. The pacifist son withholds from the service of his country his invention of a green powder which is capable of being used as a terrific explosive, but when the boom of cannon announces the declaration of war, he cries: "I go!" This play was used at the beginning of War to stir up the war spirit in France and for the same reason was brought over to America and acted in English by Mrs. Fiske.

Another French play, written on the eve of war and popular throughout the War was Kistermaeckers' *The Spy*, in which a French Lieutenant Colonel is represented as strangling to death a spy who has tried to get plans of a French fortification. Kistermaeckers followed this up with an even more violent play called *An Evening at the Front* where a French woman, discovering that her husband is a German spy, proceeds to kill him. During the War, I found a whole epidemic of French plays in which French wives are extolled for killing their German husbands. In Calmette's *Prayer in the Night* a French woman of the invaded region discovers her husband is a German and stabs him. In D'Ambré's *Frontier* the French wife is insulted by her drunken German husband and slays him. In Fonson's *Commander* a Belgian girl is assaulted by a German police agent and stabs him. In Soulie's play called "1914-1937," it is the illegitimate son of a French woman ravaged by an Uhlan officer in 1914 who meets his father some 23 years later and strangles him. Even Prussian "frightfulness" had no counterpart to these violent, sadistic French melodramas advocating the murder of Germans found in France and sanctioning the slaying of husbands or lovers if the woman thought they might be spies or traitors.

Maeterlinck was not quite so crude as this and in his *Burgomaster of Stilmonde*, the daughter is contented with breaking off all relations with her husband. Yet Maeterlinck, the symbolist and mystic, saw the struggle between France and Germany as that between an Angel and a Beast. For the French Catholics the symbolism is clear. In Aicard's *Witness* France is Christ and Germany Anti-Christ. In Villeroy's *Virgin of Lutetia* Saint Genevieve saves Paris from the Huns under Attila. In François Porché's *The Ruffians and Finette*, the pig-headed ruffians are, of course, the Germans and the Princesse Finette is France who slays the spy and traitor with her own hands. The Catholic Paul Claudel, who since the War has been ambassador at Washington, wrote a play called *Christmas Night, 1914*, in which he represented the Belgian children looking down from Heaven upon the Germans who have massacred them and coming to the edifying conclusion that "Luther is with the Devil." In Maraud's symbolic play called *Cathedrals*, Sarah Bernhardt, the divine Sarah,

well on in years, pluckily toured the front and standing on her one remaining leg recited quivering the patriotic words of the Cathedral of Strassburg.

**CATHOLICISM, Capitalism, Militarism,** were triumphant in the French theatres during the War. The plays that were revived from earlier French drama were all of this mould. Heroic drama triumphed over comedy. Corneille swamped Molière. Corneille's *Horatius* was revived, in which the Roman warrior kills his sister because she has dared to love one of the enemy. Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, with his snow white soldier's plume, his panache, was triumphantly revived again and again. Suberville wrote a *Cyrano in the Trenches*, in which the 17th century Gascon soldier visits the battlefields of the World War and recognizes the France of the Three Musketeers in the France of the Poilus.

Yet all this outburst of heroics and bravado does not mean that French drama during the World War lost completely its "eternal triangle." Trigonometry was still to be found in the drama, but during the War the eternal triangle took, if one may say so, a new angle: in place of a jealous rivalry of possession, there was a generous rivalry of self-sacrifice. When the triangle consists of two women and one man, as in Bataille's *Amazon*, the mistress stirs the husband to battle and his death and the wife bids the mistress to remain true to the love for the husband. When the triangle consists of two men and one woman, as in Bernstein's *Elevation*, the husband bids his wife to go to the deathbed of her lover and the lover, not to be outdone in nobility, bids her return to her husband.

While the World War and these heroes, heroines, and heroics lasted, it was difficult to produce in Paris any play treating war realistically and impossible to produce any play protesting against war. Charles Mére had to wait until after the Armistice before he could produce his powerful play called *The Captive* in which a mother, that is a sort of symbol of Mother Earth, nurses back to life high up in the mountains of Switzerland her two sons, one French and the other German, who have wounded and blinded one another in a battle long ago at Verdun. Romain Rolland, among the snow covered Alps of that same Switzerland, which was set like an island of peace in the midst of a world at war, had launched his appeal for international peace, entitled *Above the Battle*; yet had to postpone till after the war *Liluli*, his satirical play on the illusions of war in which he represents two friends, one clearly France and the other Germany, who are forced in spite of themselves to fight each other on the very bridge they have built to unite them in reconciliation.

French drama, then, with the coming of the World War had undergone an immediate change. In place of the brightness and lightness of touch which had before seemed the chief characteristic of the Boulevard theatres of the Gay Paree, I found a grim seriousness which one might have thought more typical of British drama. Even

since the War there has continued to be a note of stoicism in French drama rather different from what is usually thought to be French and more akin to what is usually thought Anglo-Saxon. Unlike either Germany or England, France had actually been invaded for four years. The War against the invader was waged with the same grim seriousness in the theatres as it was in the trenches.

## ENGLAND

WHEN I crossed from France to England in the Autumn of 1914, I found that the theatres of London had undergone almost exactly the opposite transformation from the theatres of Paris. Instead of having become more sombre, the London theatres had become more gay. If the French with their frank facing of facts had accepted the War at once and changed their way of life and the tone of their theatres accordingly, the English, as a part of the Anglo-Saxon bluff, were using the slogan "Business as Usual" and with that the slogan "Pleasure as Usual." I found that the London theatres were places not to discuss the War but to forget the War. They seemed to be trying to act as though there were not any war at all. The theatres were places of transitory amusement for soldiers between life and death and Shaftesbury Avenue took on the light-hearted gaiety that the Paris Boulevard theatres had had before the War. The most popular plays during the War were an oriental fantasy like *Chu Chin Chow*, a musical comedy such as *The Maid of the Mountain*, or a risqué farce appropriately called *A Little Bit of Fluff*. Most of the new English plays were little bits of fluff and the younger generation of English dramatists, the smart set, have taken over from pre-War France a lightness of touch which has brought to England what might be called a New Restoration Comedy. Since the War many of the younger dramatists, Noel Coward, Frederick Lonsdale, etc., have been characterized by a spirit of disillusion, of a breaking of the older Anglo-Saxon moral codes. In other words the effect of the World War on English drama was in many ways the exact opposite from its effect on French drama.

Yet in England as in France the overwhelming majority of the dramatists lined up in support of the War. In London I found that almost all the older English dramatists, Pinero, Jones, Barrie, Galsworthy, William Archer, Granville Barker—practically all save Bernard Shaw—had signed a document supporting the War "with all their strength"—a document that was almost the exact counterpart of the famous one signed by the 93 German intellectuals.

In that great Triumvirate of older English dramatists—Barrie, Galsworthy, and Shaw—I found that the reaction to the War was characteristic, of each of the three.

Sir James Barrie, the sentimentalist, allowed his emotions to run away with him. During the opening months of the War he burst out in his bitter and unbalanced diatribe against the German Kaiser called *Der Tag or the Tragic Man:—the Werewolf of Potsdam*. Sentimental feelings for sons at the front were reflected in

Barrie's *The New Word* and *The Old Lady Shows her Medals*. Brooding on the deaths in the War turned his sentimentalism to spiritualism in *The Well-Remembered Voice* and *Barbara's Wedding* and prepared the way for the post-War spiritualism of Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and that half comic half mystical other-world drama, *Outward Bound*, by the shell-shocked Sutton Vane.

Galsworthy, on the other hand, retained throughout the War his cold, balanced, judicial attitude. Already in 1913 in *The Mob* he had anticipated the way in which the war fever and the united forces of politics, press, and pulpit would produce a mob spirit that would crush any individual pacifist who tried to stand out against war. Later on, in *The Skin Game* Galsworthy seemed to be writing of an English gentleman, Hilcrest, who had come to defend a small tenant threatened by a ruthless upstart, Hornblower; but we cannot help feeling that back of this drama he has in mind England coming to the defense of Belgium against Germany. At the end the English gentleman has to admit that he too has played a "skin game." As he says: "When we began this fight we had clean hands. Are they clean now?"

Bernard Shaw was practically alone among the older dramatists in taking a definite stand against the World War. Already in *Arms and the Man*, *Press Clippings*, and in incidental passages in many other plays, Shaw had satirized war and the forces that make for war. Now that the World War had come and all his colleagues insisted in talking nonsense about it, Shaw boldly published his *Common Sense in War Time*. While the War was still going on, in his *Playlets of the War*, Shaw let loose his shafts of satire.

In *O'Flaherty V. C.* he took his shot at the predicament of the Irish fighting for the English. In his *Augustus Does His Bit* he took his shot at the British stay-at-home patriot. In his *Inca of Perusalem* he took his shot at the Kaiser of Germany—but his humor was far more subtle and double-edged than that which Sir James Barrie had displayed in his *Werewolf of Poitsdam*. Shaw's most penetrating criticism of the whole generation that could produce such a war, however, was reserved for one of his masterpieces, *Heartbreak House*, written during the World War but not produced or published till the War was over. Finally in *Saint Joan* Shaw paid his respects to the forces of Catholicism and Militarism which had burned Joan at the stake 500 years ago but which were trying to exploit her memory during the World War to advance their own ends. Shaw managed to rescue Joan from these forces of reaction and indeed to use her against them.

Yet in England as in Germany and in France, while the World War lasted, no voice, not even Shaw's was sufficient to stop the tide. The isolated efforts of the individual dramatists, like the isolated protests of the individual Conscientious Objectors were powerless against the herd instinct which swept through the streets and through the theatres and which was using the theatres to still further inflame the mob madness in the streets.

(Cont. on Page 32)

# Dance of Death

By PAUL LOVE

**N**IGHTINGALES OF AMERICA READY FOR WAR'S STERN DUTIES. This headline in the *Journal* on August 12, 1914 was illustrated with an ironical photograph of Isadora Duncan in a pose similar to the neo-classic David's portrait of Recamier. Isadora was one of those "heading the colony of brave American women who are going to the front as war nurses. The women had made their plans even before the men were called to their colors, and were ready and waiting when the summons came."

Isadora was never a war nurse, but it was interesting publicity. As she was gnashing her teeth over the blindness and stupidity of America for not giving her enough money to carry on the Greek *Dionysion* which had been briefly presented, the Russian Ballet under the direction of Diaghilev was touching the heights and simultaneously suffering from internal wars due to jealousies and intrigues. Nijinsky, through his marriage, had aroused the wrath of Diaghilev and had temporarily left the company. Pavlova was touring on her own. Mary Wigman, beginning her career, was working in Switzerland and recuperating from a serious illness. Ruth St. Denis in California was at the height of her oriental period.

As nearly as could be discovered in a rapid survey of books and clippings, there were only three of these dancers who were aware that a war existed—aware, that is, to the extent of making an immediate response in their dancing. Those three were Ruth St. Denis, Isadora and Nijinsky.

Pavlova continued uninterrupted in her classical ballet divertissements. The Russian Ballet was too busy with internal dissensions and too occupied with its program of beauty and grace. It continued on its way, expatriated, with romanticism, remoteness and exoticism as the keynote, apparently unaware that the Ivory Tower had crumbled into something worse than dust. It was beautiful in the sense that filigree or a cameo are beautiful and for this reason it offered nothing but an escape in two directions: in time, backward into past and calmer days; in space, upward into the realm of faëry where the Law of Gravity is unknown.

There were several things that prevented the creation of any dances based on war experiences. Possibly the main one is that the modern dance was hardly out of swaddling clothes and the ballet technique which was current was impossible for such a theme. Another is that there were personal incidents which deterred and determined the reactions of several of the dancers. Still another is the fact that expression follows an experience and does not occur simultaneously with it. Nearness, for almost any creative person, is a blinder; he must wait until the experience becomes disentangled from his own per-

sonal and immediate life before he can realize it in three dimensions.

It is because of this that Jooss's *The Green Table* was not composed until some twelve or thirteen years had elapsed. Several dances and cycles by Mary Wigman, two or three solos by Martha Graham and most of the finest (that is, truest) books on the war appeared within the past five years. There were some dances, however, that were created in the 1914-1919 period and they are worth some small attention since they represent a reaction as typical as the mob reaction to drums.

**I**SADORA was in France when war was declared, staying at the Hotel in Bellevue which had been converted into a Temple of the Arts for her. It was in the month of August, almost to a day when the mobilization began, that she gave birth to her third child. She had lost the first two under tragic circumstances, and she was to lose the last one only a few hours after it was born.

This has little to do with war, but it has much to do with the state of mind and condition of body with which, from that moment of death onward, she viewed the world and watched it collapse. This final frustration, nurtured by her exhibitionist ego and her emotional response to the writings of the mad Nietzsche, caused her to fall unreluctantly into the chaotic tide that was sweeping over Europe.

She gave her Bellevue villa as a hospital for wounded soldiers; she conducted one of her many frenzied romances with one of the doctors; and she blamed the war to the fact that people ate meat. "Who loves this horrible thing called War? Probably the meat eaters, having killed, feel the need to kill. . . . The butcher with his bloody apron incites bloodshed, murder. Why not? From cutting the throat of a young calf to cutting the throat of our brothers and sisters is but a step." Yet, somewhat later, covered by the tri-color of France and with arm uplifted in exalted defiance, she danced the *Marseillaise*—a cry to war.

She saw the insurgence of jazz and was unable to realize that the vogue which she called "the barbarous yaps and cries of a Negro orchestra" was an easily understandable response to the tension that was about to snap. Because America seemed to like this better than it liked giving money for Greek dramas or for her bleeding France, Isadora shortened her American tour and returned to Europe. She and her group of dancers, like a bunch of school children, lustily sang the *Marseillaise* as the boat left the deck—all this as a way of thumbing her nose at the managers who refused to assist her.

Isadora's whole life was a series of contradictions. She talked peace but she danced war. In



"American Ballet - 1917"—From *The First World War* by L. Stallings

words, in talk, she suffered for humanity, but in life she was extravagant and crass. The more one thinks of Isadora as a person, the more one wonders whether she was not really one of the supreme self-publicity agents.

Two of her other dances were Tchaikowsky's *Symphonie Pathétique* and the *Marche Slav*. Of the first she has said, "It represents the soul of a nation in travail, in war. I was calling to them never to surrender, never to yield. Why do our ships stay home?" And in direct contradiction to this capitalistic cry, she has said of the second that she was "picturing the down-trodden serf under the lash of the whip." Possibly she did but we doubt it—doubt it, that is, as a sincere protest.

Similar to her in many ways is Ruth St. Denis. She too has the Vision of God; she too has heard the anguished Cry of Humanity. But the words are all capitalized as were Isadora's, and capitalized in a much more literal sense. Her only dance on a war theme that I could discover was *The Spirit of Democracy* which was about as banal as the Statue of Liberty has become.

Miss St. Denis had been planning a year's vacation, when suddenly America entered the war. Her words were for peace but she did the usual thing and gave the usual justification. It was one of those explanations we have heard so many times and which is both true and false: "I don't believe in the horrible war, but we are in it, so—well, we must do our part." For her and, in a slightly different light, for Isadora and for thousands of Americans, it was an unexpected opportunity to put into practice a great many abstract nouns such as Love, Tenderness, Valor, Renunciation, Sacrifice—nouns which had been sitting so long in the dictionary that their meaning had been forgotten.

Miss St. Denis became the godmother of the 158th Ambulance Company at Camp Kearny in California in which Ted Shawn had enlisted. She abandoned her vacation and started on a vaudeville tour, turning over her income to war work. In 1918 she spent her time selling Liberty Bonds and giving speeches. During the influenza epidemic, "braving the quarantine, Ruth St. Denis came to Camp Kearny, lived for eight days in a tent on the outskirts, and nightly gave open-air performances to a ghostly-looking host of soldiers whose faces were covered with white 'flu-masks'."

It was shortly before the Armistice that she composed *The Spirit of Democracy*, in which she was the Spirit, clad in a flaming robe. All of the movements were based on war gestures such as bayonetting, throwing hand grenades, etc. The climax came when a girl in black tatters came onto the stage, pleaded totteringly for aid and finally fell down dead. From all accounts, this group dance was little more than a miming of War Posters, full of War, Death, Starvation and that peculiar thing called Democracy which in some vague way America was supposed to be attempting to save.

NIJINSKY and his wife and the child Kyra were in Budapest on the twenty-third of July, 1914. On the following day an ultimatum was sent to Serbia. July twenty-fifth they went to the circus which was overfilled with excitement. Strangers kissed each other; it was like a national fête. War had been declared. "Ceaselessly regiments of soldiers marched by, covered with flowers, singing, accompanied on the roadside by their laughing and, frantically waving women relatives."

Nijinsky stood sighing before the window. "All these young men marching to their deaths, and for what?" It was shortly after this that they were made prisoners of war and lived for more than a year and a half in complete isolation. Nijinsky was well aware of the war but regarded it with a fatalistic mind and continued his work as well as he could under the restrictions that were imposed upon him. He created the choreography for the long ballet, *Tyl Eulenspiegel*, and began to work on his system of dance notation.

Finally, through Diaghilev and some of Romola Nijinsky's friends ("The relatives of people in high positions all stay at home, they do not go to the front"), they were moved to Vienna in January, 1916. At this time Nijinsky composed the *Mephisto Valse* and began another ballet on a Japanese theme, which was never finished. After a short interval, he was "loaned" to America and made his American debut at the Metropolitan Opera House. There was an American tour and a visit to Spain and South America before he finally returned to "home in St. Moritz." There was no creative work in this period which reflected the war psychoses. Possibly it would never have entered his work at all if it had not been for several outside factors.

One must remember that Nijinsky came from a family with a decided insanity taint. Because of this his mind was peculiarly open to the sudden reversion Tolstoi had made in his writings. Through one or two fanatical friends he was subjected daily to this new so-called humanitarian philosophy which Tolstoi projected in his volume on aesthetics. This and the sex triangle, involving him and Diaghilev and his wife—this and the inherited tendency toward insanity—this and his excessively sensitive nature—this and the rigid training of the ballet and the constant touring, which made him cry out, "I am not a machine. I will dance when I feel like it." With these things in mind, it is not surprising that the war should eventually touch him like a bristle drawn over flayed flesh.

It was in Switzerland that he improvised and presented his last ballet. He was already mad. His intention was to show "how we live, how we suffer, how we artists create." After a tense half hour or more of silence and motionlessness, sitting before his audience of two hundred, "he took a few rolls of black and white velvet and made a big cross the length of the room. He stood at the head of it with open arms, a living cross himself. 'Now I will dance you the war, with its suffering, with its destruction, with its death. The war which you did not prevent and so you are also responsible for' . . . He seemed to fill the room with horror-stricken suffering humanity . . . Whirling through space, taking his audience away with him to war, to destruction, facing suffering and horror, struggling with all his steel-like muscles, his agility, his lightning quickness, his ethereal being, to escape the inevitable end. It was a dance for life against death."

