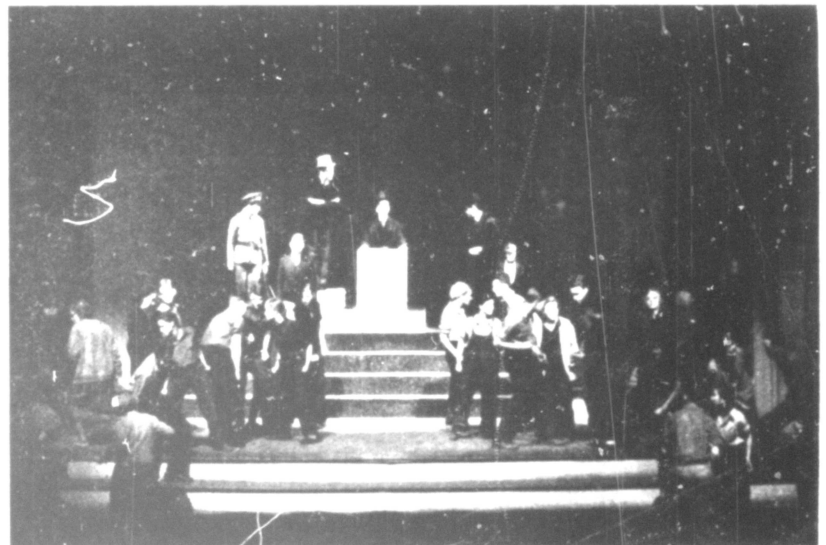


MAR 1 1932

WORKERS THEATRE

**JUNE-JULY
1932 15c**



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"WORKERS THEATRE"

Application for entry as second class matter is pending.

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An Invitation

The United Front Election Campaign Committee extends an invitation to all workers' theatre groups throughout the United States to take an active part in bringing the working class election program of the Communist Party to the workers of this country. With unemployment increasing, and with a world war and an attack on the Soviet Union imminent, it is important immediately to build a broad mass basis for the workers revolutionary struggle. The committee is confident that the workers' theatre groups, by going out on the street with simple dramatizations of the issues involved in the campaign, will be able to bring the message of working class solidarity to hundreds of thousands of workers that have up to now remained blinded by the bosses' theatre and newspaper propaganda. The committee is confident that the workers' theatre will spread the knowledge of the platform of the Communist Party, and these main demands.

1. Unemployment and Social Insurance at the expense of the state and employers.

2. Against Hoover's wage-cutting policy.
3. Emergency relief for the poor farmers without restrictions by the government and banks; exemption of poor farmers from taxes, and no forced collection of rents or debts.
4. Equal rights for the Negroes and self-determination for the Black Belt.
5. Against capitalist terror; against all forms of suppression of the political rights of workers.
6. Against imperialist war; for the defense of the Chinese people and for the Soviet Union.

We Answer the Call

The League of Workers Theatres of the United States is proud of the recognition of the value of agitprop work, as evidenced by the invitation, printed on this page, extended to workers theatre groups to participate in the election campaign to be conducted by the United Front Election Campaign Committee.

This invitation represents a great task and a great op-

portunity. We have a chance now to reach hundreds of thousands of workers who have never heard of our work, and to demonstrate the real value of agitprop groups in rallying new masses of workers behind the program of workers' struggles.

We can say with some pride that workers theatre groups in the United States have done good preparatory work in the past year. We have made progress in working out a technique for playwriting, acting and directing. But our work has been confined to small circles of sympathetic workers. As a result our knowledge and our ability are still limited. We are in danger of running into blind alleys of routine repetition if we do not break through our small circles to the millions of workers that still know nothing of our activity. When, through the election campaign, we reach new audiences we will gain the new experiences that are essential to the development of a living workers theatre.

To our readers we can already report that many of our groups have studied the Communist Party's election platform, and have come, in the discussions among the members, to the clear understanding of why this platform is the only election platform for the workers to follow. As compared to the "Socialist" party's slanders against the Soviet Union, to such treachery to the working class as is embodied in the "Socialist party's resolutions for the United States to join

the war plotters in the League of Nations, to the fake resolutions for unemployment insurance "to be contributed by the government and the employers", the Communist Party, with its call to defend the Soviet Union, to fight imperialist war, and for an unemployment insurance fund to be administered by the workers clearly stands out as the only real workers' party and as the only party that can possibly be supported by a real workers theatre.

We are busy writing plays to be performed on the street in the coming election campaign. Two of these plays we are printing in this issue. We are getting training courses ready to develop street groups. The workers will not have long to wait before they will see their own struggles brought to them in simple mass recitation and dialogue forms.

The sharpening class war, coming to a head in increasing starvation and misery for the workers and in bosses' plots for a new world war, demands every ounce of effort from all class conscious workers. An emergency situation such as this present crisis presents, demands the creation of a mass basis for the workers' fight. If we participate in the election campaign we can be a big factor in the creation of this mass basis.

Workers theatre groups of the United States, into the streets with your election plays and mass recitations. Answer the call of the United Front Election Campaign Committee.

"The Writing on the Wall"

Workers Plays At Vassar College—A Letter from HALLIE FLANAGAN

The VASSAR EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE has been deeply interested in the "Workers Theatre" since its opening issue, and will be glad to help in any way.

Since we are a college theatre, our experimentation is not confined to plays dealing with the social struggle; but we base one, at least, of our four yearly productions, on some aspect of the present. In the social-industrial sense, we have done "Toller's "Man and the Masses", "See America First", a satire on American bourgeois standardization, written by a student here, "Cartoon", a translation from the Polish, and "Can You Hear Their Voices", written, published, and given its first production here. "Miners Are Striking" and "We Demand" were the last in this series and were given as direct and simple a performance as we could effect. Twelve men from Yale University acted with us in order to give the necessary depth and volume.

I enclose the press comment by Professor Lockwood who teaches Journalism. It indicates quite fairly the attitude, both favorable and unfavorable, of our audience.

FROM PROF. LOCKWOOD'S REVIEW:

"Whether we like it or not the rising of the masses is the incoming tide of our time. As we have failed to order our industrial machinery fast enough, their left wing has become increasingly active. Hence the industrial war carried on by it in the south, and its mass demonstrations to force a sluggish public opinion to demand relief for unemployment. To express its longings and to move more people toward action, its own

forms of art are emerging.

"We Demand" and "Miners Are Striking" try to meet the new artistic problems. But they are elementary, one might even say, superstitious. They are not unlike the American Indians beating their drums and making a dance praying for rain. But like that they are a force and out of them may come in time the richer interpretations that both labor and the rest of the world need. We must accept them as writing on the wall, and we shall do wisely to take immediate steps to understand their full meaning.

In challenging us with an actual experience of the way movements are made by such propaganda and the need of understanding our own feelings either of hostility or of sympathy, and in giving us the rising proletariat's expression of itself, the main new note in this year's theatre, the Experimental Theatre has ended its public year significantly."

I hope you will let us know if there is any way in which we can be of service.

Sincerely,

Experimental Theatre, Vassar College
HALLIE FLANAGAN, Director

Editors' Note: The title is not part of the letter;—the editors are responsible for it.

We will be very glad to print contributions from dramatic groups that are not connected nor in agreement with the League of Workers Theatres.

Scarlet Fever Criticism

By ALFRED SAXE
W. L. T., New York

An Answer to
Mr. Grady's At-
tack Upon the
Workers Theatre

The Honorable Richard F. Grady S. J. (Society of Jesus) writes a fevered analysis in the Catholic weekly "America" of May 21. In an article headed "Scarlet Fever Drama" Sir Richard bemoans the existence of the Workers Theatre movement under the banner of Marx and Lenin. And what does Mr. Grady say is wrong with the present Workers Theatre? Well, briefly,—It has a bad case of scarlet fever. It is a theatre of HALF TRUTHS. "It is as unhealthy as is any and every theory that is based on half-truth and swollen with deliberate untruth." I might ask Mr. Grady, why pick, all of a sudden, on the Workers Theatre. Is there any theatre that Mr. Grady can mention which has presented the truth? Why not investigate the Theatre Guild or Broadway burlesque? And why is Mr. Grady who has never before sought for the truth in the theatre via articles in the Catholic weekly, suddenly seized with the itch to discover the truth? But let us begin—from the beginning.

The Workers Theatre is a theatre of half-truths, says Mr. Grady. Very good. At least Mr. Grady admits that half of what we say is correct. Half of what the Workers Theatre fights against is correct. It is correct, says Mr. Grady, that capitalism deserves attack. But why do we specifically insist on attacking the church, the American Federation of Labor, the Republican, Democratic and Socialist parties, the Daughters of the American Revolution and "such unorganized issues as the Colored question with all its ramifications of lynching, race-prejudice and unjust discrimination." Go ahead, says Grady, attack capitalism but, my dear Workers Theatre, why attack those institutions which are a part of capitalism and which uphold capitalism. Mr. Grady, it seems, is against abstract capitalism.

Sir Grady's thesis rests on the assumption that the Workers Theatre deliberately lies,— that we present a half truth and then work that half truth around to fit our ideas. Mr. Grady's ignorance as to just what is the truth can best be judged by seeing what ails Mr. Grady and so we herewith present his idea of truth. Truth No. 1. "The American Federation of Labor can be looked upon only as the champion of the worker." This looks to me like plain ornery willful ignorance of facts. Had Mr. Grady asked an unemployed worker of the A. F. of L. for his information he would have been told what every rank and file worker of the A. F. of L. knew years ago; that the American Fed. of Labor is a bankrupt organization as far as assisting the workers is concerned; that the leaders of the A. F. of L. draw huge salaries while the workers suffer from wage-cuts, unemployment and starvation; that John L. Lewis, President of the United Mine Workers of America (the largest union in the A. F. of L. boasting a membership on paper of 400,000, actually having less than 200,000—but still voting 400,000, which is one of the methods used by

Lewis to control the A. F. of L.) raised his own pay \$4,000 a year over the heads of the rank and file,—this making a grand total of \$12,000 per year for him, while thousands of mine workers were starving; that racketeering, graft and corruption are the order of the day and not the unusual occurrence.

■ This is the half-truth which the Workers Theatre dramatizes and presents to the working class. Mr. Grady has a feeling that because the A. F. of L. was once a workers organization, that is reason enough for backing it today in its policy of wage-cuts, starvation and unemployment for workers. This we think is kindergarden logic. In the future we advise Mr. Grady to look for his information to a rank and file worker of the A. F. of L. But perhaps Mr. Grady is a scholar who makes it a point never to come in contact with workers. In that case, I refer Mr. Grady to the following articles where he will find a thousand and one figures and facts on the policy and position of the A. F. of L. And mind you, Mr. Grady, these articles were not written by communists at all. Harper's Monthly, Jan. 1932, THE COLLAPSE OF ORGANIZED LABOR,—IS THE A. F. OF L. ON ITS DEATH BED, by Louis Adamic; American Mercury, June 1929, PARLIAMENT OF LABOR, by H. J. Greenwool; the Nation, Dec. 12, 1928, THE RESPECTABLE A. F. OF L., by Carl Haessler; The Nation, THE COLLAPSE OF THE A. F. OF L. by Louis Stanley.