It was the sudden snap of his mind that impelled him to this gesture. Finally, it was not the World War that Nijinsky was dancing; it was himself, his own war with life, his last powerful effort to escape the darkness that was enfolding his mind. Nevertheless, it should remain, whether legend or fact, as the one dance of death that grew out of the world struggle. "Marriage avec Dieu," the title of the chapter in which his wife describes it, may well remain as the name of this ballet.

The Russian Ballet did little more than cool its heels until The Thing was over; it did not affect their work at all. Isadora's was the romantic version, colored with the thrill of excitement and danger but blind to the fact. Ruth St. Denis's was the humanitarian version, weakened by her distance from the field of battle and smothered by high-sounding generalizations. It remained for Nijinsky out of madness to say, "This is my marriage with God." He alone seems to have experienced the war in the way that it is being re-experienced by many people today—not as a valorous struggle but a mass murder for profit.

This article pretends to be neither compact nor conclusive. It is more a brief record than an interpretation; that, the reader will be forced to make for himself. The quotations on Isadora Duncan are mainly from her autobiography, *My Life*. Those on St. Denis are chiefly drawn from Ted Shawn's biography of her. Those on Nijinsky come from the recent biography by his wife.—P. L.



“American Ballet - 1917”—From *The First World War* by L. Stallings

# The Movies in Wartime

By TOM LANGLEY

BACK in 1918, pompous, wordy Cecil B. DeMille boasted:

"... you asked for my opinion regarding the most noteworthy and significant thing accomplished by the motion picture industry during the past year . . . I consider the development of the motion picture . . . into a conspicuously vital factor for the dissemination of governmental propaganda to be . . . most important . . .

"Both through original story, such as our patriotic war dramas, and through picturization of actual war scenes, such as our weeklies, the motion picture, today, is positively developing patriots—dragging the spectator from the smug complacency of his good—and very safe—after-dinner cigar, willy nilly, across the seas to the panting, sweating, struggling world-drama going on over there . . .

"And so, *Pride of Patriotism*—grim Determination to Win the War—Calm Decision to support every measure of our government unreservedly to that end, is finally—through nightly and daily iteration—instilled with telling force, into the breast of the spectator—a spectator taken from every class of American."

At that time Director General of Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, DeMille was questioned by "Wid" Gunning, *Film Daily* editor. The questionnaire was sent to the leaders of the industry. DeMille's answer is so complete, so revealing that all others are superfluous.

Thus was the motion picture industry boastfully acknowledged as the super-salesman of the War. But, the vicious war films of 1918 were the culmination of a long line of militaristic pictures dating back to 1913. This article will trace the development of this war spirit in American films from 1913 on and will demonstrate that the ideological preparation for war had begun long before the actual declaration of war.

In May, 1913, Universal released *The Sons of a Soldier*, with the subtitle, *The Big Japan War*. The picture, declared the advertisement, dealt "with the fighting instinct of the Primrose family through several generations."

The picture showed the Primroses as soldiers in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars and finally during the Japanese War of 1920. Then, one Primrose is President, another heads the Army, and a third is a West Pointer who finally saves his country from the Japanese and wins the girl. An epilogue shows the inevitable child carrying on the "heroic" tradition by playing soldier.

Thus, even before the outbreak of the European War, the movies were drumming up jingoism. In 1913, however, Japan seemed to be a more plausible enemy than Germany. In the same year, another picture, *Gontran, Apostle of Peace*, ridiculed pacifism and pacifists.

With the opening of the World Imperialist War, the movies no longer needed a mythical war as the basis for propaganda. The interests of the American capitalists were deeply involved in this real war, but the movies did not come out openly in favor of either side for some time.

To preserve the appearance of neutrality and to show only pacifist intentions was still desirable; the mass desire for peace was strong and clearly expressed. In the Fall of 1914, for example, *Lay Down Your Arms*, a picture made by one of the regular producing firms, was shown to huge audiences everywhere by the Socialist Party. That a genuinely pacifist film could come out of one of the American studios is significant proof of the still unco-ordinated forces in the industry.

A raw film shortage made it necessary to import many foreign pictures during the first period of the war. Though most of them were, like *The Kaiser's Challenge*, bitterly anti-German films made in Allied countries, a few were pro-German.

On September 26, 1914, a Presidential order forbade all pictures dealing with the war. Because it was clear, however, which way the wind was blowing, pro-Allied war films continued to be shown. On October 17, for example, the German consulate objected to the showing of *The Ordeal*. The protest had little effect, for in November, *For Home and Country*, a rabidly anti-German film made in England was released.

The American masses were also fed the much subtler propaganda in such a picture as *The Funny Regiment*. This film, according to the producer's confidential advance notice to the exhibitors, dealt "with the many amusing episodes typical of life in the French Army." From the film, declared the notice, "we are enabled to get

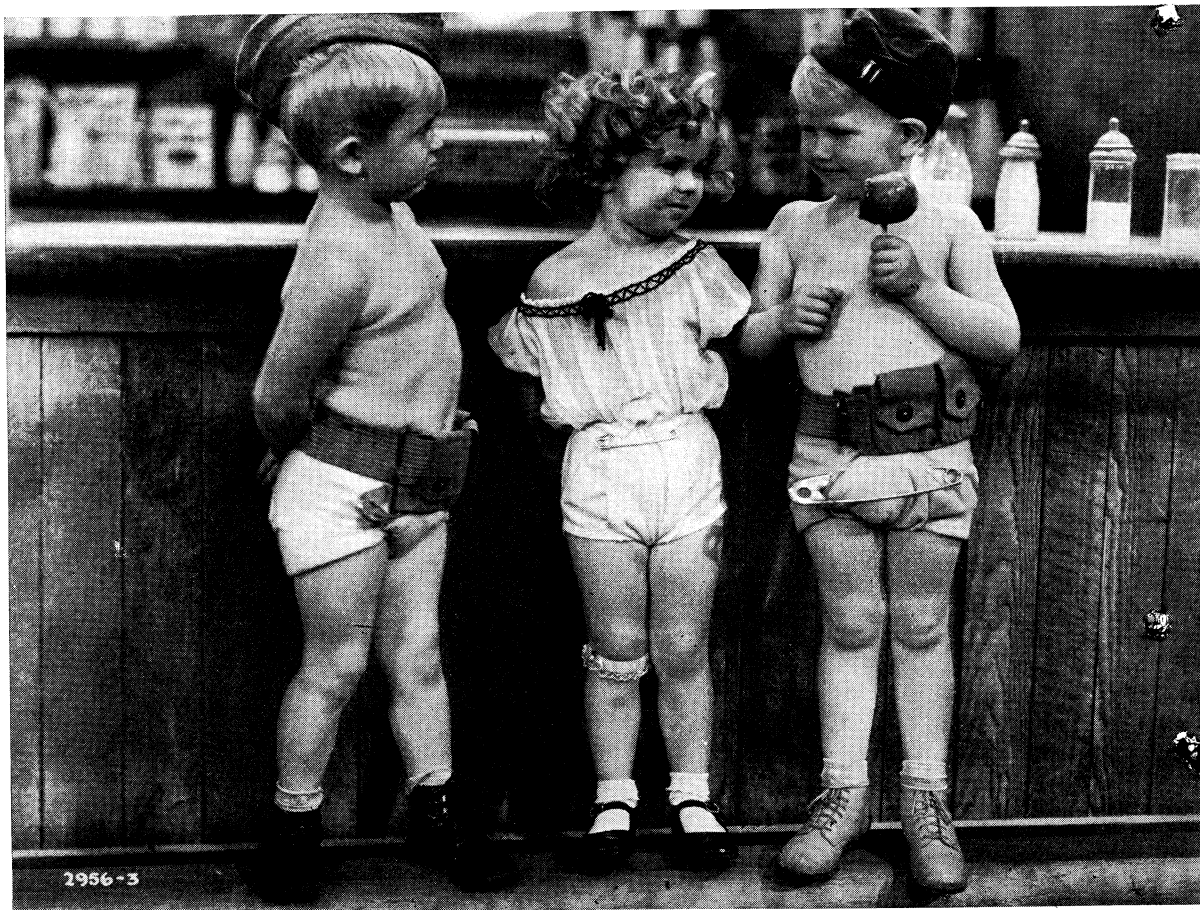
a clearer insight into the life of a French conscientious objector."

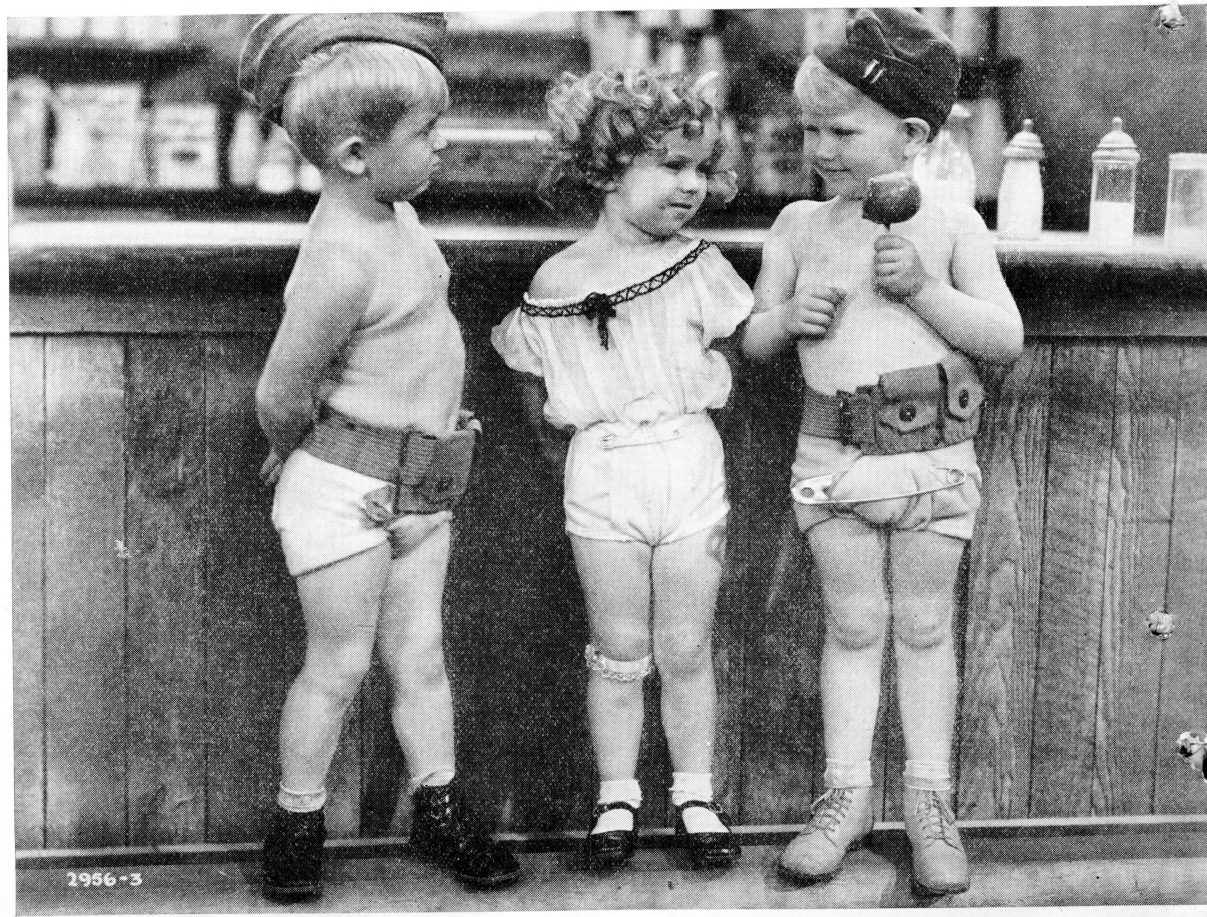
Though as yet the American films did not dare to treat of the European War, they found opportunity for jingoistic incitement against the Mexican people during the Mexican "campaign." As early as July, 1914, *The Honor of Old Glory, or, Carrying the Stars and Stripes into Mexico* was shown. In 1914, *Species of Mexican Man*, another anti-Mexican film, was produced. The review of this film in *Film Variety*, a bulletin for exhibitors, is worth quoting:

"Aside from the war in Europe the American public is vitally interested in the affairs of Mexico. For this reason this remarkable drama is a tremendous success. Also, the story is unusually interesting, being woven about a most remarkable man who tirelessly ceases in the fields of battle that his country may be saved."

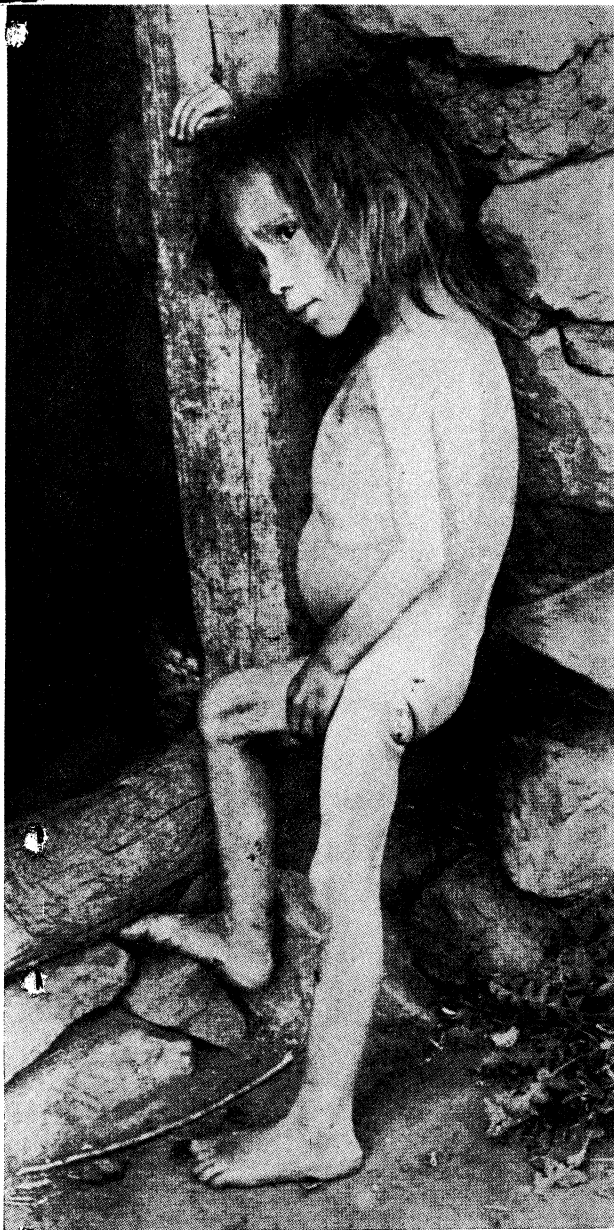
THROUGHOUT 1915, American films continued to preserve some show of impartiality toward the war. But foreign pictures, especially those from Great Britain, rounded out the public's war propaganda diet. Toward the end of 1915, however, American studios began to produce pictures unmistakably anti-German in their sympathies. In November *The Net of Deceit* was released, a story of the spy type so popular during these years. "The secret agent of a hostile foreign power," according to the distributor's bulletin, "orders Le Farge and Gabrielle, an adventuress, to secure the secret formula for a powerful explosive . . ." From the names of the characters, the hostile foreign power was Germany.

In 1916, all pretense of neutrality was dropped, and the movies became propagandists for the Allied Powers. Many films also preached preparedness to American audiences.









## WAR BABIES

LEFT: Scenes from Educational Pictures' Baby Burleck subject, *War Babies*, featuring Shirley Temple.

ABOVE: A real "war baby."—From the First World War by L. Stallings.

Typical of them was *The Flying Torpedo*, which described an imaginary invasion of the United States in 1920. In this film, the invention of a flying machine was stolen by a foreign spy. The hero, however, worked out the original formula in time to save the country when the "foreign foe" attacked.

While American films were cautiously beginning to call for war with Germany, the foreign-made pictures continued to come in, importation being restricted almost exclusively to those made by the Allies. Such films as *With the Allies at Salonica*, *How Britain Prepared* and *The Battle of the Somme*, did their bit to save the Morgan loans.

In fact, so solicitous of the Allies was the American movie industry that it was more careful of England's reputation than was England itself. The *Film Daily*, reviewing *The Battle of the Somme*, declared:

"There is one small cut to be made, where one of the English Tommies gives a German prisoner a dig in the ribs. Up to this time the pictures have dwelt particularly on the kindness with which the English handle their captives, but in this one scene the actual feeling crops out."

As war preparations speeded to their climax in the early months of 1917, war propaganda became direct and unconcealed. American films sang the praises of the Allies with greater skill than did the Allied films themselves. In *The Girl Philippa*, the usual foreign spies were definitely specified as Germans. In *Joan the Woman*, as the trade reviewer complains,

"... the author and producer have seen fit to tie their historical theme to a modern prologue and epilogue, with the very apparent purpose of attempting to take the sting out of the historical situation which presents the English and French as enemies."

Especially revealing is *Womanhood*, produced only a month or two before the declaration of war by the United States. In this film, the entire eastern part of the country is captured by the enemy; the reason for the disaster, the film makes plain, is unpreparedness. But, measures are taken, the enemy is expelled and Old Glory is triumphant.

Up to the time the United States entered the war, propaganda had been intermittent and unco-ordinated. Only about 10% of all American films in 1915 and 1916 had dealt, directly or indirectly, with the war. Even some of these did not come out openly for war. But, as I have shown, in virtually all pictures, propaganda for war was carried on at least in an indirect manner. In films like *War Brides* and *Civilization*, anti-German incitements were sugar-coated with fake pacifist sentiments.

After the declaration of war, however, the sugar-coating was dispensed with. As early as April 26, for example, the editor of *Film Daily*, in discussing *The Birth of Patriotism*, announced that

"... from what I've heard of the intentions of the War Department... it will certainly be cut up quite a bit, because they have a lot of battlefield scenes that show the harvest of war in a manner which is surely not pleasant nor liable to inspire rapid recruiting."

*Film Daily* was correct. The movie industry was made part of the governmental propaganda machine. A special bureau was set up under the Committee for Public Information, and the product of the American studios was rigidly controlled. The movies were even declared to be an essential industry and were exempted from the draft.

In addition to films for general "consumption," all sorts of special films were made. The industry boasted that the first thing the government sent to Europe after the declaration of war was not bullets, but movies—films to convince the war-weary Allied soldiers that America was

prepared to win the war in a few months. Films were also used by the government for military education in the cantonments.