Here Mr. Grady will discover that the half-truth of the Workers Theatre is much closer to the truth. And that which he has been holding up as the truth is nothing but putrid reactionary propaganda for a putrid reactionary organization.

But Sir Grady is as naive as a lamb unborn. Sir Grady probably reads nothing but the Bible and the Workers Theatre magazine, for here is truth. "Capital itself, while often deserving little defense is hardly guilty of the atrocious crimes imputed to it by such bombastic plays as "The Miners Are Striking", in which the capitalist is pictured as having relief kitchens for the strikers dynamited; strike breakers imported to carry on a program of terrorism . . . IT IS ALL HIGHLY COLORED STUFF." I quote the headlines from the capitalist press during the recent Kentucky mine strike: World Telegram, Dec. 30, 1931, DRUNKEN DEPUTIES RAIDED MINERS HOMES IN HARLAN—One husband tied to tree and lashed.—Others afraid to come home; Jan. 2, 1932, BAILING STRIKERS FRIEND COST FARMER HIS HOUSE IN KENTUCKY MINE WAR—Then his store used as soup kitchen was blown up; Jan. 4 1932, \$60 WORTH OF CLOTHES GIVEN TO GIRL IN HARLAN TO STOP HER TESTIMONY—Ruby Shadrick, who says she saw murder, tells of attempted bribery—Brother was made a proposition too. AND CAPITALISM, BABBLES MR. GRADY, IS HARDLY GUILTY OF THE ATROCIOUS CRIMES IMPUTED TO IT. But this is not all; far from it.

The Ludlow massacre. Young John D. Rockefeller was forty years old when his Colorado Fuel and Iron Co. slaughtered three women and fourteen children in the

strikers tent colony at Ludlow. Since then, with loot sweated out of company union workers in Colorado, together with loot from underpaid railroad workers from twelve hour day oil field workers, starved and cheated natives in Venezuela and other Standard Oil foreign properties, Old John D. scraped together almost three million dollars to further the service of religion by building the college chapel of Chicago University. And the thousands more our noble philanthropist and savior has donated to the church throughout the United States.—AND CAPITALISM, BABBLES MR. GRADY, IS HARDLY GUILTY OF THE ATROCIOUS CRIMES IMPUTED TO IT.

■ Steve Katovis, shot in the back, The Columbine Bloodstain, Sacco and Vanzetti murdered, the recent Ford Dearborn massacre.—AND CAPITALISM, BABBLES MR. GRADY, IS HARDLY GUILTY OF THE ATROCIOUS CRIMES IMPUTED TO IT.

Thousands of class war prisoners. Mooney and Billings, hundreds of Negroes lynched and tortured, the Scottsboro boys (who would have gone to their death if it weren't for the organized effort of the Communist Party, League of Struggle for Negro Rights and the International Labor Defense, the murder of the negro sharecroppers.—AND CAPITALISM, BABBLES MR. GRADY, IS HARDLY GUILTY OF THE ATROCIOUS CRIMES IMPUTED TO IT.

What do you mean by atrocious crime, Mr. Grady? Is it an atrocious crime to starve six million children while milk is being dumped into the rivers in this, the richest country in the world? Is it an atrocious crime to force workers to sleep in parks and alleys while there are thousands of clean, empty homes in the richest country in the world? Is it an atrocious crime for workers to starve for lack of food while the warehouses are stocked with food and farmers are burning their crops rather than sell at a loss? Is it an atrocious crime in the richest country in the world for workers to freeze to death while stores are packed tight with clothing? The Workers Theatre says "YES." It is an atrocious crime for which capitalism is responsible, and as long as these conditions exist the workers theatre will continue to dramatize these problems for the workers, and attempt to find a way out.

These are the half truths which Mr. Grady refers to. This is the swollen propaganda he speaks of. Are you afraid to face facts, Mr. Grady?

The Workers Theatre is not alone a theatre to show the injustice of the present system and bring that injustice before the workers. More important than this: the Workers Theatre presents a problem and attempts to solve it,—attempts to show the worker how he can fight against starvation by fighting for unemployment insurance; fight against wage cuts by not allowing the boss to ride at will over him, but striking militantly back for higher wages and less hours of work. The Workers Theatre is a fighting theatre that does not stand in pulpits, convention halls, and Democratic Clubs making peacock speeches—the Workers Theatre believes in following theory with constructive action.

When you wish to destroy something you must always have something to replace it. Mr. Grady wishes to destroy the "Workers Theatre." What does he wish to put in its

place? Here lies the answer to such half-baked purely destructive criticism such as is offered by Mr. Grady. Let us examine Mr. Grady's program for ridding the world of injustice.

Says Sir Grady—"Now viewing each of these attacked organizations with impartial criticism it must be admitted that they are not free from all stigma. The Workers Theatre is not the first to lampoon the snob complex of the D. A. R. and F. F. V.z. It has been done before, says Mr. Grady. Nevertheless, the snob complex of the D. A. R. and the F. F. V.z still continue to flourish and grow instead of disappearing. Does Mr. Grady offer any concrete suggestion as to how to rid these high and mighty of their snob complex? If so he fails to mention it.

■ Again, here is what Mr. Grady has to say of the exploitation of the negro race. "As far back as the days of the "premiere" of Uncle Tom's Cabin, fair minded people have wept and cried indignation at the unfair attitude to the problematic but eminently deserving colored population of the United States." So why should the Workers Theatre take up the problem? Has not all the brutal lynching, starvation, and misery of the negro workers disappeared since the fair minded people have shown their indignation by weeping and crying? Yes, Mr. Negro Worker, all your troubles are over. There will be no more lynchings, no more starvation, no more exploitation by the rich whites because Mr. Grady is going to have all the fair minded people weep and cry with indignation. Hurrah, the problem is solved by Prophet Grady.

Still further, Mr. Grady's program points out that the Workers Theatre is not the first to satirize the Republicans, Democratic and Socialist parties; "they have been caricaturing each other for decades. And just how much good has this caricaturing done?"

As much good as the indignant tears of the fair minded people have helped the negro workers get out from under the exploitation of the profit seekers. Is this "caricature for decades" responsible for the graft and corruption that has filled the pockets of the officials of the capitalist parties while the workers are starving? Is that the reason for the rise of gangsterism and the control of politics by gangsters and capitalists? Their satire of each other seems to have shown these parties how to carry on bigger and better graft. Another good reason, thinks Mr. Grady, for doing away with the Workers Theatre.

■ And once more Mr. Grady points out how the church has assisted and done its bit to fight for the workers. "Popes have pronounced anathemas," says he, "against the unjust and inhuman methods of those employers who victimize their employes with cruelly unfair wages and wretched working conditions." And here lies the answer to no more wage cuts,—a pope's anathema. For as long as I can remember, one pope has followed another, one anathema has followed another—and just as certainly one wage cut has followed another without the slightest interest in the pope's anathema. If the working class depended on the pope's anathema for better living conditions they might as well fold up and pack in.

Mr. Grady is a member of the Society of Jesus which is

a Catholic body under the wing of the pope. What has the pope to offer at a time when there are over forty million unemployed throughout the world; when breadlines dot the land and the flophouses are worse than the Chicago stockyards. In his latest anathema, the "Holy Father", after spending paragraphs telling us how terrific the present crisis is, has this to offer. "Let the poor and all those who at this time are facing the hard trials of want of work and scarcity of food, suffer with greater resignation . . . which divine providence in an inscrutable but ever loving plan has assigned them." This is certainly a way out of the crisis. Starve in silence, says the pope, for it is the will of an ever loving god. Is it the will of an ever loving god to allow capitalists to exploit millions of workers and give them starvation wages? Is it the will of an ever loving god that little children should go naked and hungry? I should like to ask the pope one question. Why is it, "Holy Father", that in the Soviet Union where the workers rule, the country of Godlessness, there is no unemployment, there is a seven hour day, free doctor bills, free hospitals, and constantly improving conditions for the workers, while—in capitalist countries,— where the bosses rule, and where god has the backing of the bosses, the police, the army and navy, etc., wages are being cut and starvation

and war faces the working class. Do you wonder that the Workers Theatre combats these ideas that are spread to force the workers to accept wage cuts, unemployment and starvation.

This then is the message Mr. Grady has to offer the the workers in place of the militant message of the Workers Theatre. Mr. Grady is in favor of attacking capitalism—but in the abstract—and how? For wage cuts—a pope's anathema;—for the snob complex of the D. A. R.—more lampooning; for getting rid of political graft—let the three parties of capitalism, Republican, Democratic and Socialist satirize themselves. For the negro working class—a caucus of all the fair minded people to weep and wail away the exploitation of the negro.

This is what Mr. Grady has to offer to rid the world of its ills. It is this fear of the Workers Theatre exposing and fighting the demagogy of the Gradys and the Hoovers and the Thomas' that has caused The Honorable Mr. Grady to disapprove of the Workers Theatre. It is demagogy like this that gives rise to the Workers Theatre. It is demagogy like this that the Workers Theatre will always fight against.

The strength of the Workers Theatre will grow and continue to grow.

Building a Repertory for the Workers Theatre

By J. SHAPIRO

Chairman, Repertory Committee, L.O.W.T.

The Repertory Department of the L. O. W. T. has been organized to provide an effective instrument for the growth, exchange, and distribution of repertory for workers dram groups, on a national scale. Our aim is not only to be a play exchange but also to act, wherever possible, as a stimulant and guide for the writing of new plays, skits, mass recitations, songs, or whatever may serve as play material for the workers theatre. We have, therefore, organized our work accordingly.

We are at present preparing a list of plays on hand, covering many phases of the class struggle. This list which is published on the second page of this issue of "Workers Theatre", will be brought up-to-date from time to time as our repertory increases.

Another of our permanent activities will be a library of reference material. This library will carry pamphlets, books, magazines, news-paper clippings, facts and figures, in fact anything, whether political or purely theatrical in nature which might be of use to the workers theatre groups in writing plays and otherwise. Anybody who could possibly spare material of this sort should send it to the L. O. W. T. office.

It will also be our task to form contacts with individual writers, writers organizations, workers correspondents, etc., in order to stimulate the growth of repertory and to foster generally a spirit of closer cooperation between workers in these two closely related fields.

At present we are busily engaged in work for the election campaign. We have a number of election plays already on

hand, suitable both for indoor and street performances. But we need a great many more.

We call upon all agitprop groups to get busy and send in material for the election campaign. Make the plays short and concise and make a thorough study of the Communist Party Platform before writing them.

We wish to impress all groups with the facts that the repertory committee can only be of service to the workers theatre and to the movement as a whole if it receives the thorough cooperation of the groups. Don't only send for material, but also send in material. All material sent will be carefully preserved and put to good use. All plays will receive a thorough analysis and a comradely criticism. Work with the Repertory Department for the growth of our theatre movement.