Among the most important of these special movies were those shown in munitions factories to aid in industrial speed-up. I quote from *Patriotism That Registers*, a semi-official pamphlet published during the war:

"An example of what can be accomplished in factories alone is furnished by the National Committee of Patriotic Societies. It has recently been showing at industrial plants two films of actual battle scenes. The manager of one of the largest munitions factories in the country, at which the films were shown, pays his tribute to the effectiveness of the motion picture as a means of quickening the spirit of patriotism, as follows: 'The subject was just what we wanted to give our men, real pictures of actual happenings overseas. It linked up with the basic subject of several of the speakers who tried to show the men the necessity for more speed in the production of supplies, so that our boys could push forward fully equipped at the proper time.'"

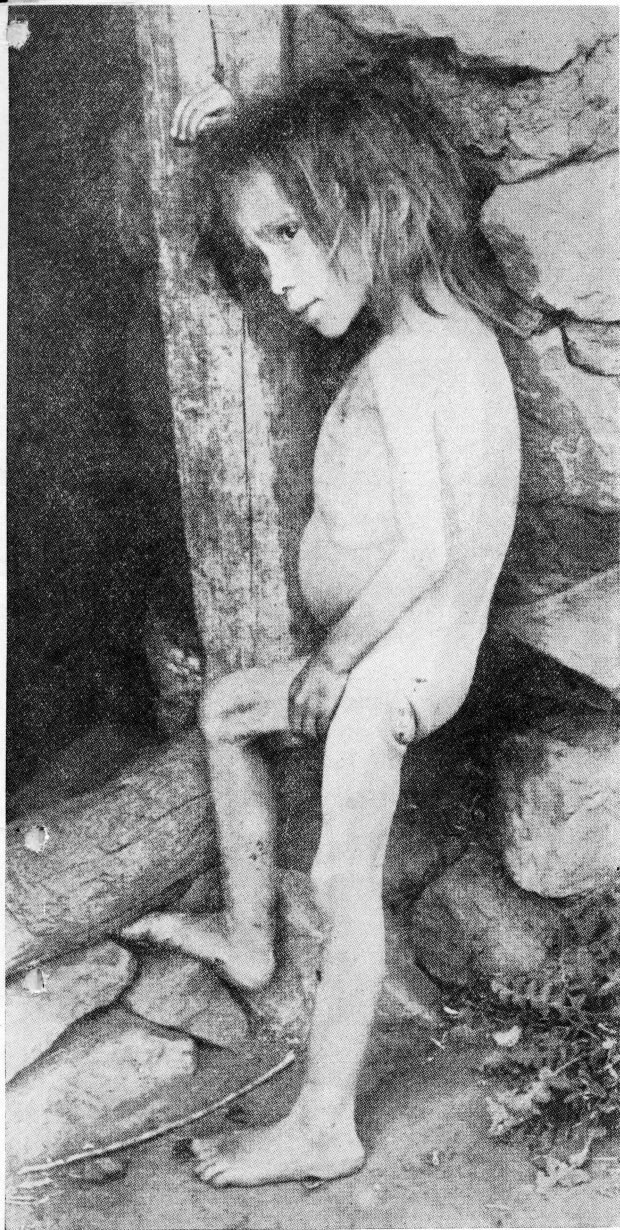
Most popular of the screen stars, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks took part in another type of special picture, made to assist in the Liberty Bond drives. No other propaganda agency did more to sell bonds.

THE production of regular films did not falter. A deluge of pictures, dealing with German atrocities and America's mission to "save the world," were released. A fair specimen of the type was Mary Pickford's *The Little American* in which German soldiers were shown breaking down the stateroom doors of the sinking Lusitania to attack the Red Cross nurses.

(Continued on Page 34)

"Her mother love caused her to shoot children to save them from worse than death"





## WAR BABIES

LEFT: Scenes from Educational Pictures' Baby Burleck subject, **War Babies**, featuring Shirley Temple.

ABOVE: A real "war baby."—From the **First World War** by L. Stallings.

“Her mother love caused her to shoot children  
to save them from worse than death”





“... and we won't come back till it's over Over There”

Russell T. Limbach

## Did You Hear Their Voices

By PHILIP STERLING

**B**ECAUSE the war days of 1917 and 1918 have been dimmed by an interval of eighteen years and by systematic suppression of public information, one is apt to think that the war sentiment which swept America met no important opposing force.

Nothing is more untrue. There was an opposition to the war. And just as all media of popular culture, stage, movies, vaudeville, and Tin Pan Alley were used to swing mass emotions into harmony with the war machine, there arose a popular culture bitterly and militantly opposed to the war. It sprang from the purest and most vital folk sources. While wasp-waisted vaudeville artists were singing *Over There*, *Keep the Home Fires Burning*, *Till We Meet Again*, the folk music of the struggle against war was making itself heard.

Of all Tin Pan Alley's war-time creations one cannot equal in its vitality and spirit the following devastating parody on *Onward Christian Soldiers* sung during the war by the International Workers of the World:

“Onward Christian soldiers, duty's way is plain  
Slay your Christian neighbors or by them be slain.  
Pulpiters are spouting effervescent swill  
God above is calling you to rob and rake and kill.

All your acts are sanctified, by the lamb on high  
If you love the Holy Ghost go murder, pray, and die.

Onward Christian soldiers, blighting all you meet  
Trampling human freedom under pious feet  
Praise the Lord whose dollar sign dupes his favored race  
Make the foreign trash respect your bullion brand  
of grace.

Trust in mock salvation, serve as pirates' tools  
History will say of you, you pack of goddam  
fools.”

These songs voice the spirit of men like Frank Little and Wesley Everest who died valiantly in the fight against the war. In the same bitter vein, contemptuously ripping from the war its cloak of glorification, and ridiculing its recruiting slogans was the song, *A Modern Love Letter*, sung to the tune of *Silver Threads Among the Gold*.

“Put your wooden arms around me,  
Hold me in your cork embrace,  
Let me kiss that northeast section,  
Where you used to have your face.  
You are mine and mine forever  
Darling patriotic boob,  
And my lips they long to press, too  
The end of that long silver tube.  
Get yourself all tied together,  
Ship the bits by parcel post  
What the war has torn asunder  
I would join again—almost.”

Compare *Just A Baby's Prayer At Twilight*.

But the I.W.W., and the large numbers of western and midwestern workers who followed their lead, had another quality common to good fighters, they could laugh—bold pertinent laughter. And amid the deluge of enlistment slogans (“Stamp Out the Hun,” “Make the World

Safe for Democracy,” “Uncle Sam Wants You,” “Make Your Daddy Glad to Have Such a Lad”) the Wobblies used humorous songs to expose the frightful sham idealism which concealed the aims of American imperialism. Here is an example to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*:

“I love my flag, indeed I do, which floats upon the breeze,  
I also love my arms and legs and neck and nose and knees  
One little shell may spoil them all or give them such a twist  
They wouldn't be no use to me. I guess I won't enlist.

I love my country, yes I do, I hope her folks stay well  
But without arms or legs or things, I guess I'd look like hell.  
Young men with faces shot away ain't fitten to be kissed,  
I love my girl, I do indeed. I guess I won't enlist.”

And another, to the tune of a popular war song *When You Come Back (And You Will Come Back)*:

“When you come back, if you do come back  
You will be broke and you'll need some jack,  
Then we'll see how happy you will be  
For losing an arm for Demockery.  
When you go broke and are hungry  
You'll wish all your limbs were sound and true  
When you come back, brace up, Jack  
There's a breadline waiting for you . . .”

**M**EANWHILE, what were the soldiers singing? One might think that the doughboys, far removed from the currents of civilian opposition to the war, were entirely at the mercy of Elsie Janis and the Y.M.C.A. song leaders. Nothing of the kind. Their experience taught them quickly that war was all horror and no glory. Their disillusionment, and their protest against having been hoodwinked into fighting a war from which they had nothing to gain, quickly found expression in song. These were permitted by the authorities on the theory that the boys had to blow off steam.

It is difficult to select examples. Almost every soldier song carries at least an implicit note of protest, with the exception of the official regimental songs designed to lift the *esprit de corps*





“ . . . and we won't come back till it's over Over There”

*Russell T. Limbach*

Safe for Democracy," "Uncle Sam Wants You," "Make Your Daddy Glad to Have Such a Lad") the Wobblies used humorous songs to expose the frightful sham idealism which concealed the aims of American imperialism. Here is an example to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*:

"I love my flag, indeed I do, which floats upon the breeze,  
I also love my arms and legs and neck and nose and knees  
One little shell may spoil them all or give them such a twist  
They wouldn't be no use to me. I guess I won't enlist."

I love my country, yes I do, I hope her folks stay well  
But without arms or legs or things, I guess I'd look like hell.  
Young men with faces shot away ain't fitten to be kissed,  
I love my girl, I do indeed. I guess I won't enlist."

And another, to the tune of a popular war song *When You Come Back (And You Will Come Back)*:

"When you come back, if you do come back  
You will be broke and you'll need some jack,  
Then we'll see how happy you will be  
For losing an arm for Demockery.  
When you go broke and are hungry  
You'll wish all your limbs were sound and true  
When you come back, brace up, Jack  
There's a breadline waiting for you . . ."

MEANWHILE, what were the soldiers singing? One might think that the doughboys, far removed from the currents of civilian opposition to the war, were entirely at the mercy of Elsie Janis and the Y.M.C.A. song leaders. Nothing of the kind. Their experience taught them quickly that war was all horror and no glory. Their disillusionment, and their protest against having been hoodwinked into fighting a war from which they had nothing to gain, quickly found expression in song. These were permitted by the authorities on the theory that the boys had to blow off steam.

It is difficult to select examples. Almost every soldier song carries at least an implicit note of protest, with the exception of the official regimental songs designed to lift the *esprit de corps*

on special occasions and the outright bawdy ones. But even those songs which began on a bawdy note often ended in more serious tone. There is no better example than *Mademoiselle From Armentières* more popularly known as *Hinkey, Dinkey Parleyvoo*. The bawdy verses have become common property but here are a few of the less familiar lines sung by soldiers:

"The Generals stayed behind the line, parleyvoo,  
With plenty of women and plenty of wine,  
Hinkey, dinkey, parleyvoo."

The Y.M.C.A. went over the top, parleyvoo  
To grab the nickels the doughboys dropped,  
Hinkey, dinkey, parleyvoo."

And most significant of all:

"They say it is a terrible war, parleyvoo,  
But what the hell are we fighting it for?  
Hinkey, dinkey, parleyvoo."

The protest began long before the men saw action. Shortly after they hit camp many of them realized that they had enlisted in "a rich man's war and a poor man's fight." The old army song, "You're in the Army now, you're not behind the plow, you sonavabitch, you'll never get rich, you're in the Army now" dates back long before the World War. But for the disillusioned recruits and the unwilling draftees, the song took on a new meaning and they sang it with genuine gusto. Often the time-honored epithet in the song was mentally reserved for some officer.

Once they got over there, they perfected new songs which grew more bitter as the food became worse.

Here is a ditty sung to the tune of the popular pre-war *If You Don't Like Your Uncle Sammy*:

"If you don't like your beans and hardtack  
If you don't like slumgullion and stew.  
No matter what you eat, the table's always neat  
And there's no kick a-comin' from you.  
If you don't like your thirty monthly  
And if you're sore at the mess sergeant too,  
Just remember, my boy, it's an honor,  
It's Uncle Sam that's feeding you."

Let there be no mistake about those last two

lines. They were unadulterated sarcasm.

The popular wartime and sentimental pre-war Tin Pan Alley trash peddled by War Department performers behind the lines got short shrift from the soldiers. The large numbers of parodies and their nature reveals the disdain of the soldiers for the false sentiment and war spirit of the song which, sometimes, in their overwrought emotional and exhausted physical state, caused them to shed tears.

There was the famous "smile" song, which advised soldiers, willy-nilly, to pack up their troubles in their old kit bags, as if their bags weren't heavy enough. The men parodied it this way:

"Wrap both your elbows up around your neck and scratch, scratch, scratch. . ."

The syrupy *There's A Long, Long Trail A-Winding* became

"There's a long, long nail a-grinding into the sole of my shoe,  
And it digs a little deeper every mile or two."

What the rank and file thought of the officers was expressed in many songs. But the real crux of the soldier's relation to his officials was stated in the following:

"If you want to know where the generals were,  
I'll tell you where they were, I'll tell you where they were,  
Oh, I'll tell you where they were.  
If you want to know where the generals were,  
I'll tell you where they were.  
Back in gay Paree, Back in gay Paree,  
How do you know? I saw them, I saw them,  
Back in gay Paree,  
I saw them back in gay Paree."

The variations include:

"The colonels were way behind the lines.  
The majors were playing with the mademoiselles.  
The captains were down in the deep dugout.  
The sergeants were drinking the private's rum

But:

The privates were up to their necks in mud."

NEGRO soldiers had many songs exclusively their own, the product of folk-genius and social environment which has made them the

source of the truest American folk-music. The transition of Negro soldiers from their peacetime social environment to the position they occupied in the army was a situation which they easily grasped.

They were oppressed, terrorized, exploited at home. It was the same in the army, only far more so.

"Black man fights with the shovel and the pick,  
Lordy, turn your face on me.  
Never gets no rest cause he never gets sick,  
Lordy turn your face on me.  
Joined the army for to get some clothes,  
Lordy, turn your face on me.  
What we're fightin' about nobody knows,  
Lordy, turn your face on me."

Though various soldiers protested against various hateful features of their lives, there was a unanimity of protest against one thing—dying—horribly, painfully, cause-weary. The following was sung to the tune of *When the Roll is Called Up Yonder*:

"When your lungs are filled with gas  
You'll be thinking of a lass  
But you'll never see your sweetheart anymore  
Lying in the mud and rain  
With a shrapnel in your brain,  
You'll never see your sweetheart anymore."

These were the beginnings not merely of a tradition of musical protest in the A.E.F., but a stimulus to action against war which assumed formidable shape in far-off Siberia and led to forcing the American government to withdraw its rebellious troops from Siberia.

In the next war which with the open mobilization of Germany's armies becomes daily more difficult to prevent, American soldiers and civilians alike will not escape the full force of the horror and privation which Europe suffered in the last war. And then, they may learn not only songs of protest far more vigorous and militant than those they sang in the last war—they may learn a song of liberation and hope sung in every civilized tongue in the world. It goes:

"Arise, you prisoners of starvation,  
Arise, you wretched of the earth . . ."



**Over There** **HERE DO WE GO FROM HERE**

Words and Music by **GEO. M. COHAN**

by **HOWARD JOHNSON** and **PERCY WENRICH**

W.J. REILLY U.S.A.

LEO FEIST NEW YORK

**IF I HAD A SON FOR EACH STAR IN OLD GLORY (UNCLE SAM, I'D GIVE THEM ALL TO YOU)**

WORDS BY **J.E. DEMPSEY**  
MUSIC BY **JOSEPH A. BURKE**

LEO FEIST NEW YORK

**HELLO CENTRAL! GIVE ME NO MAN'S LAND**

As INTRODUCED BY **AL. JOLSON** IN **SINBAD** AT THE WINTLE GARDEN

WORDS BY **JAN SCHWARTZ**

**PREPARE**

**U. S. A.**

WORDS & MUSIC BY **Fisher**

plus by **Alexander Jackson Phillips** and **Sam Freedman**

**KINKY DINKY PARLAY VOO?**

**BILLY GEARY**

plus **AL. DUBIN**, **IRVING MILLS**, **JIMMIE McHUGH**, and **IRWIN DASH**

**JACK MILLS**

**THEY'LL BE MIGHTY PROUD IN DIXIE OF THEIR OLD BLACK JOE**

**HARRY CARROLL**

**HARRY CARROLL**

POST NO BILLS

# Black Pit

By HERBERT KLINE

"... t'ree 'clock come, I go wurk in pit ... come out twelve 'clock night, take'm wash, eat leely bit, go, sleep ... come five 'clock morning, whistle blow, catch breakfast, smoke leely bit, rest leely bit ... after while catch'm couple hour more sleep ... den wurk again ... live lak dis all my life ..."  
—Steve Kristoff, since dead from a fall of slate.

HERE, in the drama of a worker who betrays his class, is an important and highly original departure in working-class plays. Albert Maltz has to his credit our first revolutionary tragedy.

The *Black Pit* dramatizes the kind of life described above by Steve Kristoff. Unlike *Peace On Earth* and *Stevedore*, this new Theatre Union play is not a thrilling stimulus to action, though the need for militant struggle is emphasized in a clear cut revolutionary line throughout. Rather, it is a morality play of the proletariat, the moral tragedy of Joe Kovarsky, a militant young Slovak miner who weakens under the relentless, crushing, piling-up of disaster after disaster, and ends by becoming a stool-pigeon. The tragedy, centering upon the moral issues involved more than upon the fatal consequences of the stool-pigeon's crime, is told with such understanding artistry that only a few sectarians, missing the point completely, mistake the human portrait of a man who is crushed by the system and by his own weakness for what they foolishly call "the glorification of a stool-pigeon."

As the play opens Joe Kovarsky is taken from the arms of his young bride Iola to serve a term in prison on a trumped up charge of having blown up a tippie during a strike. When he returns three years later, he finds that he has left one prison for another. His brother Tony has been crippled in a mine accident. Tony, his wife and children, and Iola have all been living on the \$10.50 per week "compensation" awarded the paralyzed miner by the coal company. A company union controls the patch and conditions are worse than ever. Like every other miner with a strike record Joe is on the "blacklist."

After months of searching, Joe finally finds work under an assumed name. The miners are herded together in boarding houses that "stink like hell." They carouse and gamble on Saturday nights, throwing away their hard earned pay to forget the loneliness and squalor of their lives in drunkenness and vice. One of the most exciting moments in the play comes when the miner Bakovchen leaps across the room to warn the newcomer against being drawn into conversation by a "stool-pigeon." But Bakovchen's comradely warning does not matter, for a moment later, the Super, having discovered Joe's real identity and record, fires him.

Upon his return home, Joe finds that Iola, as the wife of a blacklisted miner, cannot be attended to by the company doctor, even in childbirth. The Super offers to get the company doctor for Iola if Joe will accept a job as stool-

pigeon. Joe refuses contemptuously and Mr. Prescott leaves. And when his wife cries out her fear that, like her mother before her, she will die in childbirth for want of a doctor, Joe yells:

"What you wan'—me be stool-pigeon ... tink I no wan' job—no wan' eat—no wan' have dochter? Tink I wan' you to have baby maybe die?"

In desperation, when his wife suggests that he fool the Super by "just pretending" to be a stool-pigeon, Joe grasps at this straw and decides to take the job just long enough to get the doctor for Iola, and a few dollars to get away on afterwards.

ALTHOUGH he is determined not to tell anything of importance, he is trapped by Prescott (in the one phony and wholly unnecessary scene in the show—the good old dictaphone is called upon to turn the trick—again!) He is forced to lie to his fellow workers when a strike is imminent as a result of the miners' suspicions that the mine is "hot" and liable to explode. Not only do his lies persuade the miners to return to the dangerous mine instead of striking, but worse still, on the very night that Iola is giving birth, the Super forces Joe to squeal on the new union that is being organized by Hansy McCulloh. Shortly afterwards, at a picnic given by Joe to celebrate the birth of his son, it is discovered that McCulloh has been taken for a ride and beaten up by company thugs and that Joe lied about the mine not being "hot." Just then, it is heard that a miner has been seriously hurt in an explosion. Furious that they have been sent to work in a gas laden mine, the men go out on strike. Joe denies his guilt at first, but is forced to confess by Tony. Joe tells his brother that he was driven into taking his rat job, that he turned stool-pigeon for all of them, for Tony too. The crippled miner cries out furiously.

"No! Jesus Chris' you be lie. I no be like you. I go'n sleep on the groun' I go'n eat coal. I go'n die from starve 'fore I be cheat or odern miner. You wan' t be stool pigeon? You lak be stool pigeon. O. K. (He spits at Joe) I no gone stay in same howse wit' stool pigeon ..."

And when Joe tries to tell Tony that he did it for Iola, because she would have died without a doctor, Tony answers:

"Joe, Joe, bett'r be Iola die from baby—bett'r be you die from starve ..."

Tony tells Joe to go away, the miners will never trust him again, and as his stool-pigeon brother departs, Tony wheels his cripple's chair to the window to watch the picket line outside. Then he turns to Iola who is sobbing on the bed and says:

"Never mind ... Lil fella gone grow up ... he no crawn on belly to get pice bread ... outside miners ... by God, miners gone raise head oop in sun ... holler out, Jesus Chris' ... miner gone

blow whistle ... not boss blow ... blow ... Jesus Chris' I never gone die ... I gone sit here wait for dat tahn." (The siren screams)

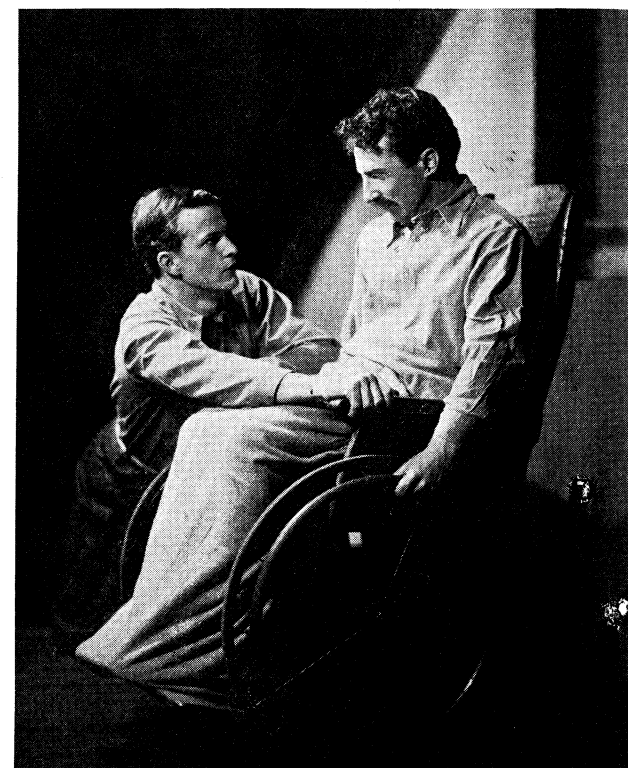
THIS recounting of the story of the *Black Pit* gives no idea of how effectively it was brought to life on the stage. The fine acting of Martin Wolfson, as Tony, brought home its revolutionary message. George Tobias, Harold Johnsrud and Tony Ross made the boarding room scene unforgettable, and Clyde Franklin as the Super did nobly in an ignoble and rather heavily written part. Alan Baxter, as Joe Kovarsky, played the difficult role well except for that trace of a juvenile-lead quality which Brooks Atkinson pointed out justifiably in the *New York Times*. I wonder if the playwright, or the director, or Millicent Green was responsible for making Iola so cloyingly sweet?

The direction by Irving Gordon showed a real advance over that of *Sailors of Cattaro*. The handling of the scenes between Joe and the Super were excellent, but I was disappointed in the card-game strike meeting and the picnic scene. Here was a chance to play a rich script for all it was worth, to break completely with the sombre, depressing tone of the play and thus to intensify the ensuing tragedy.

The lighting in the prologue, with the spot encircling Joe, Iola and the minister, while the law stood back in the shadows (all this in a tiny room), made the scene look like a posed Hollywood close-up. Most of Tom Adrian Arcraft's sets were effective, however, and one, the exterior of Joe's house at night, was so fine that it brought spontaneous applause from the audience.

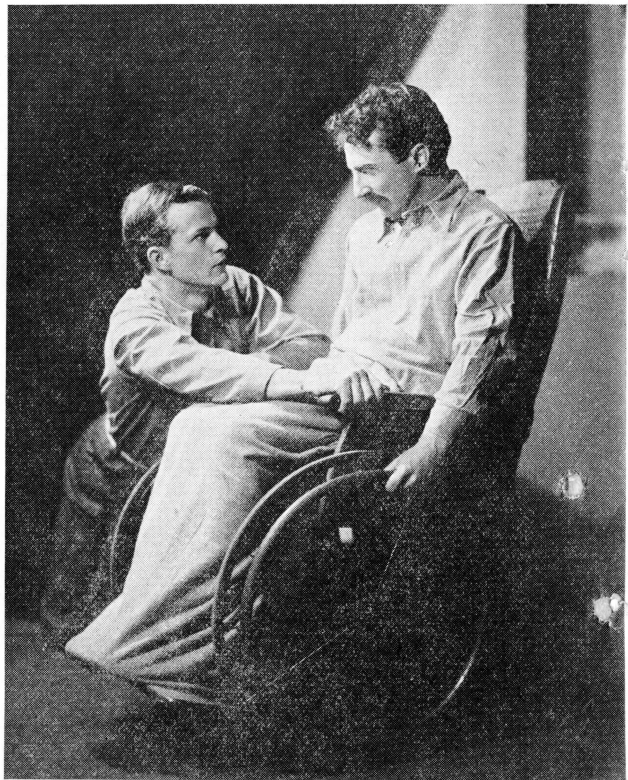
I believe that Albert Maltz missed two real opportunities to make his *Black Pit* an even finer play, and both result from his failure to give a proportionate representation to the lives of other miners besides Joe and Tony. If, in—  
(Continued on Page 33)

Alan Baxter as "Joe Kovarsky," Martin Wolfson as "Tony Lakovitch"





Alan Baxter as "Joe Kovarsky," Martin Wolfson  
as "Tony Lakovitch"



# New Found Land

By STEVE FOSTER

After twelve years, *Rain in the Wasteland*, Archibald MacLeish's boat has discovered new shores in *PANIC*, his new poetic drama of economic collapse.

THE changes in a man's life are dramatic events in themselves, particularly a man of the stature of MacLeish. The drama of MacLeish is the drama of a man whose concern with the social crises, his fellowmen and fellow Americans, his interest in history as poetic material, have led him, impelled by an urge towards reality, to search thoroughly for underlying causes.

The Americanism of MacLeish has been mistaken for rabid nationalism. In a muddled review in the *New Masses* a critic with an academic understanding and a lack of poetic taste accused MacLeish of Nazism when, in fact, MacLeish was attempting to continue in the democratic tradition of Walt Whitman and Carl Sandburg.

In his poems in *Newfoundland*, the expatriate MacLeish left foreign shores and his fellow expatriates Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot, and set out to rediscover America, to seek native roots. MacLeish at first mistook the geography of a nation for its people, for those who tilled the soil and labored to build a civilization. The *Frescoes for Rockefeller City* was an expression of this Americanism, the native love for one's country and the fear that those alien to its traditions would take over the land. Later MacLeish discovered that his fears were groundless, that those who scarred the landscape and made of the land a wasteland, were the financial and industrial pirates who ruled America, that the traditions of America belonged to its modern pioneers, the proletariat.

In *Panic*, MacLeish is aware that America is no longer the wasteland of capitalism but the new found land of America's toiling masses.

It is no longer the wasteland of the exile, Eliot, who is writing putrid pageants for the Church of England. MacLeish's boat has discovered new shores while the craft of Eliot has foundered upon a rock.

"The theme of *Panic*," the author states, "is the conflict between a powerful, extremely individualistic wilful man in a position of supremacy, and the deep, underlying sense of an inevitable, economic collapse: that is to say a kind of modern fatality which seems to me one of the most profound forces in our world."

In his play, MacLeish has blended the lyricism of *Newfoundland* with the polemics of the *Frescoes* and the historical narrative of *Conquistador*, the man of power and will. He has struck the source of a magnificent theme. He

has drawn a grand character in the figure of McGafferty. But the true conflict of forces is not clear to the poet. It is not the conflict between the man of will who desires his own destruction and the man of certain knowledge, history behind him. The man of will is the man of power. Powerless, his will becomes "mere wishing." The true conflict of modern forces is the clash between two great antagonists, the struggle between the will of a minority group in power versus the will of a majority group striving for power. Aristotle conceived of tragedy not as a struggle between man and an external unknown, intangible force but men in action struggling with circumstances of their own making. Men in action cast the dice of their destinies. MacLeish, through McGafferty speaks of fate, the "three bitches" because he is vague as to the fate which overwhelms McGafferty. The dramatist is master of the plot and his characters, and not "fate."

MacLeish is master of McGafferty because he is master of his former self. But McGafferty does not face a formidable antagonist who is the banker's fate. The chorus, fears, ghosts, McGafferty's "will to die," the premonition of the blind man, is not effective. The unified vision of the blind man is essential to MacLeish's conception (the mistress of McGafferty is a beautiful distraction which the blind man cannot see) but the blind man does not continue to exist dramatically before the spectator. Macbeth's fate is not in the ghost of Banquo but in Banquo's avenger, Macduff. Macbeth's death arises out of a net of circumstances which Macbeth has helped to weave.

MacLeish, master of McGafferty, is not master of the crowd because the meaning of the crowd is unclear to him, he does not understand nor visualize the definitive relationships between the crowd and McGafferty. The chorus appears more as an omen of ill-fortune than as an actor. It is a walking symbol; the word in the mouth of the Oracle at Delphi; the blind man is the oracle.

MacLeish has attempted to use the crowd as an actor but the chorus, in relation to the central figure, McGafferty, plays a negative role. Human, not inhuman forces are at work and MacLeish fails to realize the "humanities" of the crowd. It is an amorphous being, a ragged shadow hanging over the head of McGafferty. The chorus is passive and reflects and reacts to the mood of the hero about whom the chorus and drama revolve. The chorus lacks a will, a motive of its own. The play results in a sequence of moods and not in a sequence of unfolding dramatic events.

The passivity of the crowd is the passivity of the Greek chorus, its inflexibility on the modern stage. In the performance of the mass scenes, Martha Graham does her best not to convey swift-moving, street action. Although the poet,

in his three-beat lines spoken by the chorus, successfully carries across the footlights a nervous, staccato, urban rhythm, the dancer freezes the figures and masses of the chorus into a Grecian frieze. The production of *Panic* was not conceived in terms of a modern play. The best production would have been a realistic one.

*Panic* has added significance because it is the personal statement of MacLeish in artistic form, objectified upon the stage. The hero McGafferty is a picture of MacLeish's transition from the arch-individualist to the man who realizes that individualism is a myth and envisions the triumph of collectivism. The poet is at one removed from his character and he is therefore able to project him upon the stage. MacLeish is master of McGafferty because MacLeish has become master of his former self.

Some time ago, MacLeish was a young man of Wall Street who, confronted by the economic crisis, the true meaning of which he did not grasp, appealed to the young men of his class. He discovered that these young men were not interested in saving the nation from social collapse but were interested only in preserving their own skins. There is a scene in *Panic* in which McGafferty appeals to his fellow bankers to help him stave off economic collapse, and they reply: "Every man for himself in a sea McGafferty! Every man for himself and to hell with the rest of them."

MacLeish makes the point that because McGafferty has a particular sense of the doom of his class that he destroys himself: The will to fall on the part of McGafferty is the will to fall on the part of MacLeish in the role of the young man of Wall Street. The argument has been raised that the symbol is ineffective because the bourgeoisie does not commit suicide. It is true that the bourgeoisie does not commit suicide but the bourgeois does. George Eastman, the Kodak manufacturer, Shelton, the general manager, McGafferty, the banker, commit suicide. Others supplant them. In the death of McGafferty MacLeish sees the doom of the others. McGafferty is not a fascist, he is the "rugged individualist," the Rousseauian natural man, the primitive will in banker's clothing, the middle class democratic myth. It is Griggs who is the fascist, those who are stronger. True, the "rugged" individualist, with his back to the wall, is a "grinning gangster." But McGafferty's potentialities are not realized. Re-stated, it is a marked social prescience which distinguishes MacLeish and McGafferty from members of their class. McGafferty is the "idea"-lized representation of MacLeish's former self. McGafferty is the hero of *Conquistador*. He is the Wall Street Conquistador, overthrown, after centuries of rule, by the peons of the Socialist, Felipe de Puerto.

MacLeish has failed to write a great tragedy. His play tapped the elements of great poetry and tragedy but MacLeish has not grasped them in their entirety. When MacLeish solves the problems of poetic dramaturgy and clarifies fundamental social issues for himself, he will succeed. *Panic* is a proof that the poetic drama can regain its former prominence upon the stage.

# Consider the Red Octopus

"How long, O America, are you going to allow these baby-starvers, decadent fanatics and Jack-the-rippers to spit in your complacent and good natured face?"

—Hearst on Soviet Films.

A MORSEL delicious to the taste of William Randolph Hearst popped several days ago from the editorial kitchen of Terry Ramsaye—once a Hearst writer and now busily and bitterly resisting the influence of motion pictures from the U.S.S.R. Mr. Ramsaye is editor of the Motion Picture Herald, a weekly trade magazine owned by Martin Quigley who is glove-in-hand with the Hollywood producers and the Will Hays office.

Mr. Ramsaye opened up in his magazine with a four-page article anomalously minimizing the importance of Soviet films in the United States because they show to only 920,000 patrons weekly—less than 1 percent of the movie-going public in the nation—and damning critics who happen to like Soviet films and say so.

Mr. Hearst followed with a cross-country page-one tirade quoting the Motion Picture Herald to magnify his notions of the ruinous influence of the pictures. He quoted the Herald to "prove" that 50,000,000 Americans yearly see the dangerous "red movies"; that the "Soviet Film Octopus" (or "this slimy octopus") has grabbed the theatres of the U. S.; that "the startling and incredible facts revealed should be laid before Congress." In his overzealous "expose" Mr. Hearst managed to collect some trouble for himself by condemning two New York movie showmen who exhibit Soviet films in an expanding chain of theatres in New York City and elsewhere, Charles F. Levin and Matty Radin. He called them operators of a "communist cell," an appellation these businessmen resented.

Moved by the threat of a libel suit, Mr. Hearst's attorneys agreed to print a retraction, instead merely published the Radin-Levin denial that they have any connection with the Communist Party or the Soviet Union.

Then the Herald took up again, even Mr. Ramsaye expressing editorial amazement that Mr. Hearst could make so much of so little, but using the opportunity for a little more palaver in his own right, thus:

"One is not so readily to be convinced that the 'Red Octopus' has really 'grabbed' the theatres showing Soviet films. It seems much more probable that a number of exhibitors, without too much feeling of citizenship responsibility or concern for the screen as an institution, have found special opportunity to serve some minority audiences with the pabulum they like."

At this last minute there are rumblings of a fifth development in the making: Messrs. Levin and Radin did not learn until after the Hearst retraction that they had been described as "communist cell" operators throughout the Hearst

By JULIAN LEE

chain and now, doubly resentful, they have attorneys studying the libel laws.

What moved the Herald to print its survey at this time? Why does Editor Ramsaye print periodic thrusts at such cinema critics as Richard F. Watts, Jr., of the *New York Herald-Tribune* and Andre Sennwald of the *New York Times* for the sole sin of finding Soviet films praiseworthy? What is the editorial connection—if any—or mutual interest between the Herald and Hearst? Have Hollywood picture producers (who, incidentally, advertise heavily in the Herald) ordered a campaign against increasing competition from Soviet production units (who, incidentally, don't)? If Soviet pictures attract less than 1 percent of the U. S. business, why the pother?

The writer called on Mr. Ramsaye and others for answers.

Mr. Ramsaye, certain that the Soviet films were attracting but a negligible segment of the American public, yet bothered by the attention and approval dealt by the critics, ordered a staff writer to survey the American scene. He insisted upon an impartial survey; a simple, factual story, he said. Although he experienced two or three months' difficulties in getting what he wanted because the staff writer was too inclined to write a "colored" report (colored against Soviet pictures), a satisfactory manuscript reached his desk and was published February 23.

THE entire idea was his own, said Mr. Ramsaye. He alone ordered the survey. Furthermore, he added, no one in the Hearst organization knew about it. Nor did he have advance information that Hearst would quote the Herald article. The Herald has utterly no connection with Hearst. And as for any possibility that the anti-Soviet campaign of Hearst influences the Herald:

"Nuts!"

Mr. Ramsaye, genial, stoutish, iron-grey haired, a shirt-sleeve worker and constant smoker (Sweet Caporals), said he worked for Hearst for twenty years in Chicago and elsewhere.

"I wrote the yellow murder stories so well," he smiled, "that they shifted me around wherever I was needed."

He has been with the Herald for more than five years, he said.

The survey confirmed Mr. Ramsaye's suspicions: the Soviet film in America is unimportant: "The Soviet motion picture exhibition structure in America—controlled indirectly from Moscow—today embraces 152 independently owned theatres" of the 14,000 in operation; the USSR markets about fifteen feature motion pictures annually; for every 829,000 inhabitants in this country only one theatre steadily shows Soviet product and there is but one seat per 1,360 per-

sons, while for every 8,590 persons there is one "regular" motion picture theatre and for every 13, one seat; the theatres consistently showing Soviet films have a combined seating capacity of 92,720—less than 1 percent of the 9,719,537 available seats in the U. S.