THE DRAM LETTER, A NEW L. O. W. T. BULLETIN,

is being published by the National Executive Committee and will be sent out regularly to all member groups of the organization. The Dram Letter will contain announcements of the National Executive Committee, and the Local Executive Committees. It is also open to the groups for contributions concerning their current activities.

The first issue of the Dram Letter includes in full the Plan of Preparation and Action for the coming Election Campaign, as presented by the National Executive Committee of the L. O. W. T.

Situation and Tasks of the Workers Theatres in the U. S. A.

By JOHN E. BONN

A report to the First National Workers Theatre Conference held in New York, April 17

(Continued from the May issue)

It was not accidentally that I dealt mostly with the organizational and artistic form of the Agitprop theatre. For this is finally the form of the great majority of the workers theatres and then it is the form most adequate to the political and economic conditions of the proletariat in capitalist countries. However, the other form of theatre, the stationary theatre, should not be neglected or condemned. There is no doubt that only in a workers country a stationary workers theatre has the opportunity to develop all its possibilities to a full extent. But there is also a place for a stationary workers theatre in a capitalist country. If it had no other function than to detract the workers audience from the bourgeois stationary theatre, we had reason enough for building up a stationary workers theatre. But there are many other reasons, which not only justify the existence of a stationary theatre in a capitalist country but also show obviously that it is necessary to build it up. First of all the stationary professional theatre has many means and ways of expression which are not at the disposal of the agitprop theatre. Of course, these means must be exploited for our political propaganda purposes. Then, there exists a demand for the stationary workers theatre with its more elaborate technical means, with its more emotional approach toward the audience.

The stationary workers theatres in Japan, in Germany, (Piscator) and here (Artef) show us the possibility of professional theatres in capitalist countries, but at the same time they show us many organizational, political and economic mistakes which we have to avoid when we, in the capitalist U. S. A., start to build up an English speaking stationary workers theatre. And this, comrades, it seems to me, is one of our main future tasks.

Comrades, I hope the situation is clear to you. The question is not: Agitprop theatre or stationary theatre. Our task is to develop both types. For: we need both types as weapons in the class struggle the flashlight effect of the mobile up-to-date agit-prop theatre as well as the impetus of the slower but broad attack of the more complicated stationary theatre.

HISTORY OF OUR WORKERS THEATRE

The Workers Theatre movement of this country is very young. Not more than about three years separate us from our "prehistoric" period, where we had quite a few workers theatres which worked with more or less success, in an isolated manner with no clear idea of their task, with no constructive program. The first attempt to organize the

workers theatres in this country, made in 1929, did not achieve more than a complicated and bureaucratic constitution.

A second attempt was stimulated by the International Workers Dramatic Union, which asked the Workers International Relief to undertake the first step toward an organization of the various groups. The Workers Laboratory Theatre, at that time already affiliated with the W. I. R., was too busy with its own organizational problems. But with the strengthening of its organizational, political, and artistic foundation, it became more and more conscious of the responsibility toward the whole movement, handed over to it by the I. W. D. U.

But the group only half understood its task. Instead of building the foundation for central organization by preparing and mobilizing the various groups, it established itself as a kind of clearing house and information center, for all workers theatres in this country. Though these activities did not and could not result in the necessary centralization and organization of the workers theatres, its achievements should not be underestimated. By establishing contacts on a national and international scale, by spreading the idea of the political importance of the Workers Theatre, it laid the foundation for the coming more successful attempts.

About one year ago, March, 1931, another step was undertaken by the German Workers Theatre, the Prolet-Buehne, which was the most disciplined, and politically and artistically most advanced workers theatre in the U. S. A. The Prolet-Buehne invited representatives of various Workers Theatres to a conference, where it recommended the formation of a central organization of Workers Theatres, first of New York, and later of all the states. A provisional committee started the preparatory work, when the Workers Cultural Conference was announced for June 14, 1931. The committee interrupted its activities in order to wait for the decisions of the conference. However, these attempts had also one very important concrete result: the cooperation of the two most developed Workers Theatres: the Workers Laboratory and the Prolet-Buehne as "United Workers Theatres of N. Y." This found its most efficient expression in the joint editorship of the Magazine "Workers Theatre", which had been started by the Workers Laboratory Theatre.

DRAM BURO AND DRAM COUNCILS

At the Workers Cultural Conference, on June 14, the Workers Cultural Federation was organized. The Dramatic Section of the Executive Committee of the new federation constituted itself as Dram Buro. The program of the Dram Buro included the following main points:

- 1.) To prepare a National organization of all Workers Theatres of the U. S. A.
- 2.) to coordinate the activities of the various groups

- 3.) to give the groups advice and assistance
- 4.) to establish an exchange of experiences and forces between the groups.

Though the Dram Buro, as a section of the New York Cultural Federation was only a district body, its program was laid out on a national scale.

This twofold task, to prepare a national organization and to act as temporary central body, could only be carried out in close contact with and through the full cooperation of all groups. The first organizational step of the Dram Buro was therefore, to recommend the organization of local Dram Councils.

New York, which had the first and most active Dram Council, proved what can be achieved through permanent cooperation of all groups. I cite only the various mass performances which became an important entertainment and propoganda feature of the New York mass meetings, the first street performances in the last election campaign; the joint activities of the N. Y. groups to raise money for the striking Kentucky miners.

The groups in N. Y. as well as all over the country received plays and organizational assistance from the Dram Buro. A Workers Theatre Training Course was held in New York.

During all the day to day tasks and all the routine work, the Dram Buro did not forget the main task: the preparation of the National Conference. Independent of the success of yesterday's Spartakiade, and of this conference, the preparatory work for our First National Workers Theatre Conference and Sptartakiade can be considered as one of the most important achievements in the history of our movement. An event of which each group member, each functionary, and the Dram Buro can be proud.

For more than two months the workers theatres of this country were in a state of mobilization, concentrated on the

task to prepare the conference financially, organizationally, ideologically and artistically. It was a splendid example of solidarity and collective spirit. It was the final proof that the workers theatres of this country are a power. It was the last dress rehearsal for our political activities in the near future. It was a promise to the working class of this country and of the world which we have to make good.

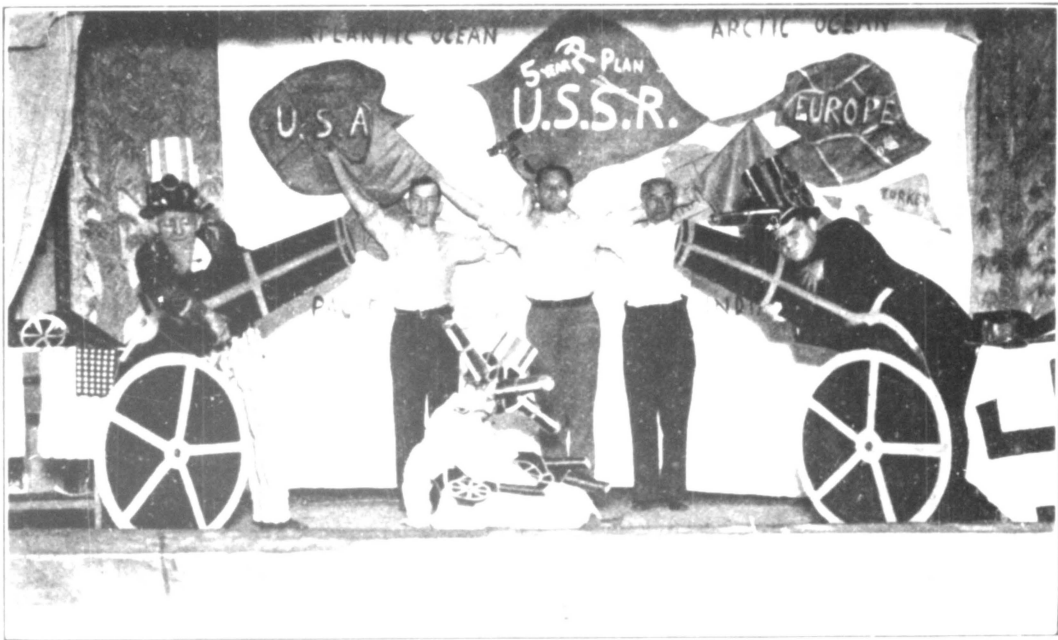
The best way to recognize our achievements during the last year is to compare today's situation with that at the time of the N. Y. Cultural Conference in June, 1931. A year ago each of the 200 workers theatres of this country was isolated, not knowing about the work, the difficulties, the problems, or even about the existence of the other groups. Today at least 150 groups in all parts of the country belonging to the different language groups are in permanent contact through the Dram Buro and the local Dramatic Councils. We know about the activities of the other groups. We can learn from each other. We can avoid mistakes which others have made. Our plays can be distributed and translated. The different organizational, technical, and artistic problems can be discussed among the groups.

The consequence of this permanent contact between the various groups is a remarkable improvement of the quality of our work. We have not only more but also better plays. We are abandoning more and more the petty bourgeois tendency of imitating the bourgeois professional theatre, in favor of a real revolutionary theatre of propoganda and agitation. The contents of our productions correspond better with the major political questions of our class and react faster on the day-to-day events. Important events as the Scottsboro Case, the Miners Strike, last year's election campaign, and others became subjects of our plays.

(To be concluded)

Scene
from
Coney
Island
Dram
Group
Production
of
"Hands
Off"





The Prize-winners of the Spartakiade

A Review—By NATHANIEL BUCHWALD
Artel, New York

Prolet-Buehne, New York, in "15 Minute Red Revue" by John E. Bonn
Jack London Club (Newark, N. J.) in "Charity" by J. Shapiro
John Reed Club (Phila.) in "We Demand" by Bernard Reines

The official judges of the Spartakiade were probably right in awarding the winning places to the three groups and plays in the order given. Even though it may be difficult to ascertain by any kind of measure what share is due the play and the performing group in each of the awards, there can hardly be any doubt that the prizes went to the three best groups presenting the three best plays. Both the applause and the tabulation of the questionnaires filled out by the audience unmistakably assigned the winning places to the groups and plays mentioned.

THE PROLET-BUEHNE

Taking the group and play as a whole, the Prolet-Buehne undoubtedly made the best showing. This message of the play was clear and specific, and was effectively projected to the audience. The main theme of the "15-minute Red Revue" is the contrast between the workers' rule in the Soviet Union and the capitalist rule in the United States. Various aspects of capitalist exploitation and dictatorship are sharply and graphically contrasted with the opposite conditions, and the Workers' Fatherland. The contrast is rendered visual by frisant and clever use of placards. The slogan of defending the Soviet Union appears as an obvious and logical conclusion. Politically the play is clear and simple, theatrically it is spectacular and dynamic.

Yet it is questionable whether the "15-minute Red Revue" would impress a neutral or an unfriendly proletarian audience. The texture of the script and the wording of the slogans and the "strong lines" are such as will be "aught, on the fly" by a class-conscious audience, but may not impress or convince the skeptical and the misguided workers who are still under the influence of the agencies of bourgeois and social-fascist propaganda.

In general, the work of the Prolet-Buehne, though outstanding in the field of agit-prop theatre, leans too heavily on direction and delivery of lines and too little on the literary and dramaturgical shaping of its plays. The Prolet Buehne players speak their lines with a ringing, galvanic forcefulness, and the director marshals them upon the stage in perfect rhythm and in a variety of group-patterns, with changing tempi building up to a spectacular dynamic climax. But the plays themselves are frequently devoid of effective theatrical form and the vocabulary leans to the conventional propagandist jargon.

Technically the "15-minute Red Revue" is suitable for kind of platform and does not depend upon the lighting effects or scenery for its effectiveness. The "props" are few and not bulky. It is a portable show that can be given anywhere. The number of participants, however, is

quite large (11) and on a small platform the stage appears crowded.

The virtue of simplicity of direction is developed by the Prolet-Buehne director to a fault. While the use of placards is quite effective it tends to grow dull with repetition. On the spectacular side the "15-Minute Red Revue" lacks variety. On the dramaturgical side the play lacks the element of narrative, of suspense, of the dramatic building up of a situation. Its lines ring with the overtones of sectarian phraseology and formulation.

But in criticizing some features of the work of the Prolet-Buehne, we must remember that we treat of a splendid agit-prop expertly directed,—a group that is both a pioneer and a model in the field of agit-prop work. A little more variety in its methods, a little more attention to dramaturgy, a little less of that stiff, straight-laced manner will go a long way toward perfecting the work of that group. Its position of leadership in the field makes it doubly desirable that the Prolet-Buehne correct some of its shortcomings.

JACK LONDON CLUB OF NEWARK

Play and players combined in the case of the Jack London group to make a tremendous impression upon the audience as well as upon the judge. "Charity" by J. Shapiro of the Workers Laboratory Theatre treats of a timely topic and manages in simple terms and with the aid of only five players to conjure up before the audience a grotesquely satirical picture of capitalist philanthropy, particularly of the charity-fraud in New York City. The characters are: Salvation Army Lass, Gifford Committee, Red Cross, Boss, Workers. They speak mostly in rhyme, and some of the rhymes are very amusing and heighten the satirical effect of the lines:

Boss: But times are very hard, you see,
And business very bad,
And so I cut the workers' pay
It makes me feel so sad.

.....
You see, I know the trick
But now, good friends, I am getting scared
He's turning Bolshevik!

Salvation Army Lass: Good God, it makes me sick!
He's turning Bolshevik!

And here is the barrage of questions the Worker is subjected to when he applies for relief:

Your name, your occupation?
Your age, your education?
Your weight, your height?
Your hearing, your sight?
Your church affiliation?
Your history is quite hazy,
Was your grandfather ever crazy?
Your hair, your eyes, your collar size?
Are you a criminal or lazy?

(Continued on page 23)

"15 Minute Red Revue"

An Agit-Prop Play—By JOHN E. BONN
Prolet-Buehne, New York

Played by the Prolet-Buehne at the Spartakiade. Translated by B. Stern, W. L. T. and George Lewis Red Players New York

Note on the direction: 11 players are needed. We will not give too many notes on how to direct the "15 Minute Red Revue" as we think that here is a good chance for the groups to create their own way of performing.

It is suggested that: The rhymes be spoken in a strong rhythmic way and that action be paced in the same manner. Part I, Players line up, front stage, one by one, while saying their lines. (The numbers 1, 2, 3, etc., stand for 1st Workes, 2nd worker, etc.)

Part II. Players change their position so that at the end they stand in an angle (like an inverted V) pointing to the map of the Soviet Union at the back curtain.

Notes for the other parts are included in the script.

I. AGITPROP

1. Comrades, workers, listen, stop—
Prolet-Buehne agit-prop.
2. Agitprop—against hunger and destitution—
Agitprop—theatre of revolution—
3. Agitprop—wakes the masses to fight—
Agitprop—is the workers' light—
4. Agitprop—in streets and factory gates—
Agitprop—all over the United States—
5. Agitprop—and the bosses quake with fear—
Agitprop—for the workers' day is near—
6. Agitprop—against the yellow socialists—
Agitprop—against the preachers and fascists—
7. Agitprop—against police terror and exploitation—
Agitprop—against the lying press and starvation—
8. Agitprop—is the cannon's roar—
Agitprop—is class war—
9. Agitprop—bears the battle's brunt—
Agitprop—builds the revolutionary front—
10. Agitprop—strikes the boss's iron hand—
Agitprop—defends the Soviet Union, the workers' fatherland!
10. The workers' news—
9. The workers' views—
8. Protest of masses—
7. War of classes—
6. Strong—unyielding—
5. Victory wielding—
4. Tempo—action—
3. Fights reaction—

2. In street and shop—

1. We never stop!

All. AGITPROP!

II. FIFTEEN MINUTES

5. Working women, working men.
6. Attention. Our play begins.
4. We are going to play for you
7. A fifteen minute red revue.
3. Fifteen minutes goes rapidly.
8. Fifteen minutes is eternity.
2. In 15 minutes a factory may be shut.
9. In 15 minutes your wages may be cut.
1. In 15 minutes you may be hired.
10. In 15 minutes you may be fired.
5. In 15 minutes you may be in jail.
6. In 15 minutes you may be out on bail.
4. In 15 minutes see war of the classes.
7. In 15 minutes learn the strength of the masses.
3. In 15 minutes one question you must face.
8. In 15 minutes you must choose your place.
2. In 15 minutes we must definitely know.
9. In 15 minutes, are you friend or are you foe.
1. In 15 minutes
10. Say what you are
- 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, For
- 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, or against

THE SOVIET UNION

All. the U. S. S. R.

(All except 9 off stage)

III. WHAT IS THE SOVIET UNION?

9. The Soviet Union!
What is the Soviet Union?
What is the Soviet Union to us?
What is a country to us
that is thousands of miles away—
separated from us by two oceans—
whose language we cannot understand—
which the government of the United States does not recognize?
What is the Soviet Union?
What is the Soviet Union to us?
4. The Soviet Union!
One sixth of the earth—
161,000,000 people
The Soviet Union!
the workers and peasants have driven out
the profitmakers
the landlords
the exploiters
The workers and peasants
have destroyed
a system of profiteering and exploitation!

The capitalist dictatorship of the bosses
has been replaced
by the Soviets of the workers and peasants.

The chaos of capitalism
has been replaced
by socialist construction.

The Soviet Union
One sixth of the earth
belongs to the workers and peasants
belongs to the producing masses
belongs to the Proletariat.

2. This is the death sentence of capitalism!
If the workers and peasants of Russia
Could throw off the leeches and exploiters—
Then the proletariat of other lands
Can throw off their leeches and exploiters—
If the workers and peasants of Russia
Can rule themselves—
Then the proletariat of all other lands
Can rule themselves.
The success of socialist construction in the
Soviet Union
Is the death blow to capitalism.
Will the capitalist willingly give up their
rule?

Will the capitalist stand for that?

CAPITALIST: I will not stand for that.
I will not give up my power.
Above everything, I must
have—my profit.
And don't forget
I'm not dead yet
Attention—attention—to the
attack!
Beat the Soviet Union back!

IV. CAPITALISM AND ITS SERVANTS

(March in: PRESS, CENSOR, RADIO, JUSTICE,
ART, CHURCH, SCIENCE, POLICE)
line up, bow to capitalist during his
next line

I've done all I'm able
To keep my rule stable
But that's not enough.
My slaves you must bluff,
You must show them the way
To work for less pay
And keep them afar
From the U. S. S. R.

CENSOR: We will not pause
JUSTICE: We'll twist the laws
CHURCH: We'll blindfold the eyes
PRESS: Of the Workers with lies
POLICE: We'll keep them slaves
RADIO: With my radio waves
ART: We'll lull them to sleep
SCIENCE: Into slumbers deep.
CAPITALIST: Fine, gentlemen, fine
The workers are mine
If you keep them afar

WORKER: enters

From the U. S. S. R.
We, the workers and peasants
of the capitalist countries
have heard that our brothers
in Russia have driven out
the bosses, that our brothers
in Russia have taken over for
themselves the land and the
factories that our brothers
in Russia are building a new
classless, socialist society.

We, the workers and peasants
of the capitalist countries
eagerly follow the events
in the Soviet Union. What
is the truth about the Soviet
Union?

PRESS:

This is the truth about the
Soviet Union.

Russia is terrorized by a
minority, which refuses to
pay the debts to the United
States.

We stand for honesty and
reciprocity.

We will not recognize the so-
called government of Russia
before she pays what she
owes us.

SOVIET UNION:
stands near map

The revolutionary workers
and peasants warned the
United States government
not to lend money to the
Czar or to Kerensky.

The Soviet Union will not
rob the proletariat of one
cent to finance the czarist
and white terror

Workers and peasants of the
world

CENSOR:

Halt — Enough — Bolshevik
propaganda is censored—
Films of Soviet Russia must
be cut—

Second class mailing rates
denied—
Importation of subversive
literature prohibited.

RADIO:

Stand by, ladies and gentlemen,
and hear the real treat
of the evening. This is station
G O L D, of the Wall Street
Broadcasting System. Ladies
and gentlemen, I have the
honor to present to you
Mr. Babbitt, who has just
returned from a trip to Soviet
Russia. Hear the truth about
Soviet Russia.—Good evening
my dear folks of the radio
audience. Russia, one sixth of

the earth, is darkened by terrorist activities of the Bolshevik home police, the GPU. The prisons are overfilled, innocent blood flows in streams. The people of Russia are shivering in fear. Nobody knows who is next.

the Soviet Union. But the Soviet Union has no money to support fat and lazy priests. The Soviet Union uses its unnecessary churches as hospitals and rest centers for the workers and peasants. Workers and peasants of the world

SOVIET UNION: The saboteurs of socialist construction are trembling because of the GPU guards the land of the workers and peasant against the counter-revolutionaries, because the GPU protects the freedom of the workers and peasants against the white terror, because the GPU strengthens the step forward for the world revolution of the workers and peasants. Workers and peasants of the world

SCIENCE: We still have science in the United States, that proves to you that the capitalist system is the best and only correct system, that proves it with figures—

SOVIET UNION: That's a lie.
SCIENCE: With facts—
SOVIET UNION: That are twisted.
SCIENCE: Worked up by official experts—

JUSTICE: Look out! There is still justice in America. Your interest in the Soviet Union is suspicious. Propaganda for the Soviet Union means treason. Militant workers are thrown into jail if they are citizens, they are deported if they are foreign born, they are lynched if they are negroes. The fate of Mooney and Billings, of Sacco and Vanzetti, of Harry Sims, of the four workers shot in Detroit, of the nine negro boys in Scottsboro, serve as examples that justice still lives in America.