All of which proved to Mr. Ramsaye that there is nothing to worry about. But he is worrying. And all of which provided Mr. Hearst with figures to distort into "proof" that "the latest propagandist move . . . of Russia to conquer America is in the field of motion pictures." He's worrying, too.

What continues to bother Mr. Ramsaye is the attention the critics accord the Soviet pictures. He concludes in his magazine that the "paens of praise of Russian screen technique poured out by the pink critics must pertain to qualities that have little indeed to do with audience appeal."

Proud of his own five-generation American ancestry and particularly aroused by Mr. Watts of the *Herald-Tribune* and Mr. Sennwald of the *Times* and somewhat aroused by William Boehnel of the *New York World-Telegram*, Mr. Ramsaye dubbed them "young upstarts."

"Stanley Walker," he said, "has introduced Watts as the reddest friend he has, and Sennwald is half gentile and half Jew—although I understand he's denying his Jewish background. But, of course, there's nothing racial about this."

One trouble with these critics, Mr. Ramsaye pointed out, is: "As soon as they get intellectual they get in muddy water. They read into motion pictures what isn't there. They forget they are writing about simple entertainment." Furthermore, Mr. Ramsaye reasoned, they have no business to continue writing what they write and continue to work for the papers now employing them, because their viewpoint is at odds with the "editorial policy" of their papers. He, as a newspaper reader, has a right to expect editorial consistency, he said.



How Long, O America?

Mackey



How Long, O America?

*Mackey*

"If," asked the interviewer, "Watts or Sennwald or Boehnel should write for the *Daily Worker* would it be quite all right?"

"Exactly! That's where they belong."

Other points that Mr. Ramsaye covered were: Neither individual Hollywood producers nor the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc., (MPPDOA: the Hays organization) influence the Herald's policies.

"I can get Hays on the phone and Hays can get me on the phone—but Hays calls no shots in this office and we call no shots in the Hays office."

THERE is no foundation for "rumors" that the MPPDOA has an exclusive five-year advertising contract with the Herald, dating from the year the Herald consolidated with competitors in the trade field, 1930.

"There's nothing to it. The Herald has individual contracts with the Hollywood producers for varying lengths of time. The contracts are renewed as they expire in most cases."

The public from which the Soviet pictures can attract patrons is limited to Communists and sympathizers who religiously attend all Soviet film showings.

"Every time I go to the Cameo Theatre to see a Russian picture I see the same kind of an audience. I feel like a goy."

About a seeming contradiction in the Herald article: "Unavailability of theatres of suitable size in desirable downtown locations has lessened Amkino's opportunities to attempt to develop larger audiences among prospective Soviet sympathizers."

"I'd have to get into the writer's mind to see what he means."

Before the interview ended, Mr. Ramsaye expansively championed free speech and free press. The point arose after the editor said his feeling concerning Soviet pictures does not apply to British (of which 43 were shown in the U. S. in 1934) or German or other foreign-made films (because, he said, the critics do not deal so disproportionately generously with other foreign films).

Disagreeing with the interviewer about the importance of boycotting German pictures along with German merchandise, Mr. Ramsaye declared:

"No, I wouldn't go that far. I believe if anyone has anything to say let him say it."

"But actually," suggested the interviewer, "you don't carry it that far, do you Mr. Ramsaye? You don't believe, for example, that Watts and Sennwald—the 'young upstarts'—should say what they please?"

"Yes I do—let them say what they want. But," smiled Mr. Ramsaye, "I reserve the right to comment upon the editorial policy of a paper that permits them to do so."

Frederick L. Herron, treasurer of the MPPDOA also declared no direct tie-up exists between his organization and the Herald. Mr. Herron, who is in charge of the foreign department of the Hays organization, also feels that

Soviet films are overemphasized by critics, but he is not worried about it.

"It is like discovering a new cocktail. All the old ingredients are there, but they are mixed differently. The cocktail is refreshing. The critics have found a new cocktail."

Nor does he believe Soviet pictures will capture much audience appeal until they improve vastly in entertainment value and technique.

But the greatest worrier of all went ahead "saving America" the mornings of March 5 and 6. Typical of the blasts he made throughout the country, basing his material on the Motion Picture Herald article, was that in the *Chicago Herald and Examiner*. The head shouted: "Tentacles of Moscow; Soviet Film Octopus Grabs U. S. Theatres; Reds' Movies Shown to 50,000,000 in Year."

CARL HELM, attorney for the Hearst newspapers, revealed from his office in the New York American building that he was responsible for tempering the *American's* blast before it was printed.

Careful to avoid entanglements with libel laws, the *New York American* deleted the names of Levin and Radin in the "communist cell" portion of its tirade. The other Hearst papers were

not so careful. That's why Levin and Radin are so sore.

Nor was Mr. Helm so ready to utter the same sentiments that passed through his hands on copy paper and onto the printed page concerning the classification of Levin and Radin—or their business enterprise—as Moscow-directed.

"They aren't communists. I think," laughed Mr. Helm, "they're just a couple of clever Jewish boys in the motion picture business."

The printed blast conveyed a different sentiment. Disregarding all comparative data furnished by the source article, Hearst proclaimed: The freedom, rapidity and subtlety with which these enemies of our institutions work ought to bring America to its feet—before America is knocked off its feet!

"Soviet pictures are being shown in one hundred and fifty-two theatres in the United States. . . ."

"How long, O America, are you going to allow these baby-starvers, decadent fanatics and Jack-the-rippers to spit in your complacent and good natured face?"

How long, indeed. As long, Mister Public Enemy Number One Hearst as we have an ounce of strength left to fight against you and your kind.

## An Editorial Appeal

War drums roll again in Europe. Millions of men are under arms. Fascism, the leprosy of a rotten, dying system, is spreading in America as well as in Europe. Strikes, demonstrations, legal frame-ups and police terror from New York to San Francisco. Breadlines and starvation everywhere. Human misery in every form. Yet the American theatre, as represented by Broadway and Hollywood, has nothing to offer but sex-dramas, historical pastiches, and other forms of theatrical marshmallow. But while Broadway runs away from reality, a new and powerful theatre of social protest is making itself felt throughout the country. The New Theatre League and NEW THEATRE magazine are speeding the growth of these vital young theatre groups.

But the ambitious task of organizing a theatre movement that can reach thousands of new audiences throughout America is a task that requires extra-financial assistance not forthcoming from the ordinary channels available to a monthly magazine. While Broadway play-boys splurge thousands on worthless shows that may close in a night, important work in building the new social theatre is retarded for lack of a sustaining fund. In order to put this work on a self-supporting basis, \$5,000 must be raised in the next thirty days. We need financial help right now. We appeal to you to send us every dollar you can spare. We ask you to persuade every one of your friends who is interested in the NEW THEATRE to chip in and help. We are using every avenue available to us to raise this \$5,000 before May 1. No amount is too small or too large—mail whatever sum you can afford to NEW THEATRE, 114 W. 14 St., N. Y. C. Help us to build a united theatre front in America—to set up footlights against War and Fascism throughout the United States!

# Films, Current and Coming

By LOUIS NORDEN

EACH month throughout the year some two-score films are produced by the seven major and many minor film companies. From London Films, Gaumont-British, Tobis, Ufa, Amkino and other foreign producers come hundreds more each year. Here is a tremendous industry, producing for profit the chief entertainment of millions of Americans.

Yet, because it is their chief entertainment medium, it becomes too, in far greater degree than ever before, the greatest medium for propaganda known to man. The motion pictures, in 1914-1918, existed only in a crude form. But, with all the advantages of modern technique, they and the radio will be the chief means used by the George Creels of the future to bring the workers of America to support a new imperialistic war, to follow fascist misleaders, to bolster moribund capitalism.

Used for a serious purpose by those who are experts in their use, the films must be analyzed just as seriously by those who refuse to have propaganda forced upon them in the guise of entertainment, propaganda that desperately wishes to accomplish a breakdown of the ranks of labor, a lowering of wages for the increase of profit in industry and, finally, a new imperialistic war for another division of the world markets.

\* \* \*

**THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL (LF)**—With Leslie Howard. Produced by Alexander Korda. A vicious slander against the workers everywhere, nevertheless selected by the London Observer as the best film of 1934. Subtle propaganda for the overthrow of the U.S.S.R., it enlists sympathy for the bourgeois-fascists by comparing them to the "maligned" French aristocrats of 1792. Popular Leslie Howard is cast as Lord Percy Blakely who romantically constitutes himself as the saviour of the nobles from the guillotine set up by the ruthless, stupid workers of France. Robespierre is purposefully made the villain and, at the same time, to cloak the propaganda, as the comedian. The French aristocrats are depicted as gentle, charming people who admittedly made mistakes but were willing to forgive and forget.

By asserting that the revolutionaries but talk of ideals, accomplishing them with "unnecessary" terror, Korda draws the usual Fascist-Trotsky analogy to present-day events in the Soviet Union, thus preparing the world masses for a support of the attacks that Fascist forces are now urging.

He would have you believe, by analogy, that the bourgeoisie has learned its lessons and, after the return to power, will deal gently with the misguided workers. Nowhere, however, is sympathy shown for the French workers who died of starvation, disease, oppression under the rule of the French nobility, nor for the thousands who died during the bloody counter-revolution instituted by this same class. Omitted entirely is any mention of the English workers whose labor supported men like Blakely and his fellows during this period of the birth of capitalism. Here is only a libelous attack on the workers, an idealization of their oppressors.

Workers should protest any showing of this picture at local theatres through mass action, picketing, petitions. Managers are permitted, under the Code, to refuse to play this picture. Force them to take advantage of that right.

\* \* \*

**THE WEDDING NIGHT (UA)**—With Gary Cooper, Anna Sten. King Vidor has always had the ability to suffuse his pictures with life, to take the bare skeleton of a plot, adding to it the flesh of reality, creating believable characters rather than the animated puppets that grace the usual film. His weakness lies

in his inability to allow his characters and their surroundings to become the motivating forces in the story. Rather does he restrict them with a trite, over-worked blueprint.

*The Wedding Night* might have been a brilliant picture if he had allowed the forces inherent in the story full sway; now it has only its character portrayals to recommend it.

Vidor tells the familiar story of a modern author, ruined by the society in which he moves, one novel a refresh of its predecessor. His mood becomes the all-important force in his writing and that, an infrequent one. His latest novel rejected, overburdened by debts, he packs off to an old farmhouse in Connecticut, once his family's home.

His wife leaves, unable to stand the quiet. But Tony stays on, senses the strange, vital change that the Polish farmers, who have bought up the fields to raise tobacco, have brought to dried-out New England. Vidor brings to the screen all of the color, the life and the background of these people.

Tony sells one of his fields to Nowak, a neighboring farmer whose daughter, Manya, has been promised in marriage to a neighbor's son. Manya has only disdain for the author who writes four pages in two months because the mood is not upon him, wonders what would happen if her cow weren't in the mood to give milk, tells Tony that, since he makes his living by it, his pen is his plow.

Tony begins to see in these characters a great story, surging with the vitality they have brought here. He begins to write feverishly.

Up to this point, the story has splendid implications. Here, too, is its greatest weakness, its danger to young writers. For Vidor has Tony inject himself into the story. Instead of trying honestly to picture the lives of these people, to tell of the forces that impel them in their greed for land, their struggle for wealth, to portray the strange relationships between the old farmers and their wives in all of the inherent dramatic force, Tony writes an autobiographical novel in which Manya and his wife fight for him. A shop-worn tragedy develops, in the classical Russian manner, which culminates with Manya's death on the night of her marriage.

What could have been a great picture is now just another Hollywood distortion, better than average, but still, for the most part, drivel.

\* \* \*

**RUGGLES OF RED GAP (PAR)**—With Charles Laughton, Charlie Ruggles, Mary Boland, Zasu Pitts, Roland Young. Directed by Leo McCarey. Charles Laughton, who puts more "business" into a role than any other actor on the screen, invests this old Harry Leon Wilson story with a great deal more life than it deserves.

This is the third time it has been made for the screen, probably selected for this performance because of a lack of interesting stories in America where nothing ever happens. Always a money maker, the picture gives Paramount the opportunity to make huge profits, thus to lay by sums needed for financing charges in connection with the forthcoming reorganization of the company under banker control.

The picture is an amusing comedy, consisting of a series of characterizations, hung around the old plot of the English valet torn between his old traditional job as valet to the Earl of Burnstead and the opportunity in Red Gap to become a man—and a member of the bourgeoisie.

With only comedians in the cast, Paramount needed the soul-stirring emotion that a romantic team usually gives to the average picture. But to have dragged in a young couple by the heels would only have taken the interest away from the stars. Some smart writer popped Lincoln's Gettysburg Address into the script, and Laughton's declamation of this battlefield classic is intended to have the same emotional wallop as a Hollywood soul-kiss.

**ROBERTA (RKO)**—With Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers. Irene Dunne sings *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes* to the White Guard colony in Paris as a tuneful warning. *Lovely to Look At* is the hit tune—and Fred Astaire's dancing is worth anybody's time, despite the picture's glorification of the Romanoff jingoists as they mourn "the good old days" and dream of new Imperial glories to Jerome Kern melodies.

\* \* \*

**FOLIES BERGERE (TC)**—With Maurice Chevalier. One of the three dual-role pictures of the month with the irrepressible Chevalier as a music hall star whose impersonation of a famous banker is the talk of Paris. It wins him the job of impersonating the banker in real life when financial difficulties forces the magnate to leave town for a few days. Somewhere in Africa, on the Franco-Portuguese frontier, is a piece of worthless land that was the source of the banker's worries. This, the impersonator sells to the French government, in his boss' absence, as the site for future fortifications. Thus the banker becomes an imperialistic patriot at a profit, the stage star gets 50,000 francs, and the two romantic plots come to their usual conclusion. Sly handling of sex situations and the inescapable Chevalier charm save the picture from the utter stupidity of the out-worn plot.

\* \* \*

**THE WHOLE TOWN'S TALKING (COL)**—With Edward G. Robinson, Jean Arthur. The wish-fulfillment formula of the Casper Milquetoast clerk whom fate makes famous. Based on the Collier's serial, *The Jail Breaker*.

When Killer Manion breaks out of jail, a clerk who resembles him is arrested. The bulls sweat him for a confession. The error discovered, the clerk is released, given a police passport for future identification. Returning home, famous, he finds Manion awaiting him, planning to use the passport as a means of tricking the police while committing new robberies. From there on, write the usual ticket.

There is propaganda for the finger-print boys who have already begun barking for universal police registration as the means to an anti-labor drive. Despite these criticisms, the picture is good entertainment though you can well afford to wait for neighborhood theatre prices. Columbia has given the picture a perfect cast, good direction, excellent mounting.

\* \* \*

**TRANSIENT LADY (U)**—With Henry Hull, Gene Raymond, Frances Drake. The South will and should resent the amazingly stupid portrayal of the southern worker in this incompetent picturization of lynch law. When his brother is murdered, Hull, as a small-town politician, provokes the mob to hang an innocent man. While the film does show the workers' hatred of the decadent southern aristocracy, it is the workers who are made the villains of the lynching party. Not shown, except in brief flashes, are the efforts to split the white and Negro workers, to divert mob passion against the Negro rather than a white. The Negro workers' terror at the thought of being made the victims of mob violence is translated into comedy. What could have been a profound social drama is now entitled *Transient Lady*.

## BOOKS on the THEATRE

THE DANCE - DRAMA  
COSTUMES - STAGE  
SETTING and DESIGN

New Catalogue on request

## GOTHAM BOOK MART

51 West 47 St., New York  
BRyant 9-5666

**THE LITTLE COLONEL (FOX)**—With Shirley Temple, Lionel Barrymore, Bill Robinson. Shirley foils the villains, makes mamma and papa happy—and the good, old Union Pacific Railroad buys papa's land at a handsome profit. In a brief Technicolor scene which managers will probably advertise "See Shirley Temple in Her True Colors," the youngster looks like a chorus girl with vivid lips, mascaraed eyes.

\* \* \*

**PRIVATE WORLDS (PAR)**—With Claudette Colbert, Charles Boyer. Produced by Walter (*President Vanishes*) Wanger. The undramatic portrayal of a female psychiatrist's love-life in an insane asylum. Talky, slow-moving and, for the most part dull, despite the drama inherent in the locale. To make you believe that these people are doctors, you'll hear lines like "it shows a definite pigmentation of the upper layer of the neurons" and there are references to "paresis serums" and "morph-sulphate with one-hundredth atropin." There's one beautifully photographed scene of Joan Bennett going insane—and a gibbering sequence in which a ward of "cases" goes hay-wire when one of their number becomes violent and wants to kill Boyer. Claudette Colbert, naturally, saves him. It's all so unbelievable.

\* \* \*

**IT HAPPENED IN NEW YORK (U)**. With Lyle Talbot, Gertrude Michael, Heather Angel. A stupid production.

**THE CASINO MURDER CASE (MGM)**. With Paul Lukas as Philo Vance. The poorest of the Van Dine mysteries, badly handled for the screen.

**ALL THE KING'S HORSES (PAR)**. With Carl Brisson, Mary Ellis. The third dual-role film of the month, set in a mythical kingdom. Badly done, except for several song hits. Mary Ellis' American debut, but an inauspicious one.

**McFADDEN'S FLATS (PAR)**. Splendid performances by Walter C. Kelly and Andy Clyde. It might

be funny if you could stand those old Scotch-Irish jokes. The moral: America is a free country—where a man can get ahead. For this old story, produced for years on the stage and screen, R. I. P.

**LIVING ON VELVET (WAR)**. An exceedingly dull and boring picture, nominated herewith for the booby prize of the month.

**RUMBA (PAR)**. With George Raft, Carole Lombard and Margo. A typically Hollywood romantic treatment of Cuba wherein the only Cubans shown go sex-mad to a Rumba rhythm. The Cuban backgrounds are faked, the dances have been cut in deference to the Hays' office, the acting is abominable. Cuba has already demanded "full satisfaction," threatening to ban all Paramount pictures unless *Rumba* is immediately withdrawn from the market. It's that bad.

**WHILE THE PATIENT SLEPT (WAR)**. With Guy Kibbee, Aline McMahon, Allen Jenkins, Patricia Ellis. We joined the patient.

### NEW THEATRE, of Philadelphia

Presents its first production

## Too Late to Die

by  
CHRISTOPHER WOOD

Thurs., Fri., Sat., every week

311 North 16th St., Loc. 9405

Special Discount to Organizations

## THE THEATRE OF ACTION

announces two new plays

**THE YOUNG GO FIRST** by Peter Martin & George Scudder

*A dynamic exposé of the C.C.C. Camps*

**MY DEAR CO-WORKERS** by Edward Dahlberg

*A trenchant drama of department store life*

**WATCH FOR OPENING DATE!**

For information regarding benefits and theatre parties write or call

**THEATRE OF ACTION**

42 East 12th Street, N. Y. C.—STuyvesant 9-1821

DON'T MISS

## Hanns Eisler

FAMOUS EXILED GERMAN COMPOSER

**Last New York Appearance**

Pierre Degeyter Symphony Orchestra  
Kuhle Wampe, Conducted by Eisler

FREIHEIT GESANGS VEREIN  
EISLER SONGS

Mordecai Bauman Vocal Soloist  
Eisler Ballads, Eisler at the Piano

... NEW SINGERS ...

Eisler Polyphonic Chorus

## FRIDAY, APRIL 19

8:30 P. M.

**Brooklyn Academy  
of Music**

Atlantic Ave. and Pacific St.  
Subway Stations

TICKETS: 35c to \$1.25 at  
Workers Book Shops, 50 E. 13 St., N. Y.  
369 Sutter Ave., Brooklyn Academy  
of Music

Anti-Nazi Federation, 168 W. 23 St.  
Rand School, 9 East 15th Street.

Auspices: *Anti-Nazi Federation  
Brooklyn Professional Committee*



## MODERN LIBRARY

has for years supplied lovers of the drama and of books everywhere with the most satisfying and attractive editions of the most famous plays of all time. Why not take this opportunity of enriching your own library from the selection listed below? Here you will find O'Neill, Ibsen, Wilde, Tchekov, Rostand, in handsome *complete and unabridged* editions, for only 95c a copy!

**ENGENE O'NEILL**

Seven Plays of the Sea, #111, The Emperor Jones and The Straw, #154

**EDMOND ROSTAND**

Cyrano de Bergerac, #154

**THE PLAYS OF TCHEKOV**, #171

**EIGHT FAMOUS ELIZABETHAN PLAYS**, #94

**FOUR FAMOUS GREEK PLAYS**, #158

**W. S. GILBERT**

The Mikado, The Pirates of Penzance, Iolanthe, The Gondoliers, #26  
Pinafore, Patience, Yeomen of the Guard, Ruddigore, #113

**HENRIK IBSEN**

A Doll's House, Ghosts, An Enemy of the People, #6

**OSCAR WILDE**

The Plays of Oscar Wilde, #83

Order by number after each title. Ask for free list of MODERN LIBRARY titles: history, biography, fiction, poetry, philosophy.

*ALL BOOKSELLERS or*

**MODERN LIBRARY**

20 East 57th Street, New York City

*P. S. Just Published:*

The complete works of J. M. Synge, ..... \$3.50  
Also *The Playboy of the Western World*, (reprint) \$1.

RANDOM HOUSE, 20 East 57th Street, New York. 25

# The Lay Dance

By RUTH ALLERHAND

THE dance in America today is undeniably more important, more constructive, than it ever was. But in spite of the fact that audiences are growing, that soloists and groups are increasing in number and ability, there is a potentiality in the dance that has not been touched.

It is not enough for ten soloists to spring up, for a few groups to do outstanding work. If we look back on the short history of this contemporary dance, we find the roots in a *mass movement*, in a feeling of the people to create for themselves a new outlet, healthier and nearer to their problems. It is for us today to redeem *that* side of the dance, which need not be put on a stage to reach the people. Although dance audiences are larger, they are still specialized. The masses are yet to be reached. So long as the dance remains a visual experience, it is separate from the people, whereas it should be part of every day life. Large groups of people can be taught to dance, to take part in vast, mass dance spectacles. Then there would be no audience in the sense of onlookers at a performance, because this enthusiastic group of people would also be participating. And through a vital lay dance the professional dance would gain.

For the dance to be of the people we must form dance choruses as we have formed singing and speaking choruses. Adults, stiff and inarticulate in their bodies, can be taught to broaden their entire communal and social outlook through the development of the individual within the group. Children, misled in schools, ground either through the weary one-two one-two of physical training, or led through a maze of folk-dancing, tap routines, and so-called aesthetic outlets, must be rescued. They can be rightly directed in their motor impulses, their bodies functioning naturally, their reactions stimulated, their minds developed.

To accomplish the really educational goal in the dance, a new approach to the problem, by both lay student and teacher, is necessary. The student must no longer come with set aims or ideas of accomplishment. So must the teacher, as a teacher, no longer exist, but only as a friend, an experienced leader. The student must begin with the simple sincerity of a child, finding out about his body, what it can do, and what he can say with it. The leader will never correct but suggest, he will solve problems and bring up new ones with the group. His only aim is sincerity, directness and vitality to further the essentially creative quality of the dance. A great pleasure and satisfaction will be discovered as the workings of the body are pointed out and revealed.

A profound development on the basis of anatomy alone can take place. For instance, the worker student will be impressed with the parallels to be drawn between himself and the machine. His joints, his circulation, his breathing,

his entire functioning self will be discussed, shown to him more clearly than ever before. From the first simple movements, which grow out of a naturally working physical being, he will find a co-ordinating mental stimulus and development. Relaxation will bring him much more than a momentary physical pause. It means to him going down to the very depths of his being and starting fresh, throwing off the layers of false control. Following complete relaxation, complete tension will be so much more sincere, the dynamic realization of oppositional movement and all its possibilities will be explored. The simplicity, directness and elemental quality of all movement will come to him more and more. Now, well balanced and eager, his horizon broadened, he turns from his introspective gropings toward a relationship with the world around him. He is drawn into moving forward. He actively cuts into space, using his body impulsively, he runs, leaps, turns, he creates and composes within space.

FROM all directions, others approach, galvanized by the same forces within themselves, the result of the same development through which he has just come. They appear to him myriad reflections of himself. Spontaneously reaching toward them he is absorbed into the group.

The group experience is a practical school which teaches something that can never be forgotten, nor taught as eloquently through any other medium. Through union with others, in adjusting himself to the group, he comes to an active discovery of a real solidarity. From the individual to the mass! The individual no longer feels that he is the whole, he now sees that he represents the substance. He is not so much a link in a chain, a cog in a machine, as a very alive, very productive cell within a body.

The possibilities of group expression are unlimited. Movement is the most elementary form of reaction in life. Motion and rhythm are basic means of communication. The groups, fundamentally lay-dance groups, will use the present, the world around them, their own acquaintance with life, for their expression. Their world will not only be absorbed by them, but projected stirringly in many new implications.

In the mass dance, the people will find a two-fold gain of tremendous significance. The first, the educational development, through which they have found themselves and each other, and which has awakened in them a strong feeling of respect and responsibility for the others. The second, a group ability to express, to articulate, and formulate what was before only half clear in their own minds—to rise in great dance choruses and shout aloud, in real sincerity now, what they feel, no longer sitting silent and uncomprehending as others attempt to speak for them.

## BRUGGI

Complete Line of Dance  
Footwear

Toe Shoes .....	\$3.50
Ballet .....	\$2.75
Snug Fit Studio Sandals .....	\$.75
Tap for Musical Comedy .....	\$3.25

Special Price for Group Orders  
143 W. 54 ST.

## IMPERIAL Wine Co.

DIRECT FROM  
our  
CALIFORNIA VINEYARDS

Government Bonded Wine

Expensive Wines at  
Inexpensive Prices

66 W. 3rd St.

GRamercy 7-4395

PLANNING A PARTY?  
a banquet? a bazaar?  
a ball? a convention?  
a wedding? or what?

We're equipped to handle  
them all—smoothly  
pleasantly and at reason-  
able prices . . .

All Union Help Employed  
Now Booking for 1935-1936

hotel delano

43rd Street. Bet. 6 Ave. & B'way

J. EDWARD SALTZMAN  
Phone BRyant 9-3707

When patronizing our advertisers, please mention NEW THEATRE



# Dance Reviews

FE ALF—*Little Theatre*—February 24.

Fe Alf is a dancer of great and beautiful capabilities; her body moves with fluency and radiance. When, however, she wastes her authentic talent on sentimental or outmoded subject matter, she owes herself and her audience an apology. The recital of dances which Miss Alf presented was a curious admission of the dancer's immaturity. Only a young dancer, unsure of her orientation, could present on one and the same program such contradictory items as the three revolutionary dances (*Girl in Conflict, Slavery, Degradation*) from the cycle *The City*, and *Chorale, Reverie, Promenade*. It is to Miss Alf's credit that her true ability as dancer pronounced itself in those dances dealing with contemporary social themes, and not in her pseudo-religious, pseudo-romantic, pseudo-Spanish offerings.

The revolutionary dance movement has need of dancers as gifted and youthful as Fe Alf. Until, however, she realizes that dance audiences in general have been surfeited with her choice of unspecific subject matter, and that revolutionary audiences demand consistent thematic significance from their dancers, she will remain at artistic odds with herself. She cannot dance with any amount of artistic integrity for two publics, and please them both.

SKRIP

## AMERICAN BALLET

TO those of us who believe that ballet is an outworn form, serving only the purposes of diversion and spectacle, the American Ballet offers, in its formal presentation, little but confirmation. Of the six dances in the repertoire, *Alma Mater* is a musical-comedy compound of college football and the college mind. Tricky and juvenile, it would look very bright on the revue stage, but, considering the ambitions of this group, fails notably, since it is the only one of the inventions which considers the American scene.

*Reminiscence* rewards the veteran. Here are the yellow tulle and wreaths of gold leaves, the black mask of Harlequin, an agile Saturn, the long bright line of the ballet facing four partners in purple, all the classic situations. It satisfied a great part of the audience, which recognized every *tour* with applause like a Walter Hampden audience acknowledging Shakespeare's quotations. *Serenade* and *Transcendence*, the former quietly abstract, the latter confusedly romantic, were less creditable presentations.

The two most interesting works were *Errante* and *Dreams*. *Dreams*, a variant of the Alice in Wonderland fantasies, showed Balanchine, the maitre de ballet, at his best. Aided by the incomparably brilliant costuming by Andre Derain, Balanchine proved himself a sensitive and witty choreographer when dealing with unprovocative but picturesque subject matter. Here "points" were used organically, all the technical ingenuity of ballet form was felicitously applied.

*Errante* is beautiful and neurotic. The greater part of this conception of individual agony is the work of Paul Tchelitchev, the Russian painter. The curtain rises on an unnaturally tall stage, paneled with superb white drops. Climax forces climax in shocking succession: the routs of shadows, the main figure of the woman in dark green satin with a wide and immense train driven through the dance by apparitions through blood-red masses carrying banners—through streams of angels leashed with white ribbons, moving in orbits, intervening in mazes between her and the other. A sun like a spot in a burning-glass appears; the stage becomes liquid black, mint-green, mint-white again. Let the man approach, she wounds him; he is shadow, she runs to meet him; he climbs a shadow-ladder, is enlarged to enormity, becomes sharp again and is again enlarged and climbs into a tall white sky—from which, as he goes, a last silk cloud drops over her. Emotion is held to its pitch of hysteria by the performers.

What the American Ballet will do is not predictable from six dances. If it repeats this range, emphasizing the formalities of art, it will do nothing for us but present the sumptuous and questionable past; if it can rally a group of young artists around it who can use its machine for contemporary purposes, depending on other conceptions besides the vivifying of a pretty agility, then we may look for new force in dancing. Until that time, we may complain, after being shown the brilliance of such a dance as *Errante*, that here is something too sharp, too feverish, to be surrounded by the echoes of the other ballets. The mechanics of the theatre and of the classic dance are raised to a fine level. No ingenuity of staging is overlooked. With this equipment, let the American Ballet work toward significant development. For its future will not depend on brilliance or machinery, but on meaning alone.

MURIEL RUKEYSER

CAROLINE CHEW—*Town Hall*—March 1st.

Caroline Chew (King Lan—*The Last Orchid*, to her friends) has a splendid physique. She does several sword dances with wooden swords, then she shows she can do the same movements without the swords. Hardly anybody cared particularly, except perhaps her banker father back in Frisco who has to pay the rent for Town Hall.

DAL NEGRO

JUDITH FORD AND JEROME ANDREWS—*New School Auditorium*—March 10th.

Mr. Andrews is an amazing dancer. With little or no real choreographic sense he manages to fashion solo dances that are almost always entertaining. Some of his pieces like *March* and *Tanz* are as good as anything that I have ever seen a male dancer do in America. He is a superb acrobat and his best pieces are those that serve simply to show off his skill in movement. He has developed some leaps that are as interesting as they are dangerous. In his *March* he had a combination leap and call movement that some of our revolutionary dancers might do well to look into.

His closest attempt to social comment is *Illusions* in which he concerns himself with the problem of Youth. To Mr. Andrews, Youth must decide between Sport and Temptation. Neither alternative manages to conquer Mr. Andrews as the curtain falls. Sport and Temptation are left to salvage what pleasure they may from their own company. Mr. Andrews is a gay dog and some of his duets with Miss Ford shocked his fashionable audience by their lack of "good taste," particularly his *Royal Court*, a harmless bit of outmoded satire.

DAL NEGRO

DANCE recitals in Philadelphia are usually very "arty"—reports H. H. Horwitz—but the illustrated symposium, *What is the Modern Dance?*, sponsored by the New World Dance Group on March 1, brought an eager S.R.O. attendance of nearly five hundred to a program that was direct and unarty.

The dancer Merle gave a remarkably clear talk on traditional and experimental dance patterns, demonstrating her principles with her own dances and her pupils'.

Mary Binney Montgomery is unmistakably sincere and enthusiastic but her contribution was disappointing. Although a receptive audience acclaimed her *Golliwog*, in all honesty it should be said that the unformed studies of Merle's pupils are closer to art than this literal and banal, picture of a child mood.

Speaking from where Merle's talk left off, Nadia Chilkovsky stated boldly that the dancer must take sides in the class struggle. She may have bowled over some Philadelphians, but her obvious sincerity had a great deal to do with the warm reception she received. Her group dance, *Lynching*, though provocative, is hardly more than a sketch. The spirited *Three Gentlemen*, on the other hand, is unmistakable in its satiric thrust.

A question period showed the warm interest of the audience, and indicated that, freed of the usual fetishes, the dance has a future in Philadelphia.

## LIGHTING

Complete lighting equipment  
for theatrical productions

Special Attention given to Requirements of Colleges and Little Theatres

New 1935 Catalog "F" free on request  
to directors and technicians

Display Stage Lighting Co.

442 West 45th Street, New York  
Established in 1917

SUMMER COURSE — June 1 to July 1

## MARTHA GRAHAM

Daily class and supervised practise

For information and registration apply

FRANCES HAWKINS

11 West 42nd Street New York

Pennsylvania 6-1284

Meet Me At

## PETER'S

Italian Restaurant

59 Grove St., New York City  
(Cor. Sheridan Square)  
Old Thomas Paine House

Regular Dinner of 25 Different  
Specialties From 50c up  
— Also A La Carte —

Specialties in  
Home Made Ravioli, and Spaghetti

## RUTH ALLERHAND SCHOOL OF THE DANCE

● Announcement

All classes have been re-organized into  
Co-Operative Groups.

Gymnastic Group — 2-3 hours weekly  
Intermediate group — 4-6 hours weekly  
Semi-Professional — 6-10 hours weekly

These groups have been arranged to give the student a broader opportunity for study, with rates paid in form of a monthly group membership fee, regardless of the number of classes taken each month.

148 West Fourth Street, New York  
Near Washington Square

# The New Dance League

AT the Eastern Council of the Workers Dance League, delegates elected from the various states in the East met to discuss their accomplishments and their problems. They came to the realization that not only was *their* program being threatened by the reactionary forces at work today—censorship of the arts, incipient fascism with its stifling jingoism, the imminent threat of war with its devastating and ruinous results to all cultural achievements—but in addition the program of all progressive, forward-looking dancers. It was decided at the Council, therefore, to broaden the program of the Workers Dance League to encompass the activities of all those who are striving, in their way, for freedom of expression and the perpetuity of dance culture. The Workers Dance League, hereafter functioning under this broader program, will be called the New Dance League.

The New Dance League resolves to incorporate into its present structure the old League and, in addition, expands to include all members of dance groups, dance teachers, and professionals who are willing to support the basic program: *for a mass development of the American dance to its highest artistic and social level, for a dance movement that is against war, fascism, and censorship.* This involves already organized dance groups and dancers of all techniques, tap dancers, ballet dancers, ballroom dancers, modern and variety show dancers. We invite them to join the New Dance League at once and participate in furthering its growth.

As a national organization, the New Dance League will attempt to assemble the finest dance repertory and articles and publish them through its organs, *NEW THEATRE* and *Bulletin*, sponsor lecture demonstrations, forums, symposia, etc., bring to isolated audiences that which is new and vital in the dance, and build sustaining audiences of a true mass nature from coast to coast. Dancers, choreographers, teachers, leaders of groups, dance students, regardless of other political or artistic differences, we invite you to join the New Dance League at once on our minimum program. [Write to the national office at 114 West 14th Street.]

IT was encouraging to note that at the Eastern Council of the New Dance League last month, the bulk of the discussion revolved about ideological and artistic problems rather than inner organizational ones. This confirms the widespread conviction of the steady and persistent growth of the dance organization.

Ideological development of membership has been achieved to a certain extent through general educational projects. Sections of the New Dance Group, for example, have been holding informal inner group discussions on social problems and on questions of dance technique. In New York, a class in Fundamentals of the Class Struggle was very poorly attended, however, and forums on a city scale have not been held within the past year. One of the outstanding weaknesses in our educational activity has been our failure to raise the ideological level of our members to the point of *participating* in class struggle events. Not only must campaigns be started to support strike activity in other fields of industrial and professional activity, but our members must be urged to join the Dancers

Emergency Association (Dancers Union) to participate in the struggle for economic demands for dancers. This would mean turning our educational program from a purely theoretic into a practical one.

Mobilization for such activities should be carried on through our official organs *NEW THEATRE* and *Bulletin* which, together with comprehensive program notes should be sold or distributed at all dance events. Bulletin boards must be used to record group decisions so that they are available for everyone. Special Bulletin boards can be prepared for special events. *NEW THEATRE* and *Bulletin* must become more specifically the voice of the League and the organizer of campaigns. *NEW THEATRE* should carry at least one important dance article in each issue and strive to interest professionals outside the revolutionary dance movement as well as deal with our own problems. *Bulletin* should come out monthly as the specific organ through which campaigns and tasks are brought to the groups.

There has been too little attention paid to the tremendous possibilities of the mass dance, or the formation of large lay classes to work in mass groups. Group improvisations should be developed wherever possible into mass dances—dances simple in form using broad repetitious movement, ideologically clear, and representative of a common aim, (refer to article on *Mass Dance* by Jane Dudley in *NEW THEATRE* for December, and article on *Lay Dance* by Ruth Allerhand in this issue). These dances are useful as a means of recreation, as the basis for a pageant such as might be presented at large demonstrations, and, if very definitely planned and technically perfected, as a concert dance. In using the mass dance for performance, the audience can often be drawn in as performer through the use of program notes as cues.