SOVIET UNION: Bribed by the bosses
Because press, radio, censor, church, justice, art, science .
And the police—

POLICE: And the police—are in the service of the ruling class, are in the class struggle on the side of the bosses, the exploiters, the profiteers. Workers and peasants of the world

SOVIET UNION: And the police—are in the service of the ruling class, are in the class struggle on the side of the bosses, the exploiters, the profiteers. Workers and peasants of the world

CAPITALIST: This is too much. Fight these Bolsheviks, with God, for business and the fatherland.
PRESS, RADIO, ETC, shout to the WORKER, each one his previous speech attacking the SOVIET UNION, while they crowd around the WORKER. Then they go down from the stage and stand in front of the stage, pointing and hissing at the SOVIET UNION, while each repeats his verse from the rhymes that accompanied their entrance.

ART: And also art, free of propaganda. Workers and peasants of the world, there is something higher than the wage problem, and that is love. There is something higher than the defense of the Soviet Union—to fight and die for for your fatherland.

CENSOR: We will not pause
JUSTICE: We'll twist the laws
CHURCH: We'll blindfold the eyes
PRESS: Of the workers with lies
POLICE: We'll keep them slaves
RADIO: With my radio waves
ART: We'll lull them to sleep
SCIENCE: Into slumber deep.
CAPITALIST: Fine, gentlemen, fine.
The workers are mine
If you keep them afar
From the U. S. S. R.

SOVIET UNION: The workers have only one fatherland, the Soviet Union.

CHURCH: The fanatic Bolsheviks have no respect for the most sacred sentiments. They have forbidden religion, they are destroying the churches. In the name of all religions I call upon you to join the holy crusade against these church wreckers.

(The capitalist's servants rush behind the stage.)
CAPITALIST: Ha, ha, ha, ha. What do you say now. Who laughs best?
WORKER: Who laughs last. Ha, ha, ha,

SOVIET UNION: Religion is not forbidden in

ha. You have most money, you tell the biggest lies. But the truth about the Soviet Union I can learn from there. (Points to left of stage, where enter WORKER with sign RED PRESS, then other workers each with one of the following signs: DAILY WORKER, YOUNG WORKER, WORKING WOMAN, LIBERATOR, NEW PIONEER, MOSCOW NEWS, SOVIET RUSSIA TODAY. Each shouts the name of his paper as he faces the audience and lifts up his sign.

SOVIET RUSSIA TODAY: Facts—

MOSCOW NEWS: Facts—

WORKING WOMAN: Facts—

YOUNG WORKER: Facts—

DAILY WORKER: About the—

ALL: Soviet Union!

SOVIET UNION: (Takes his place at end of workers press line, next to SOVIET RUSSIA TODAY). And this fact, the Five Year Plan! The Five Year Plan has created—

ALL: Factories, railroads, collective farms, electric power, new cities.

NEW PIONEER: The workers and peasants of the Soviet Union . . .

MOSCOW NEWS: Have gone ahead of their own plan

SOVIET RUSSIA TODAY: The Five Year Plan in four years.

(All rise. (. F. L. enters from left, SOCIALIST from right)

A. F. L.: The Five Year Plan?

SOCIALIST: In four years?

A. F. L.: Socialization of industry?

SOCIALIST: Socialist construction?

A. F. L.: That's bad for our reputation.

SOCIALIST: That's bad for our jobs.

BOTH: We've got to do something.

(To audience)

A. F. L.: Forced Labor in Soviet Russia.

SOCIALIST: Dictatorship in Soviet Russia.

A. F. L.: Friends.

SOCIALIST: Brothers.

A. F. L.: Protect freedom.

SOCIALIST: Protect democracy.

A. F. L.: Against forced labor.

SOCIALIST: Against dictatorship. (Both exit)

(Song behind stage: We are the Builders

7 Workers of the Soviet Union march on stage from left with signs, line up back stage. 5 Workers, (8-12) representing the U. S. A. with signs come slowly from right, lay down on floor front stage. All lift up signs with next slogans:)

8. Where is freedom?
1. Where is forced labor?
12. Where is the worker free?
7. Where is the worker oppressed?
10. In capitalist U. S. A. the worker is oppressed.
4. In the Soviet Union the worker is free.
9. In capitalist U. S. A. 15,000,000 unemployed are thrown out on the street.
2. In the Soviet Union is work for all.
11. In capitalist U. S. A. the workers are beaten up when they ask for social insurance.
5. In the Soviet Union the workers are protected by social laws: vacations without pay, free hospitals, free sanatariums, free doctors, free medicine.
8. In capitalist U. S. A. the working time is lengthened.
1. In the Soviet Union the working time is shortened.
12. In capitalist U. S. A. wages are cut.
6. In the Soviet Union wages are rising.
10. In capitalist U. S. A. everything for the capitalists.
4. In the Soviet Union everything for the workers.

VI. FOR THE SOVIET UNION

5. Fellow workers
3. Comrades
5. Where is your future?
6. In the capitalist decline of the U. S. A. or in the Socialist construction of the Soviet Union?
7. This is the question:
1. For or against?
5. The answer is clear:
(The workers of the U. S. A. rush to sign 10 and tear it down, then all turn to sign 4, the Soviet Union, all pointing to S. U.):
- All For the Soviet Union!
(All turn to audience)
8. Every step forward in the Soviet Union—
10. is a step forward—
11. toward the Soviet Union—
12. of the United States of North America!
- All (Rush into one line, facing the audience)
4. Therefore
- All For the Soviet Union!!
4. Every attack against the Soviet Union—
9. is an attack—
3. against—
- All YOU! (Pointing to audience)
4. Therefore fight
- All FOR THE SOVIET UNION!
(With clinched fists)
- FOR THE SOVIET UNION!!!

THE I. W. O. YOUTH BRANCH OF WEST HAVEN has recently formed a dramatic section. On June 18, they performed the play "Scottsboro", during a Scottsboro demonstration.

"Vote Communist"

Performed by the first agit-prop Street Group in New York in 1931. Revised for the next election campaign.

Note: Plays for street performances should always have some kind of a prelude to attract the workers to give them time to gather around the platform. The content of the play, therefore, should begin a few minutes after the performances started. The slogans of the capitalist and the workers at the first page of this play are to be considered at the prelude.

Characters:

Capitalist (representing at the same time the three capitalist parties: Republican, Democratic, and Socialist Party)

Neutral Person (willing to get rich)
Later one of the workers)

3 workers with megaphones, mingle with audience

Communist (first in audience)

- I.
Cap. (on platform) (Top hat and big \$ sign)
Prosperity!
Prosperity is just around the corner!
1. W. ————We are starving!
Cap. We will give you wine and beer!
Comm. ————We cannot pay our rent!
Cap. Donate to block-aid!
2. W. ————We have no clothing!
Cap. Keep your money in circulation!
3. W. ————12 million unemployed!
Cap. America first!
2. W. ————Thousands of workers committing suicide!
Cap. We have given 500 million dollars to stabilize our banks!
1. W. ————Workers get police clubs and bullets instead of relief!
Cap. Make the world safe for democracy!
2. W. ————Thousands of workers arrested!
1. W. ————Deportation of the Foreign Born!
3. W. ————Discrimination against Negroes!
- Cap. **RIGHT OR WRONG—MY COUNTRY!**
Work. ————1. Wage-cuts, 2. Speed-up, C. Lay-offs, 3. Child labor, N. P. Evictions, 2. Suicides, 1. Depression, C. Crisis.
- Cap. (After every word Cap. says "Keep smiling". Then:
NO DEPRESSION FOR ME

An Election Play for Street Performances

- N. P. Why is there no depression for you?
Cap. Because I learned the trick of making money.
- N. P. I would like to make money, too. How about teaching me your trick?
Cap. Well, that's a very big order. I'll do it—on one condition
- N. P. And that is?
Cap. You have to be a good boy! First lesson: You can't get rich working. The only way to get rich is to make others work for you. And remember, the long the hours you make them work, the more money you make for yourself. The more you speed them up, the more money you make for yourself. The less you pay them, the more money you make for yourself. The more you exploit them, the quicker you get rich like me. You get me?
- N. P. Yes, but you are only 1% of the population. How is it that the other 99%—the workers—stand for it? How is it that so many millions of workers let themselves be exploited by a handful of bosses?
Cap. Easy! Second lesson: Give money to the schools and the teachers will teach the children to die defending your interest. Give money to the press and the newspapers will print any lies you want.—Money will do the trick!
- N. P. But suppose, there is **only one** worker who gets wise to you? He'll explain these lies to the other workers and they, of course, will rise and overthrow the whole system.
Cap. In this case, my dear fellow, you have the police and the army. Such workers are clubbed, put into jail, framed up and given the electric chair.—Get rid of any rebellious workers! No matter how!—You get me?
- N. P. Yes,—but—we are going to have elections. Every worker has a vote. All these workers will get together and vote against me. How can I keep these workers from voting?
Cap. On the contrary. You have to **insist that they vote**. But you have to teach them **how** to vote. You can appear before them in various forms and make them **vote for you**. Now, watch me, I'll show you how to do it.
(Puts on Sign: Republican)
- Cap. R. My dear workers! The Republican Party is always trying to better the conditions of the workers. We believe that rugged individualism is the backbone of our prosperity.

2. W. The rugged individualism of Rockefeller to massacre miners!
1. W. The rugged individualism of Ford to fire on starving workers!
3. W. Rugged individualism is the backbone of capitalist exploitation!
- Co. Rugged individualism is the right of the bosses to step on the workers!
- Cap. R. The Republican Party has always had the interest of the workers at heart.
- Co. That's a lie! Here, I'll show you what he has at heart! (Tears down sign: Republican, money bag and big \$ sign is seen)
- Cap. (Puts on sign "Democrat")
My beloved workers! Do you really believe that the Republican Party is interested in the workers? Who backs that grand old party anyway? The Big Bankers!
2. W. And who backs the Democratic Party?
1. W. The bosses!
- N. P. What is the difference between the bankers and bosses?
3. W. None!
- N. P. And what is the difference between the Republican Party and the Democratic Party?
3. W. None!
- Cap. D. The Democratic Party has always had the interest of the workers at heart!
- Co. That's a lie! That's what he has at heart!
Tears down sign "Democrat", \$ sign is seen again)
- Cap. (Puts on sign "Socialist")
Ladies and Gentlemen! Fellow workers! The Socialist Party does not agree with the existing system. But that does not mean that we have to overthrow it by violence. The Socialist Party does not believe in violence.
- Co. In all countries the socialists voted for war appropriations during the world war.
2. W. —because the Socialist Party does not believe in violence!
1. W. The German Socialists under Noske and Ebert shot down thousands of workers!
2. W. —because the Socialist Party doesn't believe in violence!
3. W. Socialist Mayors in Reading and Milwaukee had workers clubbed and arrested!
2. W. —because the Socialist Party doesn't believe in violence!
- Cap. S. Ladies and Gentlemen! Fellow workers! These are minor shortcomings. Theoretically we are for a straight, but sensible Socialism which is to be built up thru cooperation of all classes.
1. W. Cooperation between bosses and workers?!
3. W. Cooperation between parasites and pro-

- ducers?!
- Co. Cooperation between exploiters and exploited?!
- Cap. S. Don't you realize the point? The bosses have the money, the bosses have the jobs, the bosses have the goods, the bosses have the food, and the bosses have the police. Therefore, when you want money, jobs, goods, and food, then you have to cooperate with the bosses who will provide you with
- Co. POLICE!
- Cap. S. You - are - a Communist!