In view of the general misunderstanding as to the artistic standard and usefulness of dances created both by our amateur and semi-professional groups, and to correct the false separation set up between "concert dance" and "agit-prop" dance, the following resolutions were proposed:

1. Every dance that is performed, by any of our groups, is to be considered a concert dance. In order

that this definition may become a means of raising the artistic and ideological level of our performances, and not a means for permitting the platform appearance of any composition, we resolve

2. To set up a review board to be composed of eminent dance critics as well as untrained laymen. These critics will be called to see dances in preview, not as a judgment committee, but as an educational body to help clarify for the dancer the various problems of content and form. The review board shall, in addition, make a serious effort to organize revolutionary criticism, so that a common viewpoint be established concerning artistic and ideological standards of performance.

3. To establish a criterion for judging dances, we resolve to try to develop dances at least as meritorious as those already presented by our groups and soloists in New York, but constantly aim to surpass them in artistic achievement, clarity, and revolutionary purpose.

4. In line with the policy that led to our reorganization as the New Dance League, to adopt, as a basis for our work, the minimum program: *For a mass development of the American dance to its highest artistic and social level. For a dance movement dedicated to the struggle against war, fascism and censorship.*

NELL ANYON

(A more detailed account of this report and of others given at the Council is appearing in the March issue of *Bulletin*.)

## Voice and Speech

for Theatre and Platform  
Individual or Group Instruction

**HELEN CROSS**

287 West 4th Street CHelsea 3-8806

## Leaflets, Posters & Tickets

at

**ROTOCRAFT CO.**

827 Broadway GRamercy 5-9356

## 2 GREAT EVENTS Soviet Music

SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA

Orchestral League  
of New York

Charles Lichter, Conductor

LILLIAN  
SHAPERO and  
Dance Group

CHORAL ART  
GUILD

Alex Saron, Conductor

SATURDAY NIGHT

**APRIL  
13 & 20**

8:30 P. M.

MAY DAY SYMPHONY

By SHOSTAKOWITSCH (Op. 3)  
First Complete Presentation in America

**BALLET • TRAGIC CARNIVAL**

Based on Legend by Peretz—Music by Krein

**CHORUS OF 50 VOICES**

in songs by Davidenko, Schischov, Steinberg

April 13—Auspices: Workers School

April 20—Auspices United Council Working Class Women  
Management Central Program Bureau, 96 Fifth Avenue

**MECCA TEMPLE,** 55th Street  
Between 6th & 7th Aves.

TICKETS: 50 cents to \$2.00—NOW FOR SALE AT  
All Workers Bookshops—Mecca Temple—New Theatre  
114 W. 14 St.—Drama Book Shop, 48 W. 52 St.—Mayfair  
Book Shop, 1 East 47 St.

# Writers' Congress

By MICHAEL BLANKFORT

THE first American Writers' Congress will be held in New York City on April 26, 27 and 28. The following problems, which can best be summarized in four questions, will be considered by the writers. These are: What shall my political orientation and participation be? What is my economic outlook and how may I broaden my audience? What are the pressing literary problems related to the struggle against War and Fascism? And, finally, how can I help in creating the League of American Writers, a section of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers whose foremost voices are Henri Barbusse, Maxim Gorki, Romain Rolland, Andre Gide, Theodore Plivier, and John Strachey?

There are two ways in which the participating playwright may prepare for this Congress: he must join with others in discussing the broader problems, and help plan the craft caucus.

The playwright is hampered from the start by the kind and condition of the various outlets for his plays. How can these be broadened and improved? This raises the question of the political party theatre and/or the united-front theatre?

Further, the workers' theatres, which are our greatest potential outlet, must work out a royalty system in order that the playwrights who prefer to write for them may live. And the leading professional playwrights, who have not taken the time or trouble to write for these theatres, must consider the danger of ignoring these new theatres. This involves the building of a more adequate repertory department in the New Theatre League.

Along economic lines, I suggest that we consider how we may co-operate to improve the Dramatist's Guild. Limits must be established on how far a playwright should compromise with commercial managers in order to put across part, if not all, of his message. This problem which on its surface seems an economic-political one has certain very important dramatic reverberations.

This brings us to a consideration of our audience, working-class and bourgeois. How far can we go in attempting to neutralize middle-class audiences?

Dramatic criticism is another sore spot. This involves, naturally, criticism from the Left as well as from the Right. As John Howard Lawson comments:

"The weakness of left-wing criticism needs special consideration at the Writer's Congress. While the *Daily Worker* and the *New Masses* review plays (often very ably), it is fair to say that neither of these periodicals contain systematic criticism of the stage. Even in NEW THEATRE the reviews of current plays are often no more than notes. From the point of view of the professional theatre worker, criticism of the drama should be far less fragmentary and incomplete. This is not the fault of any particular publication, but of the generally weak development of Marxist dramatic criticism."

Questions of theatre organization will resolve largely about the plans, policies and methods of the Group Theatre, the Theatre Union, the Theatre of Action, the Theatre Collective, the Artef, and others. How can playwrights work more closely with these organizations?

The left-wing playwright is in a position to bring strong pressure to bear on the American theatre. If a working-class play is competent it must be given to an audience. Concerted action and influence must be exerted to see that it is produced. NEW THEATRE can be utilized more effectively along these lines. Through NEW THEATRE, and by other means, the contributory theatre throughout the country can be influenced so that our plays do not gather dust. But these plans are effective only when they are considered collectively.

There is no art which contains within it so many aspects of collectivism as the theatre. We can broaden these still further by collectively crystalizing our problems, artistic, economic, and political. Toward that end, the American Writers' Congress has been called.

## The New Leader

In a recent issue of the *New Leader*, organ of the old guard Socialists, there appeared an editorial ridiculing nine members of the cast of *Sailors of Cattaro* who participated in the picket line during the Ohrbach strike. The writer, Samuel H. Friedman, a member of Theatre Union's executive board, deliberately endangered the successful carrying out of the strike by describing it as a "mess" and by calling the Office Workers Union a "dual (usually called scab) union run by Communists for the sake of their party." Friedman wonders why these actors, members of Equity, affiliated with the A. F. of L., should help a union not so affiliated. He characterizes them as "nice boys and girls who got their knowledge of the labor movement from the so-called *Daily Worker*."

The following statement by Liston Oak of Theatre Union answers Friedman so thoroughly that further editorial comment on this is unnecessary:

"This is of course a slander of the actors, as well as the Ohrbach strikers fighting for union conditions, and of the *Daily Worker* whose support helped them win their victory. The Office Workers Union is the only union in this particular field which is carrying on a determined organizational drive, a campaign such as the A. F. of L. unions of retail clerks, stenographers, etc., have neglected for years to organize white collar workers. The Office Workers Union has led such workers in a series of militant struggles and has won strikes despite injunctions and police terrorism. This union has improved working conditions, not only for the Ohrbach and Klein workers but for thousands of other workers in offices and stores. All militant workers and sympathizers hail the recent campaign of the Retail Clerks Union to organize the workers in the Butler, Reeves and A&P stores and lead them on strike. No one would characterize these workers or anyone who aided them as 'nice boys and girls.' As for dual unionism, it is the A. F. of L. actors own responsibility and their right and duty as class-conscious workers to respond to the appeal

of the Ohrbach strikers for aid in fighting the injunction and in winning their strike, is unquestionable."

Another *New Leader* contribution to working-class culture is a despicable little review of *Waiting for Lefty*, signed by Gertrude Weil Klein and entitled "Workers Stink." The writer attempted to slander Odets by charging him with having described the working class some years ago in the above quoted words, but succeeded only in disgracing her own name. This authority describes *Waiting For Lefty* as a "pretty bad piece of theatrical hokum" whose "bad men are all old line labor leaders, synonomous with gangsters, racketeers, and crooks" and whose ordinary taxi-driver characters are portrayed as "a pretty low, ignorant lot."

An answer which shames the writer of this personal slander has come to us in a letter from a member of the Socialist-International Ladies Garment Workers Union. This worker says:

"I don't know Miss Klein nor Mr. Cliff Odets, but I do believe that the attack by Miss Klein concerning Mr. Odets is not because of what Mr. Odets used to be, but what he is today. . . . We understand the Socialist party is not what it used to be. . . . The question to us workers is not what he or she used to be, but what they are now. We know that Odets is one of the Group Theatre and it is his plays which made him known to the masses. It is absolutely sure that to thousands of taxi drivers, dress makers, turners and metal workers . . . the *Waiting for Lefty* play is in reality what happened last year during the taxi strike. I personally have seen *Waiting for Lefty* three times. If I have the opportunity again it will be a great pleasure for me to see it again."

In reviewing *Awake and Sing* (by Odets) for the *New Leader* Joseph T. Shipley concludes a favorable report in an altogether different tone:

" . . . One of the things age knows is that even youth's power is futile unless united: and this lesson young Ralph learns when out of Isaiah he repeats his grandfather's cry as a challenge to youth to join together, to 'awake and sing' songs of work and songs of battle in the one great war against poverty and human injustice for a new, a truly social world."

If these words were practiced in America today as Socialists, Communists and Liberals are practicing them in France where youth and age have joined hands to forestall Fascism, our united forces could strike a death blow to growing fascism.

## About MacLeish

NEW THEATRE was at fault for not prefacing the "Fragments from Panic" with an editorial explaining our reasons for publishing Archibald MacLeish, who had been proscribed as a fascist by several leading Marxist critics. We believed that *Panic* represented a definite contribution to the social literature of our time. The brilliant analysis of *Panic*, by V. J. Jerome, in the Symposium following the performance sponsored by *New Masses* and NEW THEATRE, and the opinions of John Howard Lawson and Stanley Burnshaw confirmed this point of view. The deciding vote was cast by the left-wing audience which took a great interest in the play and cheered the author afterwards. We are proud to state that NEW THEATRE took the initiative in effecting an understanding of MacLeish's work and position.

# Shifting Scenes

THOUGH they play to hundreds of thousands of spectators each year the amateur theatres affiliated with the *New Theatre League* must still be brought before millions of Americans who do not yet know that a new type of theatre is arising, despite tremendous difficulties, in their midst. It is a theatre which reflects on its stages the contemporary scene, the fierce class struggles, the tremendous mass movement against fascism, and the insane economic contradictions of the day. They present exciting plays which arouse fighting interest wherever they are shown. These plays must be brought to wider masses so that they will experience the joy of a theatre meant for working people and intellectuals cognizant of the trend of the times, and anxious to have a share in changing them.

To mark each year's development the New Theatre League has set May 12-20 aside for the presentation of competitions which shall present the work of these theatres and which can determine their varying success. This year local competitions will be held in all the cities where the New Theatre League has strong forces to represent its program. The subjects for the competitions will be restricted to war, fascism, and censorship as much as possible. In addition, symposiums, lectures, recitations, and even special film showings will accompany many performances. In line with the program of the NTL a special invitation to participate in these programs is being extended to all non-affiliated theatres which are interested in the new social drama.

It is perhaps unnecessary to recapitulate the details of the decay of the theatre in Germany and Italy under the cultural repressions of fascism for readers of NEW THEATRE. This decay is amply attested to by all the leaders of the theatre of the day: Ashley Dukes and Gordon Craig and many others. *National Theatre Week* marks the highest point in each year's intensive work of the *New Theatre League* in preventing the fascist menace from becoming a reality here in America. With each performance of our hundreds of theatrical troupes and their united front allies from both the professional and amateur stage we can confidently assert that the dangers of the disappearance of a completely free stage has been further eliminated. The *New Theatre League's* many forces from coast to coast are fighting along with the best and finest elements in American cultural life for the preservation of civil liberties and intellectual freedom.

Watch for the *National Theatre Week* programs in your city. Plan to participate in the work, or support these affairs by your presence. Help build the united theatre front against war, fascism, and censorship!

TWO sailors who took part in the actual uprising of 1917 at the Bay of Catarro, are acting in Friederich Wolf's play about the anti-war mutiny, *Sailors of Catarro*. The production is that of the Jugo-Slav Dramatic Group of Chicago.

Thus do the New Theatres of America bring their own experience in struggles for freedom to the building of a strong cultural movement against war and against fascism. News from all over the country reports the beginning of work on plays that will counteract the imperialist jingoism in every newspaper headline, war movie, and radio broadcast now preparing the masses of people for willingness to be slaughtered.

In Miami, Florida, a new dramatic company has been organized, and begun rehearsals of the graveyard scene from *Stop That War*. In this sketch, the dead soldiers of the warring nations rise and give their picture of international murder and how to stop it.

In Gary, Indiana, the five socially-conscious theatres of that steel-mill company town are uniting to produce *War In the Far East*, an indictment of imperialism. The Workers Dramatic Club of Gary, in combination with the Elinden Youth Players, have been presenting the anti-fascist play, *Dimitroff* in various centers of the Middlewest.

The Nature Friends Dramatic Group of Phila-

delphia, which has produced six plays so far this season, presented the anti-fascist mass recitation, *Free Thaelmann*, with great effectiveness.

The Unity Players of New Haven toured the state of Connecticut for two months with *War Dogs*, presenting it before packed houses in the hill towns of New England. They followed this with two scenes from Ernst Toller's *Man and the Masses*, and are now working on *Waiting for Lefty* to be presented at the Yale Drama Tournament in April.

The Theatre of Action of New York (formerly W.L.T.) is working on *The Young Go First*, an exposé of the CCC campus by Scudder and Martin, and on *My Dear Co-Workers*, a department store strike play by Edward Dahlberg. A promising young dramatic company in Brooklyn (a branch of the American League Against War and Fascism) having finished a successful production of *Squaring the Circle*, have begun work on a revised version of *Newsboy*, rewritten by one of their members to emphasize the fight against war and fascism. The Repertory Department of the New Theatre League offers this and a number of new plays to all production units in the country, amateur and professional, who want to join in building an anti-war culture for America.

In Philadelphia the YPSL Dram Group (Young Peoples Socialist League) although only one month old has already performed *Risen From the Ranks* at strike meetings of National Biscuit Company pickets, and was received with great enthusiasm. The group is now at work on *Waiting for Lefty*, and has several advance bookings before union audiences.

THE Living Theatre of Oakland, California, performed *Newsboy* for the unemployed at the Federal shelter there, in spite of attacks by "Mr. Hearst's playboys," the Vigilantes, who have forced this dramatic group to move its headquarters five times since it was organized. The new Hollywood Theatre of Action, with a membership of fifteen professionals, most of whom work in pictures during the day, wrote and produced a musical satire on the Grand Jury frame-up of eighteen Sacramento Valley strikers. They performed this play, *Very Grand Jurors*, at the first open mass meeting in Hollywood since the California terror started, and before audiences of EPIC society members, "Utopians," and other liberal groups.

The Gilpin Players of Cleveland have been presenting *Stevodore* to packed houses, including practically the entire police force of that city, who held a censorship conference about the blasphemy of the play, but took no action.

Competitions for anti-war and anti-fascist productions will be held in every center of the country during National Theatre Week (April 22-29). In addition, two groups from the Middlewest announce special programs. The Chicago section of the New Theatre League (which has been advancing by leaps and bounds since Bob Riley was sent there by the National Executive Committee) writes of an April Frolic at which *Scandalizin' Alabama*, a humorous satire on southern justice, will be the main feature. This program will be presented on Saturday, April 6, sponsored jointly by the New Theatre Group, Youth Branch 98 of the International Workers Order, and the Sparklight Social and Athletic Club. On the same night, in Detroit, Michigan, the New Theatre Union (formerly Theatre of Action) will present a full evening's program at the Maccabee Auditorium, including *Opus 1935*, *God's In His Heaven, America*, *America*, and several recitations. In preparation for the National Theatre Week New York Competitions, three mass organizations are holding preliminary contests for their member groups. The International Workers Order competitions took place March 24; the Jewish Workers Clubs will be on April 13, and the Associated Workers Clubs on April 14, with ten groups participating. The last named organization is sponsoring a Dramatic Training School for members and friends, at their headquarters, 11 West 18th St.

The Newark Collective Theatre of New Jersey is on the picket line these days, supporting the strike of the Newspaper Guild at the *Newark Ledger*. These

young actors, who are not afraid to participate in the struggles they present plays about, carry a banner: "The Newark Theatre Collective supports the Ledger strikers!"

The New Theatre Players of Boston are setting a high mark for all social theatre groups in reaching new audiences, having presented *Waiting for Lefty* and *Newsboy* at Elizabeth Peabody House, a wealthy charitable institution in Boston, and before mass meetings of textile workers in Lowell, Mass. They now have their own theatre (where they built the stage themselves) at Long Wharf, Boston, in the heart of the marine workers' territory, and already have a subscription audience of one hundred and fifty.

Reports from other groups in all parts of the country indicate definite artistic advance and the reaching of wider and wider audiences by the New Theatres of America.

The Group Theatre's announcement of their part in this anti-war and anti-fascist campaign is of special interest. *Waiting for Lefty*, and *Till The Day I Die*, a new play by Clifford Odets, dealing with two brothers who are victims of the Nazi regime in Germany, opened on March 25, at the Ambassador Theatre in New York City.

—ALICE EVANS

QUESTION BEFORE THE HOUSE, by Doris Yankhauger and Herbert Mayer, was produced by Hallie Flanagan's Experimental Theatre at Vassar College on Mar. 2. Muriel Rukeyser reports, "It is (at last!) a college play springing from its own environment, localized and direct. Beginning and ending with liberal addresses by the Dean to Quigley College, it sides definitely with strikers in the town, and their sympathizers from the college. The characters include well-balanced portraits of the liberal college girl, from the one who says, 'But the strikers have dirty fingernails!' to, 'We do belong in the world, you know . . .' When a handful of students joins the picket line, the liberalism of the college is tested. The Dean recalls that the factory owner has given buildings and funds to Quigley College, and although she will not expel the leader of the Social Discussion Group, the two sets of principles are brought face to face so bitterly that the student is forced to leave. The more fastidious students cannot countenance the friendship between a Quigley girl and a strike leader. . . . The dean's closing speech leaves suspended the definition of a 'liberal education.'

"To a campus audience *Question Before the House* struck home, and it would be strongly effective in any of the women's colleges for which it is directly written. As the latest of the series of social plays which the Experimental Theatre has produced annually, it is politically elementary, but it gains by keeping its emphasis on the college. It is directed to this purpose, and Lester Lang's permanent set, whose columns are at once smokestacks and college pillars, emphasize the relationships. It does not fall into the errors of superficiality which so many bitter college plays have shown. And it goes beyond them in declaring the need for unity between student and worker, and in defining obstacles to that unity."