- Co. Yes, I am a Communist! And you are (tears down sign) a Capitalist. (pointing to the sign) That's what is behind the Republican Party, what is behind the Democratic Party, and what is behind the Socialist Party: Three different masks to hide one enemy: the Capitalist Class..
- Cap. Workers, I am not your enemy at all. Cooperate with me, and you will get what you want—as far as your demands are reasonable.
1. W. The 12 Million Unemployed demanded jobs or relief. What did they get?
2. W. Machine guns and tear-gas from the police. Flop-houses, breadlines, slop apples for sale
1. W. The bosses wont give anything to the unemployed unless we force them thru militant struggle.
- Co. The Communist Party leads the workers in their fight against starvation. The Communist Party leads the workers in their fight for unemployment relief and social insurance at the expense of the



state and the bosses. Therefore
Vote Communist!

All: Vote Communist!
Cap. Workers, vote republican, vote democrat, vote socialist, no matter which of them, but vote for me. I give you the jobs. I pay you the wages
1. W. You cut our wages
2. W. 10 %
3. W. 20 %
1. W. 50 %
2. W. No factory
3. W. No shop
1. W. No store
2. W. —without wage-cuts.
Co. The Communist Party fight against the Hoover wage-cutting policy. The Communist Party and the Trade Union Unity League leads the workers in their fight for higher pay and better working conditions. Therefore — Vote Communist!
All: Vote Communist!
Co. The Communist Party fights against the deportation and persecution of foreign

born workers. The Communist Party fights for all exploited workers, regardless of sex, age, race, or nationality. Therefore — Vote Communist!

All: Vote Communist!!
Com. The Communist Party fights lynching and discrimination against Negro workers. The Communist Party demands equal rights for the Negroes and self-determination for the Black Belt. Vote Communist!
All: For the unity of negro and white workers! Vote Communist!
Com. The Communist Party fights against bosses and for the defense of the Chinese people and the Soviet Union.
Workers! Organize and fight!
2. W. Against the Hunger and war offensive of the Capitalists!
3. W. For the Unity of the working class!
Com. Vote for the Communist Candidates!
1. & 2. Vote Communist!
1, 2, 3 Vote Communist!!
All: VOTE COMMUNIST!!!

Hands Off!

By NATHANIEL BUCHWALD
Artef, New York

An Election Agitprop
Play for Indoor Performances,
Translated from the Yiddish by J. Shapiro,
New York, N. Y.

Characters of play:

Uncle Sam
League of Nations
Japan
3 workers

(Two tables at the left and right. In the center a large map. The map shows a large red spot, the rest is black. At each table two cannons are pointed towards the map. At the table to the right a sinister, witch-like figure: League of Nations. At the left a figure representing Uncle Sam.

U. S. (reading from newspaper) Economic conditions of the masses in the Soviet Union improving. No unemployment. Industry growing at a tremendous pace. Production increasing. (Sighing aloud) That is bad, very bad. Something must be done about it. (thinks)
L. N. (reading from newspaper) Five Year Plan successful—New factories opened—Wages increased. Moscow demands world disarmament. (Sighs aloud) That's bad, very bad. Something must

be done about it. (thinks)

U. S. We'll have to start a little bon fire, that's sure. But how? From which end? (Studies the map)
L. N. We'll have to blow up that five year plan of theirs, that's sure. But who is going to start it and how? (Studies the map)
U. S. From Poland or from Siberia? I guess I'll have to consult the League of Nations.
L. N. From Roumania or from Manchuria? I think I'll have to consult the U. S.
(U. S. and L. N. together)
U. S. (telephoning) Geneva—League of Nations!
L. N. (telephoning) Washington—State Department!
(Both telephones ring together)
(U. S. and L. N. together)
U. S. Hello! League of Nations!
L. N. Hello! State Department!
U. S. Yes?
L. N. Yes?
U. S. Can you spare a few minutes for a little disarmament conference?
L. N. Why, certainly. That's just what I am calling about. Won't you come over?
U. S. I am coming immediately. Don't forget to leave the back door open. (U. S. puts on a high hat shaped like the mouth of a cannon, takes his two cannons under his arm and starts for table at right
L. N. puts a similar hat, takes his can-

- nons under his arm, arises, and waits for U. S.)
- U. S. Yoo-hoo! League of Nations! Is the back door open?
- L. N. Why certainly, it's open. Come in please. There is no one here. (They greet each other, shaking hands and bowing very low. Their cannon-like hats collide.)
- U. S. and L. N. together: I beg your pardon. (They sit down)
- L. N. (takes out a cigar case and offers a cigar to U. S.)
Pan-European. Best brand on the market.
- U. S. No thank you. Pan-European is bad for my liver. I must smoke Pan-American. Doctors orders. Won't you have one on me?
- L. N. Thanks very much. But I'm kind of used to Pan-European. (Both light up their own cigars)
- U. S. Have you heard the latest?
spot on map)
- L. N. You mean over there? (Points to red spot)
- U. S. Yes, over there. They are on the upgrade, while we are going down.
- L. N. Yes, it's pretty tough. Bad news, they are doing fine.
- U. S. And what will happen if our workers try the same thing on us?
- L. N. God forbid! It'll be the end of us. But my dear uncle, don't let us get too pessimistic. Everything will turn out alright. All we have to do is hurry up and—(lights a match and brings it close to the red spot on the map.)
- U. S. You mean, hurry up and establish another peace. But from which side shall we begin?
- L. N. That's a problem. (thinks hard) Perhaps from here,—from the west. It will create a swell impression. You know what I mean—western civilization, European culture—(points cannon at red spot on wall)
- U. S. Oh Yeah? And how about American civilization? What will American culture get out of it if you get in from there and hog the best part? Nothing doing. I won't have it.
- L. N. Now, now, be reasonable. It's a large, rich country. There's enough for all of us. You know that old ditty, don't you:
For me the Don—For you Manchuria
For me Ukraine—For you Sibiria
The important thing is harmony, world harmony. (Lights match and sweeps the whole map with it.)
- U. S. Certainly, world harmony, that's very true. But I must get the bigger share.
- L. N. And Why?
- U. S. Because I possess more means to protect world peace. (Points to cannons)
- L. N. And what is the matter with my instruments of peace? (They jump up very belligerently and point cannons at each other.)
- U. S. Let's proceed with the conference. We'll have plenty of time for that.
- L. N. Alright, let's .
(Both sit down again)
- U. S. I feel kind of hot!
- L. N. Yes, it is rather hot.
- U. S. I am a bit run down. Guess I need a change of scenery. What do you think of China?
- L. N. Not bad. I like China.
- U. S. (Warming up) So do I. You know, China is not a bad spot to start from. What do you say? (They put their arms about each others shoulders and walk over to the map.)
- L. N. Not a bad idea. Not at all. It's pretty near, you know. Right from here, we ought to make it easily. Well, now, who do you think should start this Chinese peace? You - or - I?
- U. S. And why not our good friend Japan? First of all he is much nearer and secondly it'll be much more pleasant all around. Don't you think—
- L. N. Japan is liable to demand too big a price.
- U. S. Let's inquire.
- L. N. Are you prepared to come across?
- U. S. You know me. For a first-rate peace, I am ready to pay any price. Say, you know, if Japan starts here, you'll be able to start there and we'll have them coming and going.
- L. N. That's very important—from all sides. It must be a world peace. (Lights a match as before) I'll call up Japan and talk business. (telephones) Tokyo, Foreign office. Hello, League speaking. Say, I have a visitor. Yes, U. S. Suppose you run over. Please. We have a sacred mission for you, yes, pretty sacred—peace in China. You're coming right away? Fine. So long.
- U. S. Your efforts on behalf of world peace are indeed praiseworthy. (bows low)
- L. N. (bowing) Our ideals are identical.
- Jap. (enters with cannons under his arms) Here I am. Did I keep you waiting? Peace in China? Why, that's my specialty.
- L. N. That's just why we called on you. You have heard the latest, haven't you?
- Jap. (Pointing to red spot.) You mean—from—over there? Bad, very, very bad. They are doing fine.
- U. S. Your ideals are in absolute harmony with ours. We count on your assistance in our efforts to mop out this red spot, and establish world peace.
- Jap. That red spot is becoming an eye sore.

It would give me great pleasure to cooperate.

L. N. How much will it stand us?

Jap. I can stand for a bit of China.

U. S. So could we. But it's big enough for all.

Jap. Give me Manchuria. I'll establish peace and from there I'll be in a position to defend myself.

U. S. Isn't it a bit too much?

L. N. It is. But it's worth it. I accept.

U. S. O. K., it's a deal. When do you start?

Jap. Right this minute. (telephoning) Tokyo! War Dept. Hello! Establish peace in Manchuria immediately. Yes. Plenty of aeroplanes. Four brigades if three are not enough. No, no. Don't annex Manchuria. Japan has no imperialistic designs. Just chase out the bandits. What, no bandits! Where is the Minister of Foreign Affairs? Where is the Commander of Manchuria? Hire bandits! Pay them so much per attack. No! Not week work! Piece work! The white guards are a bunch of lazy loafers. Piece work only! Start from the north. Have 'em stage attacks near the Soviet Railroad. The rest you know. (To the two) Well, there you are.

U. S. Fine, the peace has started.

L. N. And when do you start on the red spot?

Jap. Right away. All I have to do is to chase the Chinese out of Manchuria.

U. S. And if they refuse to go?

L. N. Yes, what then?

Jap. Then they will be bandits, and against bandits we employ certain means

U. S. and L. N. together: Bravo!

Jap. I appreciate your respect for Japanese ideals.

L. N. Our ideals are identical.

U. S. Our ideals are the same.

Jap. Now we are ready to also spread our ideals also in this red country. I from here. You from there.

L. N. Altogether against this red land!

U. S. Altogether against this red land!

Jap. Well, gentlemen, I'll have to be going. My treasury needs attention.

U. S. Oh yes, that reminds me, I left a sick budget at home. Excuse me, please.

Jap. Good day! Thanks for the order.

U. S. Good day! Very nice of you!

L. N. Don't mention it. Good day!

(Exit Japan)

L. N. That will finish it. No more Five Year Plan. Now the world is saved.

U. S. (back to his desk) Started! At last! This will end it! No more Moscow! No more red! No more Socialism! At last the world is safe for democracy.

Workers Hands off China!
Hands off the Soviet Union!

Down with Imperialist War!
The workers of the world will defend the Soviet Union.
Down with the imperialist bandits in China!

L. N. What a crude note! Doesn't at all harmonize with our ideals. It makes me nervous. Br-r-r-r

U. S. What a sharp note. How it clashes with our ideals. (tragically) How can I take China if they won't let me

L. N. I should have liked to start a little bonfire over there, but they won't let me . . .

Workers The Soviet Union will not be provoked into a war. The workers of the world will defend the Soviet Union.

L. N. (Mournfully) What's the good of all my plans if they won't let me

U. S. There goes my China. They won't let me.

L. N. I could have shot up the Five Year Plan, but they won't let me

Workers (enter) Hands off China. The workers will defend the Soviet Union!

L. N. and U. S. (fall off their chair)
Help! Help! They won't let us

Workers Comrades!
The imperialist bosses are preparing another world war.
Japanese troops are slaughtering the Chinese people and are at the very door of the Soviet Union
Thousands of factories in the U. S. are mobilized for war production
Thousands of factories in the U. S. are today manufacturing ammunition and war equipment
Stop the hands of the imperialist robbers
Protect the workers fatherland
Fight Boss War
Join the Party of your class that leads you in your struggle
Join the Communist Party!
The Communist Party demands: All War Funds for the unemployed
Vote Communist against starvation!
Vote Communist against imperialist war!
Vote Communist!

A DRAMATIC CONTEST OF FIVE I. W. O. YOUTH BRANCHES took place on May 21. With the exception of the Preliminary Spartakiade, this is the first time that a mass organization has arranged a contest among its dram groups. Other groups should follow the example set by the I. W. O. Youth branches.

The prize winners of the contest were: "Mr. God Is Not In", produced by Branch 401; "The Spark", produced by Branch 403; "Marching Guns", produced by Branch 404.

A detailed account of the I. W. O. Youth Section Dram Contest appears in the review section of this issue.

REVIEWS

DRAM CONTEST OF I. W. O. YOUTH BRANCHES OF N. Y.

Review by J. Shapiro

The Dram Contest of the International Workers Order Youth Branches which took place on May 21, 1932, illustrates very encouragingly the progress of workers theatre in our revolutionary mass organizations during the past year. It brings home one point very emphatically, and that is—more and more dramatic activity in the youth organizations as a basis for their more and more rapid growth and for their greater usefulness in the class struggle.

The contest itself from a critical standpoint must be viewed with consideration to the fact that most of the participating groups were new to the work, some of them in fact performing for the first time. Judged on this basis the results were very encouraging. The evening as a whole turned out to be alive and interesting; the acting, directing and plays all ranging from the good to the excellent, both technically and in revolutionary content.

Some of the major shortcomings, however, should be pointed out as a basis for future growth. Two of the plays, both of them incidentally prize winners in the contest, were considerably weakened by a suggestion of mysticism. I am referring to "The Spark" and "Marching Guns". This taint should be avoided in a workers play. It is impossible to elaborate here on this point for lack of space. I therefore refer it to the groups themselves for discussion. "Mr. God Is Not In", another prize winner, was guilty of certain political errors, not so much in script as in rendition. It sacrificed in some points revolutionary content for theatricality without necessarily heightening the theatrical effect. I refer to the highly decorative but meaningless costume of Mr. God. Mr. God, according to the lines, should have looked like a capitalist executive, which would have been a great deal more to the point. Another error was the nondescript quality of the preacher's banker companion. Treated as he was in the production, he was merely funny, but carried no political significance. As a whole I would say that although very entertaining the production detracted rather than added to the political content of the script.

"S No Use" introduced a very novel and interesting technical idea, the shadowgraph. The performance as an experiment was fairly successful. The group should be counseled to carry on and further plumb the possibilities of this new medium. They should also in the future, plan a script to more nearly suit the medium. This medium, seems to me, to be nearer in character to the movie rather than to the stage. Comrade Buchwald's play "Hands Off!" (in this issue) was therefore not a very good choice for the purpose, since it depends to a great extent on its words.

There were no very outstanding faults in the other productions although some of them were a trifle pale due to the apparent inexperience of the actors. Workers actors should remember that they are to impress and enthuse the audience with their revolutionary conviction. Therefore,

when they are called upon in an agitprop play to speak a line directly to the audience they should speak firmly and with enthusiasm.

The high spot of the evening, which was declared out of the contest because it was given by a temporarily recruited group was "Labor's Love Lost", a "revamped and reviled" bourgeois revue skit. We were informed that it was written, produced and presented all in one day. Fine work! It was highly entertaining, had good political content and was given with a good deal of life and enthusiasm. We Want More!

And by the way! Where are all the other youth organizations? They are expected to fall in line and announce some contests. They should regard this I. W. O. Youth Contest as a challenge to a socialist competition.

FOR THE WORKERS— OR AGAINST THEM?

"Gentlemen Wanted"

Review by B. Reines

The second production of the "Workers Theatre" of the Rand School, a Socialist Party institution in New York City, for the second time raises the question: Is this a theatre for the workers or against them?

"Gentleman Wanted" is the name of the play. It is a translation from the German of the bourgeois playwright Walter Hasenclever. The play has nothing to do with workers, but is presented as a satire on capitalist society. The hero is a sort of unofficial marriage-bureau swindler. The heroine is the daughter of a big business man. She advertises for a "gentleman" to marry her.

A son of the big business man makes love to the maid, wins a fortune over night in the stock market, and marries the maid, with the remark that "This is the decline of our civilization, anyhow." The swindler outmaneuvers the business man, who admires him for this, and finally agrees to let him marry his daughter.

The only people held up to ridicule in "Gentleman Wanted" are the women (as presented, namely women of the working class) who are victims of the swindler. All the main characters—the swindler, the business man's daughter, and especially the business man himself—are presented in such a way as to be very likeable.

We'd recommend this play to the Theatre Guild.

The acting was smooth and for the most part, finished—but in the usual little theatre society comedy manner. No sharpness to the satire, no sense of workers presenting with real class understanding the rottenness of a decaying system. But capitalist society is presented as a very amusing and pleasant society, with fine-spirited people on top.

The setting was interesting, modernistic, naively experimental. But in almost every scene it remained as something entirely apart from the action and dialogue. The setting was just a passive frame-work, remote from the body of the play.

During an intermission, a pretty young lady stepped out in front of the curtain and addressed the audience, which numbered less than 100. Appealing to the audience to join the "Friends of the Workers Theatre", she explained

that the "workers theatre" was working to secure an indignation against the system. It had the highest of "ideals". And finally, that the "Workers Theatre" wants "its plays to be of the best, its acting to be of the best, and its AUDIENCE to be of the best". Shades of the declining Theatre Guild!

On the programs given out at the performance there is still mention of the fact that "Theatre is a Weapon". To the young workers who have now taken part in two productions of this Socialist Party "Workers Theatre", we declare: Consider, what is actually the message of the play you have appeared in. Then take up again our charge that by presenting such plays (which are no doubt O K'd by the officers of the Rand School), the "Workers Theatre" of 7 E 15th St. is using the theatre as a weapon not for but against the working class.

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

You, as a group, certainly have your problems and little difficulties, which come up in rehearsals, in performances, in membership meetings, in committee sessions, etc. You, as a reader who are interested in the workers theatre movement, have many questions concerning our tasks and activities. The problems of your group are also the problems of many other groups. What you, as a friend of our movement want to know is also of interest to everybody else sympathetic to our work. This new section of our magazine is the open forum where you can bring up your questions so that all groups, all group members, and all readers interested in the workers theatre may profit by the answers given or may contribute their own opinion or experience.

1. Q. Should a Negro character in a workers play be represented by a black or white player?—A. B., New York.

A. Each English speaking group should have Negro comrades in their membership. The Negro comrades should not only participate in plays where the list of characters call explicitly for Negroes but it is necessary that Negroes take part in all plays. The fact alone that in all our performances Negro and White appear side by side as "workers" explains to our Negro and white fellow workers in the audience more impressively and more convincingly the fact that black and white are suppressed and must fight side by side, as the same class. However, a play requesting a Negro character especially when it deals with Negro problems, should not be omitted from the repertory of a group which has not succeeded as yet in winning Negro members. In this case white players should use make-up. But that ridiculing "Negro Slang" which the bourgeois theatre and the vaudeville uses for black face actors, has no place in the workers theatre.

The Editorial Committee plans to publish regularly a list of the names, meeting places, and meeting nights of the various workers theatre groups so that workers who are not members of any group as yet may know where the groups meet. The charge will be \$1.00 a year.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Comrades:

I received your letter a few days ago. Your bundle of old issues of "Workers Theatre" is also now at hand. Thanks ever so much for both your letter and the magazines.

To tell you the truth I didn't know when I wrote just what "Workers Theatre" was. I had a vague notion that it was some type of workers dramatic organization. Your address had been given to me without any information. I was, therefore, pleasantly surprised to find it a regularly issued magazine sponsoring real proletarian drama.

May I say that I like your magazine first rate. You have overcome great difficulties in getting it before the workers, but I believe your efforts are being rewarded. There could be no one wishing you success more sincerely than I.

Our group is a unit of the Young Communist League of This is a city of 17,000 population. A railroad centre, very little industry other than that. The city is the centre of a wide spread agricultural district, and in the main, the workers here have not had much touch with the labor movement, either reformist or revolutionary. Consequently our movement is not very strong. However, we have experienced difficulty in getting plays to put on, but I believe "Workers Theatre" will go a long way to solve this problem.

We have been forced at times to dig down and write our own plays. I am enclosing one of my own efforts in this connection. I wrote it as much with the idea of politicizing the actors as the audience.

At the next meeting of the group I intend taking up the question of subscribing to "Workers Theatre". We are rather hard pressed for funds, but I don't think we could put two dollars to better use.

The proletarian element here has hardly been touched as yet. Therefore, any plays we put on must of necessity be very simple. Conditions in are, however, rapidly driving the workers toward the revolutionary movement.

If I can do anything toward popularizing your magazine here I shall certainly do it, and if I can give you any information of interest to you please call on me for it.

With hearty revolutionary greetings
Comrade N. N.

Editors' Note: As the letter comes from a country where the revolutionary movement is absolutely suppressed and where terrorism is used against anybody showing signs of revolutionary spirit, we will not publish the name of the comrade or the city and the country in which he lives. Nevertheless, we extend our revolutionary greetings to the comrades in With all means we will support the hard fight of the workers there. "Workers Theatre" certainly will give cooperation to this group as well as any other group that may need it. Plays and other material have already been sent. We hope that this letter marks the beginning of a steady cooperation between the workers theatre groups of the U. S. and our comrade-players in . . .

NEWS and NOTES

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING OF THE NEW YORK DISTRICT OF THE L. O. W. T. was held on Monday, June 13, with a representation of 80 members from 25 respective groups. The plan for participation in the coming election campaign, which was sent out to all the groups in the country as the first Dram Letter, was presented to the membership by Comrade Bonn, General Secretary of the L. O. W. T. A lively discussion from the floor followed.

Comrade Stevens spoke in the name of the United Front Election Campaign Committee, and invited the Workers Theatre Groups to take an active part in the coming election campaign. He promised the full cooperation from the Election Campaign Committee.