## The Village Printers

are now located at

45 - 4th Ave. 45 Astor Place  
opp. Wanamakers opp. Cooper Union  
Printing and Advertising at low prices  
ST. 9-4169

## NEW SINGERS OF W.M.L.

have openings for all voices—men & women.  
Qualification a good voice, ability to read.

Auditions Tuesday 6:30—7:30.

158 W. 85th St., N. Y. C.

●  
4  
OUTSTANDING  
DANCE EVENTS OF  
THE SPRING SEASON  
●  
THE NEW DANCE LEAGUE  
presents  
SOLO RECITAL - ALL NEW DANCES  
NEW SOLOISTS

SUNDAY APRIL 7th  
8:45 P. M.

CIVIC REPERTORY  
Tickets 35c - \$1.65  
On Sale at: Box Office  
Dance League Headquarters, 114 W. 14 St.  
Workers Bookshop, 50 E. 13 St.

MECCA TEMPLE  
SUNDAY, APR. 21st  
8:45 P. M.  
EASTER SUNDAY

## MAJOR SOLO RECITAL

Benefit ACTION, magazine for the Jewish masses

contemporary dancers  
of Newark present an  
evening of modern dancing

## ANNA SOKOLOV DANCE UNIT

SAT., APRIL 13, 8:30 P.M.

ARTS HIGH SCHOOL, NEWARK, N. J.

ADMISSION: \$0.35

MOST IMPORTANT  
DANCE EVENT PHILADELPHIA  
HAS EVER SEEN—

## SOLO RECITAL

Miriam Blecher  
Nadia Chilkovsky  
Jane Dudley

FRIDAY, APRIL 12  
8:30 P. M.

Scottish Rites Temple  
Race and Broad Sts.

TICKETS: 35c - \$1.65

On Sale at Presser's Music Shop  
Gimbel's Department Store.

# TORGsin in U.S.S.R.

(RUSSIA)

A Torgsin Order will be highly appreciated by your relatives in the Soviet Union.

Torgsin offers 15,000 different domestic and imported articles of high quality. Clothing, shoes, foodstuffs and other merchandise are for sale.

Prices compare favorably with those in the United States

For Torgsin orders see your local bank or authorized agent



General Representative in U.S.A.  
at AMTORG, 261 Fifth Ave., N.Y.

## CAUCASIAN RESTAURANT "KAVKAZ"

332 East 14th Street New York City  
Tompkins Square 6-9132  
Most Excellent Shashliks  
Banquets and Parties No Cover Charge

GENERAL SUPPLY CO.  
OFFICE AND Mimeo SUPPLIES  
Provisions and everything for affairs  
Special Prices to Organizations  
1 UNION SQ., Room 405—GR. 7-7211

LARGE THEATRE  
AVAILABLE for  
Theatrical Shows. Pictures. Lectures  
Concerts — Mass Meetings, etc.

Theatre fully equipped... Large stage  
1400 seats. REDUCTION RENTALS  
for summer and winter.

Book Your Dates Now!

FIFTH AVE. THEATRE  
Broadway and 28th St. New York  
BOgardus 4-9608

## Drama on the Western Front

(Continued from Page 14)

I HAD found that the effect of the World War was different upon the theatres in Germany, in France, and in England; yet in all three countries the theatre was being used as a powerful weapon of propaganda for war. This was the same throughout Europe—and became even worse in America. Only in Soviet Russia, which after the Russian Revolution had withdrawn from the World War, was it possible to make a really revolutionary war against war. Everywhere, else, as long as the War lasted and during the years immediately after the War, it was impossible to produce in the theatre any realistic plays about the War, or any revolutionary protest against it.

It was only in 1924, ten years after the beginning of the War, that the bourgeois theatres were able to cry out openly: "Now it can be told!" In 1924 military glory could at last be shown up for the sham it was in the gorgeous profanity of *What Price Glory* by Laurence Stallings and Maxwell Anderson and in the penetrating political and social satire of *Merchants of Glory* by Pagnol and Rivoire. Here the father who has become a merchant of glory by making political capital out of his son's supposed death on the field of honor, is mortified when the son spoils it all by returning alive and filled with the spirit of revolt against war. Another French play of that same year, *The Unknown Warrior* by Raynal, showed a similar conflict of father and son. In the woman, loved by the soldier who returns from the front on the eve of his death and by the soldier's father, was dramatized the situation of France itself torn asunder between the older generation who had made the War and exulted in the glory of it and the younger generation who loathed the War yet gave up their lives in it. The stormy discussions about this play broke up the audiences into antagonistic camps. Riots over the play had to be suppressed by the police. It was perhaps the most profound in sentiment of all the bourgeois plays about the World War. Yet it remained a drama sentimentally linked with the eternal triangle of sex. It left the larger social implications of war still untouched.

It was only still later, in 1928, ten years after the end of the War, that the actual psychology of the soldiers fighting at the front was adequately dramatized. Then in the British Isles came Sheriff's touching *Journey's End* and Sean O'Casey's smashing *Silver Tassie*. Yet both remained hopelessly defeatist. In Germany Erich Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* gave a penetrating psycho-analysis of the soldiers' state of mind under fire. Yet when this book is dramatized today in the Soviet Union, the insufficiency of the author's social analysis is shown up in a significant epilogue. Remarque enters in evening clothes, dined and wine-d by the bourgeois in honor of the success of his book, but is confronted by revolutionary German workers, his forgotten companions of the trenches, who tell him that today, though for the time being it may seem that the revolutionary movement in Germany is suppressed under Hitler and "all quiet" there on "the western front" of the Soviet Union, before long there will be something new, a change will come, and it will not be "all quiet."

Ten years after the Armistice, other stories were dramatized showing the aftermath of war. Two French dramatized novels brought up interestingly the relations of French and Germans after the War. In one of these called *Siegfried*, Giraudoux sharpened a two-edged satire against both France and Germany in his story of a shell-shocked French soldier who imagines he is a German till gradually he becomes a Frenchman again. In the other, *The Man I Killed*, Maurice Rostand, turning as a pacifist away from the military panache of his father, told the story of a French soldier whose conscience is troubled by the haunting memory of the German soldier he has killed till he is driven to visit the family of the man he killed. At the same time a young Austrian dramatist, Chlumberg, in his *Miracle of Verdun* gave us a larger vision of a whole group of soldiers arising from their graves and returning unwanted to an ungrateful world that had all but forgotten them.

GET in these plays the protest against war, dramatic as it is, is sentimental, even mystic. There is really a far more effective satire on war to be found among Czecho-Slovakian writers, in the scorching scene of the ants driven to war in Karel Capek's *Insect Comedy* or *The World We Live In*, or in the devastatingly funny *Brave Soldier Schweig* so brilliantly dramatized by Piscator in Germany and by the Realistic Theatre in Moscow. There have been moreover, throughout Europe and now more and more powerfully in America workers' theatres whose mass recitations and short dramas have powerfully focussed against war and the fascism that leads to war, an analysis that is not satisfied with a photographic realism of the externals of war or a psycho-analysis of the extremes of consciousness inside the mind of the individual soldier, but which give us through Socialist Realism the chain of cause and effect, the economic determinism behind war and the methods of an effective revolutionary revolt against war, that will turn the next imperialist war into a class war against the war makers.

In conclusion, then, one thing becomes clear. The theatre is a weapon. During the last World War (which may prove to have been only the first World War) the theatres were used as a weapon in the hands of the militarists, the munition profiteers, and the bankers—a weapon for war propaganda. Almost every effort to counteract this in the theatre seemed hopelessly sentimental, disorganized, and isolated. The aloofness of the bourgeois theatres from the working-class, the absence of any well organized workers' theatres, the lack of any international organization of revolutionary theatres, all made any effective protest impossible. It is only by a United Front of dramatists with the working-class, by the building up of large audiences everywhere for workers' theatres, and by uniting these efforts internationally that the theatre can be made a powerful weapon in the fight against fascism and war.

## Webster Hall

Ball Room, Banquet  
Rooms, Meeting Rooms

119-25 EAST 11th ST.  
Tel. Tompkins Sq. 6-7070

h k  
modern  
Printing  
booklets  
programs  
stationery  
leaflets  
posters

54 w. 21 st. n. y. c. chelsea 3-0590

## Entertaining the Army

(Continued from Page 5)

by leakage of stories of calamity abroad. So 20,000 entertainers—among them such figures as Mme. Schumann-Heink, Louise Homer, Mischka Elman, Harry Lauder, Reinald Werrenrath, Maude Adams, Jefferson de Angelis and the Philharmonic Orchestra, were sent on tour. 32 Liberty theatres, erected by the Commission on Training Camp Activities, contained "Broadway hits" in a continuous circuit at 25c and 50c admission. Rachel Crothers, Louise Closser Hale, Blanche Bates, Jessie Bonstelle, Florence Nash and Mary Boland functioned prominently in an organization called the Stage Women's War Relief. Lecturers were exchanged with the British, who were considerate enough to send over Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, H. G. Wells, Ian Hay, John Masefield and Rudyard Kipling. John Kendrick Bangs and Irvin S. Cobb were put into circulation for the dissemination of gags; John Erskine spoke, and divines with a flair for theatre spoke, too. Ella Wheeler Wilcox read her drivelling poetry both here and abroad.

LET the actor who imagines himself divorced from the complexities of government ponder these figures at length. Three warnings offer themselves out of the parade of numbers. One is against the yielding to elaborately manufactured public hysteria, which is one of the qualities of theatre—and which it is in the power of actors and all theatre people to counteract and even paralyze by anticipation. A second is against

the shrill legend of Public Service and Duty to Mankind, two selling points on which the more emotional actor is unfortunately impressionable. The third is against the illusion of being gainfully employed, which has animated so many inactive men into enlisting for service. For the pay is shamelessly small, the overwork criminal, the waste of it crushing to the creative spirit. Even in getting masses of human beings to conduct and foster a profitable war for them, the big money-boys have not yet conceived any finally satisfying reward for the dirty work.

*Entertaining the American Army*, by James W. Evans and Captain Gardner L. Harding, published by the Y.M.C.A. in 1921, is a complete record of the phenomena only touched in this article.

The book is compulsory reading for any actor who is still unpersuaded that he is an inevitable agent for the instigation and prolongation of war, so long as he remains indifferent to issues of social change and to the roaring imminence of another World War.

## Black Pit

(Continued from Page 20)

stead of the tragic first scene, the playwright had shown the miners throwing a party for Joe's welcome home from prison, the betrayal of these men later would have been even more terrible. It is difficult to feel genuine sympathy over the reported deaths of characters whom we know only by name. Also, apart

from our natural desire to see the miners at work sometime during the course of the play, the accident resulting from Joe's lies would have been far more dramatic if it had been staged instead of talked about.

Perhaps it is unfair to deal primarily with these few faults of *The Black Pit*. Its accomplishments are so high in quality of writing, in rich characterization, in sustained emotional intensity that I urge every reader of NEW THEATRE not to miss this significant revolutionary tragedy.

## Brief Reviews

*TIMES Have Changed* is a horror play of wealthy society, based on the mesalliance between an idiot millionaire and the girl who is to save her family's name and money. Defeatist in its presentation, the play contains a maximum of social content and is brightly acted by Elena Miramova, Eric Wollencott, and an intelligent cast. The building up of the horror story (Edoard Bourdet vie Louis Bromfield) is an expert example of how to take the audience's attention away from a social situation.

SIMPLETON OF THE UNEXPECTED AISLES—

Mr. Shaw flips more stale fish into the hungry maws of Guild subscribers. Senile whimsy on the subject of sex and querulous, petulant, airing of the old grievances. See the angel with the real feather wings let down by a real wire into a real phoney play.

H. R.

IBSEN THEATRE—

However commendable the idea of producing classics at popular prices, we, the people, and Ibsen, the dramatist, deserve better than they are presenting down on Houston Street.

R. H.

## What Is The New Theatre League?

The New Theatre League is the national organization of all the new social theatres which are springing up to mark a renaissance in the American theatre, to indicate the upsurge of a living drama that reflects contemporary life and struggle, and that stands as a bulwark against the cultural degradation and menace of fascism, censorship and war.

## Who Can Join the New Theatre League?

Anyone connected with any theatre, amateur or professional, can join the N.T.L. Amateurs without past experience can join if they belong to or are establishing a new theatre. Write now!

## NEW THEATRE LEAGUE

National Office  
114 W. 14 St., New York City

Mid-West Office  
20 W. Jackson, Chicago, Ill.

## REPERTORY

### New Anti-War and Anti-Fascist Plays

Best plays submitted to *New Theatre* Playwriting Contest including *The Great Philanthropist* prize-winning play by Philip Barber.

Prices 5c to 50c

### SPECIAL

"12 Plays for Boys and Girls"  
*edited by Ben Blake.*

25c plus postage.

## BOOKINGS

### Dramatic Groups! Dance Groups! Lecturers! Singers! Orchestras! Etc.

Programs of every variety furnished  
at low cost. Plan your *New Theatre*  
evening now!

# LIBERAL PRESS

UNION

LABOR'S

FAVORITE

PRINTERS

80 Fourth Ave., N. Y. C.

## 20-50% Discount Sale

at  
**WORKERS BOOK SHOPS**  
50 E. 13th STREET, N. Y. C.  
369 SUTTER AVENUE, BROOKLYN  
699 PROSPECT AVENUE, BRONX

Begins:  
**Friday March 22, 1935, 9:30 A.M.**  
Ends:  
**Sat. March 30, 1935, 6:30 P.M.**

### SELECTED SPECIALS

STEVEDORE—*Paul Peters & G. Sklar*  
now \$0.50

INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE  
(any number) 0.25

FASCISM & SOCIAL REVOLUTION now 1.25

RED ARMY MARCHES—*Smedley* 1.60

CHINESE DESTINIES—*Smedley* 1.45

COMING STRUGGLE FOR POWER  
*Strachey* 1.65

GREAT TRADITION—*Granville Hicks* 1.99

ANTI-DUHRING—*Engels* 1.95

Be Sure To  
*Take Advantage of Our Tremendous  
Sale on Our Books & Pamphlets*

Write For  
FREE BOOK LISTS AND "GUIDE TO  
READINGS IN COMMUNISM" TO  
50 E. 13th STREET

## The Movies in Wartime

(Continued from Page 17)

The titles of most of these pictures are sufficient to characterize them: *The Kaiser, Beast of Berlin, The Prussian Cur, America's Answer, Pershing's Crusaders* and *Lafayette, Welcome!* All of them attributed the war to the character of the Kaiser. The Fox Film, *The Spy*, was so unrestrained in its expression of hatred that Major Funkhouser, the Chicago censor, deleted several scenes; but the government upheld the producer and removed Funkhouser from his position.

Besides these general war pictures, the studios produced films dealing with more specific problems. There were slacker pictures, such as *The Man Who Was Afraid*, pictures on the food problem, such as *The Public Be Damned*, in which the head of the food trust reforms in time to save the heroine from becoming the tool of crooked politicians.

Pictures were used even by the Boy Scout organization as a medium for war propaganda. Among them were *Boy Scouts to the Rescue, The Little Boy Scout, Adventures of a Boy Scout, The Yellow Dog*, and *Knights of the Square Table*, all exploiting juvenile militarism.

Universal's *The Yellow Dog*, released just before the Armistice, was exploited all over the country through the establishment of "Yellow Dog" clubs in which boys were enlisted to spy upon all pro-German sympathizers, even to the extent of listening to street corner conversations in which the government might be criticized. The clubs were organized long before the picture's release, membership cards being issued, and the youngsters were sworn to report all "yellow dogs."

In *Knights of the Square Table*, there were two sets of boys, one a gang of toughs, the other a Boy Scout patrol. When the toughs accuse the scouts of being "sissies," the groups clash. Then, according to the trade paper notice:

"This is handled in true kid fashion and developed up to the point where we get a sure-enough battle that proved one faction to be about as sturdy as the other when it came to using their fists.

"The free-for-all fight was halted by one of the youngsters falling into the water, where he was drowning when rescued, and then we saw the Scouts use their knowledge of what to do, while the other boys only thought they knew."

The striking similarity of this picture to 1934's *No Greater Glory* is immediately apparent. Both exploit essentially the same theme: a miniature war between two groups of boys, concealing war propaganda behind a seemingly innocent presentation.

While American movies may have progressed very far technically since 1918, they have really learned few new tricks. In the new cycle of war films which is now beginning, the technical presentation may be far superior to those of 1913-1918, but the basic propaganda methods are identical. *Devil Dogs of the Air* contains shots considered impossible in 1918, but the picture is closely related to *Hero of Submarine D-2* and other films of 1913-1918.

For this reason, we must study carefully the movies produced during the last war, that we may be prepared for the new cycle of war propaganda films which Hollywood is now preparing. This second cycle will be infinitely more dangerous than the first, for, though the skeleton of capitalist film propaganda may have remained the same, it has been much more attractively clothed.

*Flirtation Walk* is an example of the type of film we may now expect. Here, the most vicious war propaganda is combined with a Hollywood musical comedy. Hawaiian beach scenes and West Point parades are combined in a manner seemingly incongruous. But the whole is deliberate and infinitely more subtle. Militarism can no longer be alone; it must be sweetened with all the infinite varieties of Hollywood hokum.

For this reason, we must carry on a persistent and unwearied campaign against all the mongrel Hollywood pictures fathered by the war spirit. It is because *Here Comes the Navy, No Greater Glory, Flirtation Walk* and *Devil Dogs of the Air* are the precursors of other and more open attacks upon peace, including the long postponed *War Is Declared*, that they must be fought now.

### TINY INN TINY

RUSSIAN-AMERICAN

Home Cooking  
Dinner 50c Luncheon 35-40c  
a la carte  
13th St. & 6th Ave.

### GIUSTI'S SPAGHETTI INN

Watkins 9-9177

● Luncheon, 4 & 5 course, 40c & 50c  
● Chicken Dinner, 6 course, 60c  
Special Luncheon 35c  
Wines and Beer Served

49 W. 16 St.  
New York

### LIGHT LUNCH AT PROLETARIAN PRICES

IDEAL HOME MADE  
DOUGHNUT SHOP  
101 W. 14 ST.

NEW THEATRE presents

## Prof. H. W. L. DANA

in Two Illustrated Lectures

1. The Theatre and War
2. The Soviet Theatre

FRIDAY, APRIL 19 8:30 P.M. at

NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH  
66 W. 12 St. TICKETS 50c  
At New Theatre, 114 W. 14 St. CHelsea 3-0236  
Bkstor, 50 E. 13 St. - Drama Bkshop, 48 W. 52 St.