Comrade Markoff, in the name of the National and District Agit-prop Committees of the Communist Party, emphasized the importance of the Workers Theatre Groups in agit-prop work.

The membership accepted the invitation of the C. P. and promised unflinching co-operation. A practical program was then made for adaptation of the plan to local conditions.

The following five groups declared that they had already decided to organize street agit-prop groups: Prolet-Buehne, Workers Laboratory Theatre of the W. I. R., Harlem Progressive Youth Club, Red Players, Jack London Dram Group, Newark.

A practical course to train future directors and organizers of street agit-prop groups will be begun on June 20, with the Red Players as the first experimental group. Each street agit-prop group in the New York district is to send two members to this course. In addition to the practical work, short lectures on legal questions and procedure will be given by an I. L. D. lawyer.

One or two travelling groups will be organized to tour the entire New York State, in order to bring the election platform of the C. P. before the workers and farmers of this state, who cannot be reached very easily through other means.

PHILADELPHIA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING was held on May 15. After a report of Comrade Glass, Secretary of the L. O. W. T. of the Philadelphia District, the activities of the Philadelphia groups and the dram council were discussed and criticized. A motion to join the League of Workers Theatres was passed unanimously.

Comrade Watson, as a representative of the Communist Party, Philadelphia District, spoke of the importance of the Workers Theatres in the class struggle and asked the Workers Theatre Groups to participate in the coming election campaign.

Comrade Bonn, General Secretary of the L. O. W. T. outlined a program for the dramatic work during the election campaign. In the discussion which followed, valuable suggestions for the realization of the plan were made by the delegates. It was reported that the Philadelphia comrades had already begun work in this direction. Two writers conferences had been held where the types of plays necessary for the election campaign were discussed.

The first election play written by a member of the Phila-

delphia John Reed Club, was scheduled for a performance at the National Youth Day Meeting in Reading, Pa. on May 29 and 30. In the meantime, the Repertory Committee of the L. O. W. T. received two more agitprop plays from Philadelphia.

The campaign plan as recommended by Comrade Bonn was accepted unanimously.

Besides the dramatic groups, representatives of other revolutionary organizations participated in the meeting. The Young Communist League sent a delegate, and the Pioneer Red-Guards Dramatic Group not only appeared as a whole, but contributed to the success of the conference by making excellent suggestions for the practical work.

CHICAGO GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING of all Workers Theatre groups was held on June 13. Plans were made for participation in the coming election campaign as well as for propagandizing the activities for the Counter Olympics to be held in Chicago at the end of July.

The delegates to the First National Workers Theatre Conference and Spartakiade gave their reports.

Ed. Note—(Due to the lack of information sent to us by our Chicago comrades, we cannot give a fuller account of this conference. We hope, that some time in the near future, the Chicago Dram Section will send us more information.)

THE REBEL PLAYERS OF LOS ANGELES, CAL. took the initiative in calling a general membership meeting of all dram groups of Los Angeles and the immediate vicinity, in order to organize a dram council. The new dram council voted to affiliate with the L. O. W. T. A detailed report of the Rebel Players, as well as of the Dram Council of Los Angeles, will appear in the next issue.

JACK LONDON DRAM GROUP OF NEWARK, N. J., with the aid of the W. I. R. has succeeded in invading Stelton and Plainfield, N. J., where before a majority of bourgeois audience, their forceful presentation of "Scottsboro" and "Charity" made the former cognizant of the real value of agit-prop theatre, and inspired them to arrange a special benefit performance at Freedom Hill, N. J., on July 3, where the players will repeat the performance.

As a special feature of I. L. D. street demonstrations, the group renders mass recitations unannounced. Discussions of plans are now under way for the organization of a special group of three to confine themselves to the street work on the election campaign.

COMMONWEALTH COLLEGE, MENA, ARK., LABOR DRAMATIC GROUP is a promising workers theatre. The group does not confine its dramatic undertakings to the student body alone, but goes out to show proletarian plays before white and negro workers in the agricultural sections.

One of the most recent productions was the agit-prop play "On the Belt", which was first performed by the Prolet-Buehne and then in its English and other language translations by other groups.

Commonwealth College Fortnightly comments the following on the performance of this play at Commonwealth College on International May Day: "Imperfectly presented, it nevertheless suggested the dramatic force inherent in symbolic pantomime, machine rhythms, quick climaxes and spirited mass recitation. Besides this dramatization of anti-speed-up revolt, there were songs, talks and recitations of revolutionary verse."

THE SPARTAKIAD WINNERS

(Continued from page 10)

Do you know how to behave?
Why don't you try to save?
Do you like our institutions?
Do you uphold the constitution?
Have you got religion?
Have you joined the Legion?

The play makes its point with telling effect in showing up the nature of bosses' charity, but its conclusion is forced. Instead of leading up to the workers' struggles for government relief and unemployment insurance, the author forces the play upon a new track and ends up with a call to support the Workers' International Relief and its activity on behalf of the strikers, losing sight entirely of the revolutionary struggle of the unemployed—the workers' answer to the bosses' charity. This shift of slogans tends to dissipate the mood of the audience with respect to the charity-fakers and does not manage to interest the audience in the W. I. R.

The Jack London group wisely changed the version of the play and substituted an appropriate end—appropriate ideologically. But the satirical mood of the body of the play suddenly gave way to a group recitation, challenging and defiant in mood. It was quite a different emotional key and pitch. For good or bad, the audience forgot the play proper and was thrilled by the recitation. Ordinarily the shift of mood from satire to sloganized fervor appears forced and perfunctory, but in this case the players held the audience spell-bound by the vehemence and ringing sincerity of delivery.

■

The Jack London group is relatively young, yet there is something of a distance style to be noticed in its work. The device of placing the players among the audience, though not new, is used with splendid effect by the director. Another interesting thing about the direction is the orchestration of voices, utilizing the pitch and timbre of each player's voice to produce a variety of emotional coloring. In two of the performances of the Jack London group witnessed by the writer no scenery, props or make-up was used, with only the simplest elements of costume used for identification of characters. Outwardly the work of the Jack London group does not at all look like "theatre", but their spirit, zest and emotional fervor electrifies the audience. With a more effective play this group would have been a strong contender for the first place.

JOHN REED CLUB OF PHILADELPHIA

Of the three winning plays, "We Demand", by Bernard Reines, of the Workers' Laboratory Theatre is probably the best. It is a play dealing with the struggle of the workers for unemployment insurance and government relief. It contrasts the generous policy of the government toward bankers, the railroad magnates and the militarists with its disregard of the sufferings and the needs of the workers. It is satirical in vein and builds up gradually to a revolutionary climax, with the unemployed hunger marchers serving notice upon the government that "we shall come back stronger than ever".

In its satirical part "We Demand" is written in verse, and there is a merry twinkle in the obvious doggerel rhymes. The use of the rhyme as an element of repartee gives a sparkling quality to some of the lines:

Secretary (rushing in) Master—the unemployed!
Government: Very busy. Can't be annoyed.
Secretary: But—master, they are complaining!
Government: Let them. They've had the proper training.
Tell them that Congress will end the depression
By passing a law at its very next session.
General: A little over a billion dollars
Will cover the army and navy budget.
Government: It's a lot of money, but I don't grudge it.

It is regrettable that the author did not find the same felicity of phrase for the lines spoken by the workers. The workers who rush in to demand relief and insurance, speak the lines of handbill rather than a play:

We demand—
Free food and clothing for the children of unemployed
and striking workers.
Heavy taxation of all fortunes over \$100,000
Cancellation of payments to bankers of interest on the
so-called public debts.

Contrast these hum-drum formulations with the following scintillating lines:

Government: Unemployment insurance is a dole:
It might save your body, but would ruin your soul.

■

The play as a whole outweighed the performance. Both in acting and direction the performers were uneven. Exaggerated, grotesque make-up was used by the player impersonating the government, while other players either had no make-up or were made up in conventional fashion. Frequent exits and entrances made in an uninteresting, non-theatrical manner, clogged up the performance. There was some good acting that made the most of the clever lines, and there was some mediocre attempts at "character portrayal" in the routine sense of the word.

The workers in the main were the most effective in their mass-scene. Despite the clumsy lines formulating the workers' demands, there was fire and revolutionary fervor in the closing scene, and the message of the play was communicated to the audience in a forceful manner. It is this "strong finish" that more than made up for the weaknesses and shortcomings of the production.

The three winning plays and the groups that performed them were the best in the Spartakiade. Yet some of the non-winners were not so far behind the top-notchers. Altogether, the Spartakiade showed an unexpectedly high level of achievement on the part of the workers' theatre in the United States.

HARLEM PROGRESSIVE YOUTH CLUB has developed a very active dram section during the last few months. There are now 15 members in the group.

They have given performances before several different language organizations. On their repertory are such plays as "Scottsboro", "Liberty in U. S. A.", "Tempo, Tempo", "China Wakes", "Step On It" and "Charity". The group, as a whole, has decided to participate in street agit-prop work for the coming election.

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THE FIRST LANGUAGE FEDERATION OF THE L. O. W. T. was organized in New York on June 6, when the Artef and the Dram Sections of the Jewish Workers Clubs called a joint membership meeting to decide on this question. After a report by Comrade Buchwald on agit-prop theatre in general, and the task of the Jewish Dram Sections, a lively and interesting discussion from the floor followed. Then the Jewish Federation of Workers Theatres (League Art) was organized and affiliated itself to the L. O. W. T., being the first language federation to do so. Plans are being made to extend the Federation on a national scale. Jewish dramatic groups in the country that wish to affiliate should write to "League Art", 108 East 14th St. N. Y. C., Room 302.

THE VANGUARD YOUTH PLAYERS, N. Y., are a new young workers theatre group. The organization is a section of the Vanguard Community Center of the Cooperative Colony, 2800 Bronx Park East. The group has been organized by and will function under the direct assistance of the League of Workers Theatres.

In the first meeting a discussion on the tasks of a Workers Theatre and on the next activities of the group took place. It was decided to join the L. O. W. T. and to order—for a start—a bundle of 20 copies of "Workers Theatre". The first production will be a satirical review written by a member. The group meets every Thursday at 8 P. M. at the Vanguard Community enter, 2800 Bronx Park East. Young workers and workers children who like to participate in workers theatre performances are invited to join the new group.

A CORRECTION

To the Resolution in the May issue of "Workers Theatre".

Paragraph 3 of the resolution (on P. 5) declared that the so-called "First Workers Theatre Conference", called by the Socialist Party had a total attendance of "nine people". This is incorrect. It should have read "nine delegates". There were some other people present, most of whom were members of the Rand School "Workers Theatre" group. —B. R.

Editor's Note:

It should be noted here that, while one delegate said there were about 30 people (not 30 delegates) present, the "New Leader", official organ of the Socialist Party, published a report that this conference was attended by MORE THAN A HUNDRED DELEGATES from 22 theatre groups. By the time this correction appears in print, the number may grow to more than 200—in the pages of the "New Leader".